President’s Message

Greetings from Long Beach!

Like many of you I am getting back into the swing of being on campus during this Fall 2022 semester. It’s been interesting to hear how colleagues and student at different campuses have adjusted to the welcomed return to in person classes. I can imagine that anthropological conferences and journals for years to come will continue to try to understand the cultural adaptations that have come with the pandemic. Most importantly – let’s hope we all stay healthy as the semester progresses and we head into the holiday season.

Adjusting to the classroom has been a transition after my second trip to Oaxaca this summer for the last games of the Guerreros baseball season. This baseball stadium is one of my two favorite spots in the capital. I had the opportunity to interview food vendors prior to the pandemic and wrote up about their goals and experiences for the Economic Anthropology column in Anthropology News, and I was happy to see most of them back there this year. There are many photos of the stadium in that column, but this one of McDonald’s will always be one of my favorites. One of the things I found was that although you see typical foods of baseball stadiums north of the border – including hot dogs and popcorn – despite the prevalence of NY Yankees and Dodgers t-shirts or Levi’s jeans locals wear (when not in Guerreros regalia), the most popular foods are local delicacies such as tacos and sliced fruit. And there is no McDonald’s sold there, though some folks do buy Domino’s pizza from the vendors.

These signs of globalization and local cultural practices bring us back to the 2023 conference theme of “The Global City.” The inflation of recent months complicated arrangements for holding the event in downtown Los Angeles as originally planned. Luckily, we were able to schedule it in beautiful downtown Long Beach, on Friday April 7th and Saturday April 8th. Although Long Beach does not fit the model of a “global city” in terms of being an economic and political powerhouse like its neighbor Los Angeles located 25 miles away, it is in many ways a “secondary” global city. It is integrated into the global economy in myriad ways, including through the Boeing plant near the Long Beach airport, the high number of international tourists who visit the city each year – including to tour the Queen Mary – and the oil rigs that dot the shoreline. The city is marked by dramatic cultural diversity, and is home to the largest population of Cambodians outside of Cambodia.
On top of all this, Long Beach is named for its truly long beach. The Long Beach Hilton hotel where the conference will be held is located on Ocean Blvd, within easy reach of the shops and restaurants of the Pike and other shorefront attractions — restaurants, Aquarium of the Pacific, and the lovely outdoor waterside restaurant Fuego. A free bus — known as the Passport (again, the sense of “global”) — travels down Ocean Blvd. to Shoreline Village, the Aquarium of the Pacific, and Fuego — from which you can look at the Queen Mary. We had a successful conference on the Queen Mary in 2014, and fingers crossed after closing during the pandemic it reopens by April, allowing those of us who want to enjoy the art deco décor to do so.

Registration will open in December. Please look for updates on registration and abstract submission in the winter newsletter, the SWAA Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/people/Southwestern-Anthropological-Association/100057201021897/) and the SWAA website. The latter is being updated as this newsletter goes to press and should go live in early December. Please check it out.

And since I am finishing this on Halloween, it seems fitting to include a photo of Lily, the happiest dog I know, while she does her best impression of a land shark.

Jayne Howell
SWAA President, 2022-2023

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE
2023 Southwestern Anthropological Association (SWAA) Conference

“The Global City”
April 7-8, 2023
Long Beach, CA

Global cities are urban areas and economic and political hubs marked by a rich social fabric shaped by international cultures and influences. They are a nexus of immigration, media, politics and business, as are many smaller and larger communities across the southwest and globe.

This broad theme offers many possibilities for lively discourse. We welcome your presence at the conference, and invite you to submit abstracts for individual presentations, organized sessions (with papers, or in salon and roundtable formats), posters, films, podcasts and other social media that explore local manifestations of cultural, historical, material, linguistic, social and political aspects of global processes.

Registration and submissions will begin in December. More information will follow.

Please follow SWAA on the Facebook page and check out the revised SWAA website for updates on conference and hotel registration beginning on 1 December.

We look forward to seeing you in April.
During the 2022 spring semester the authors of this column toured the Cultural and Natural History Collections at University of La Verne. The collections are housed mainly in the University’s Jaeger House in the neighborhood of the campus, which was originally founded as Lordsburg College in 1891. Old Town La Verne is on the site of a planned railroad town, called Lordsburg, founded in 1887. We interviewed Curator Anne Collier about the purpose behind the collection, how it came into existence, how it is organized and utilized, and how it might best serve the campus community and beyond. The core of the collection originates in material items donated over decades by missionaries of the Church of the Brethren, who founded the original college. Under Director Felicia Beardsley and with Collier’s curation, the collection is being reorganized and has even grown in recent years. Displays of various items from the collection regularly appear in campus and can easily be viewed by the general public.

Authors of this column include three ethnographic methods students and an anthropology instructor. One student, Yadira Quintero (a SWAA member) was already somewhat familiar with the collection, having done a methods project in an archaeology class taught by Dr. Felicia Beardsley that utilized objects housed there. Mayra Aguirre had participated in an archaeological “dig” in the backyard of Jaeger House (originally a single-family home) for a lab class taught by Dr. Lisa De Lance. She became excited about the perennial mystery of the California Indian “cogstones” included in the collection and is nurturing an interest in ethnoarchaeology. Matthew Lopez is a criminology student with no previous anthropology background and more experience in survey research than doing ethnography, so his outside-the-discipline perspective was valuable. He went on to head the new Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology Club [SAC] and is already planning an exhibit on campus of selected Collections items in spring 2023 to be held in conjunction with an event that involves a variety of student organizations. Each student therefore brought a unique perspective to the class. After our tour, the instructor asked each student to make some comments about the collection, and also to pick one object that most fascinated each of them, explaining why they felt it had meaning and value.

Yadira Quintero is specializing in museum studies. She summarizes below how she would describe the collections as a whole to promote it. She said that, for her, it was impossible to pick just one object, her evident self-confidence in posing while holding the saber-toothed cat skull notwithstanding. Yadira plans one day to be in charge of managing some aspect of museums and exhibitions, so that is probably an appropriate professional response.
As Yadira describes:

Anne Collier is a University of La Verne alumni, having graduated with a degree in history and a minor in anthropology. She first learned about the collections as an undergraduate student studying with Dr. Felicia Beardsley. After graduation, Dr. Beardsley contacted her regarding a position working with the collections. Anne has been working as the curator for the collections for seven years now. The collection is an underutilized resource, something that Anne is deeply concerned about. Anne believes that individuals from all types of majors can work with the collections to help thoroughly research the items that are there. It is an educational resource that should be taken advantage of more often. Previously, she has had a photography major work with the collections for the student’s senior project. The anthropology department has utilized the collections multiple times for independent study courses, and for a research in material culture course. Art majors may utilize the collections to understand some of the trends in art represented by the collection. They can also utilize items to learn how to draw material objects. If there is a specific art style they enjoy working with, they can see if the collections have examples of that art style to reference.

The collection has a wide variety of items associated with different historical periods and events, and from all over the world. There are items from the Vietnam War that history and political science majors can examine in their research. There are dozens of political buttons and other political items from the last century that reference the American ‘game’ of politics during various periods of our history [see right]. Political science majors can access printed sources available in the collections to reference as primary sources. The collection includes many natural history items of interest to people in biology or chemistry. There is a wide range of animal remains, including fossils. Chemistry majors can learn how to carbon date or learn the chemical composition of some naturally persevered specimens or natural materials. Even business majors can learn to practice their marketing skills by examining the collection and devising ways they can promote this educational resource. Students and faculty can work with Anne to create a marketing plan and strategy that will attract more donors and promote utilizing the collection. The possibilities are many. The Cultural and Natural History Collections is accessible to any faculty or student who has a need and can develop a plan with the curator and director.

Comments from the Group of Four Making the Tour

One of the points made repeatedly by Curator Anne Collier was how the collection is critically short on storage space, and that was quite visible during our visit. Even in a small, private university like La Verne, whose founders generated this collection, it has been hard to command the necessary resources to maintain such a collection when the present-day administration and Board of Trustees have so many other pressing concerns about the “bottom line” for the entire university. Anne commented frequently on the multiple challenges of temperature and humidity control, light and dust damage, deterioration and breakage. This being California, we immediately thought also of the dangers of fire and earthquakes.

Anne Collier’s own biggest priorities include the daily work of cataloging and preserving, developing future exhibits that generate more positive engagement with the collections, and to entice faculty and students from the campus and from other institutions to think of ways to use the collections for their own work. Space in relation to the size of the Collections is major issue, followed closely by the need to reaffirm the relevance of the Collections to the university’s mission. La Verne has a highly diverse student population and is officially a Hispanic Serving Institution. One possible pathway would be to collaborate with other institutions in the region to utilize the collection. Indeed, the Anthropology Chair at College of the Canyons, Dr. Lisa Malley (a former SWAA member) has expressed a strong interest in just such a collaboration.
Wishing to help sustain the efforts of Curator Anne Collier and the continued existence of the C&NHC, we developed a list of questions to pursue with her and Dr. Beardsley in the future.

1. What are your plans for expanding and housing the collection in the future? How does one sustainably acquire more items when space, labor, and preservation capability are so limited?

2. Would it be helpful to have a priority list of what items have the most value materially, culturally, and educationally? Do you have a sense of how this could even be assessed? What if you were forced by circumstance to reduce the Collections by 25% or 50%?

3. Are there items that could be circulated out for a time, e.g., as loans to researchers or other institutions? What would be required to do this?

4. Can you list the tasks that would be the most helpful for students to do to supplement the work of Curator Anne Collier and Director Felicia Beardsley? Photographing items for the digital archive? Recording, transcribing, and storing online the oral stories about the Collection items as the Curator and Director tell them so that these can be archived in case something happens to either of these two important custodians, or in case something happens to the Collection itself?Would any possible volunteer tasks include handling the items for cleaning or preservation purposes?

5. What is the process for faculty, students, or off-campus individuals (even from other institutions) to apply to utilize the Collections for their own work? How does one get that started? Are there insurance or liability issues?

6. What opportunities could there be for the Collections to collaborate with other departments, educational institutions (K through 12 or higher education), or museums to strengthen the relevance of the Collections to a larger base of support? How should departments and institutions approach the Curator and Director to organize collaboration?

Our interest in supporting the Cultural and Natural History Collections on the University of La Verne campus continues. If you want to know more about the Collections and see more photos of items there and on display, the following web pages are helpful:

https://ulvcollections.org
https://laverne.edu/provost/collections/
https://www.facebook.com/ulvcollections/
https://www.instagram.com/ulvcollections/?hl=en
https://laverne.edu/news/2017/06/14/jaeger-house-receives-national-endowment-for-the-arts-grant/
https://lvcampustimes.org/2017/09/jaeger-museum-awarded-10k-nea-grant/

See a sampling of the remarkable and diverse collection of items on the following five pages.
Curator Anne Collier explained the value of having a worn Native California Indian basket in the collection that shows evidence of repair. She makes the point that items in the collection are kept for potential research and teaching value, not just as attractive displays. This is what makes the collection of particular interest to anthropologists, other researchers, faculty and students.

Interior view of California Indian basket obtained from the estate of Helen Hunt Jackson. As with most items in the collection, there is a fascinating backstory to the acquisition of this item, and to the HH initials, as explained by Anne Collier, Curator. How can viewers access these backstories?

Shelves in the collection containing basketry, mostly of Native California Indians. Anne Collier has worked with a number of California Indian basketweavers to identify the origin, style, and designs on the baskets, and to encourage living, contemporary basketweavers to integrate their observations with their own craft.

View of shelving and drawer corridor in Jaeger House building, which houses the Collections. It is a tight fit because of the large volume of items in relation to the size of the storage space. Limited space is a common issue in many collections and museums. Student contributors to this column are standing to the right.
Curator Anne Collier holds (with gloved hands, as is standard practice when handling items in a collection) a piece of mourning jewelry woven of human hair from a deceased loved one. A Victorian tradition, this is once again in style, judging from a quick internet search.

Students view a matched set of earrings. Written notes about such items are invaluable when included by collectors and donors.

Dr. Hilarie Kelly’s favorite object encountered during the tour was this Huichol chair, made for a religious ceremony involving a shaman invoking a deity to “sit” there. (It is fragile and currently stored on a pallet under a protective blanket to preserve the colors of the yarn.) This chair was donated to the collection by a janitor, on the occasion of his retirement, who had brought it from Zacatecas, Mexico.

This drawer contains an eclectic mix of decorative items from various parts of the world, including dance rattles made of dried insect cocoons, soda bottle caps, and animal hooves and a life-sized, padded textile representation of a “Tarahumara” face that Anne later learned was actually from the Huichol community but had made its way north to the Tarahumara area, demonstrating trade links. A large percentage of items in the collection would benefit from additional research and documentation of their origins, purposes, and other contextual information. There are many opportunities here for students and faculty to develop their own projects referencing items in the collection, and thereby contribute to documentation and the long-term value of storing and preserving the large number of items.

Mayra and Matthew looking at the carved wood items, dolls, and metal items. Picking one, Anne Collier described how the carved figurine closest to Mayra, an example of what is sometimes called “West African colonial folk art,” became very popular and marketable globally. Is it caricature? (I had told the students earlier about the caricature-like Chinelo dancers from Morelos, Mexico that I wrote about in a previous Newsletter.) What does it mean that colonized people depict the legacy of colonization in such an aesthetically pleasing manner that it becomes “collectible?”
At left: The Native California Indian “cogstones” (foreground) and the mystery behind them most fascinated Mayra Aguirre, who is now determined to research what these items were made for, an enduring mystery in California coastal archaeology. Curator Anne Collins explained that two of the examples in this drawer represent the smallest, smoothest, and roundest of those found to date, and they were recovered in the La Verne area, far from the usual coastal region where they appeared plentiful. Variability is what makes collecting a broad range of specimens quite important in determining details about their manufacture and use.

At right, clockwise from top left:

♦ It interested all three students that there was an entire drawer of war era memorabilia. Curator Anne Collier explained that the Brethren are an example of a “peace church” (like Quakers and Mennonites), so that some members became conscientious objectors and performed alternative service in regions engulfed in war. That history of the university could be relevant to the University of La Verne program to help Veterans who are part of the campus community, and to courses taught about various wars.

♦ Matthew Lopez was most intrigued by this drawer of rifles among all the items explained by Curator Anne Collier during our visit. He said he was especially struck by the backstory about the smallest rifle in the front, which had been collected from a pre-adult fighter in Vietnam during the war there. (Which army was not specified.) As a criminology major, Matthew is attuned to concerns about guns and the law, and interested in how young men become involved in thinking about and using guns.

♦ Drawer of assorted wooden and metal weaponry.

♦ Drawer displaying metal objects, including those which represent status, power, and wealth. One practical concern in collections is how to place items together, based on both meaningful categories and preservation concerns.

♦ Drawer of additional status objects; in this case, mostly “fly whisks” made of leather strips, animal tail hair, and other natural fiber.
Curator Anne Collier holding a saber-toothed cat skull from the La Brea Tar Pits, with Mayra and Matthew looking on listening to the story of how La Verne acquired this and other materials. Some eye-catching items in the collection can be touched (with appropriate supervision) and can be effectively used for teaching purposes, especially when they are accompanied by fleshed out, well-research stories.

The students were allowed to hold the saber-toothed cat skull.

Yadira Quintero holding the skull

A full saber-tooth cat skeleton was acquired from the Lab Brea Tar Pits in 1916, via James Z. Gilbert, who was a minister of The Brethren Church, a Los Angeles high school biology teacher, and “pioneer paleontologist.” The skeleton is housed on the second floor of the ULV Abraham Campus Center. In the photo, Anne Collier is at left and Dr. Felicia Beardsley is on the right. [Photo by Darcelle Jones-Wesley.] Read the full story about it (including why a dire wolf tail was mistakenly attached) in La Verne magazine: La Verne’s 10,000-Year-Old Cat – La Verne Magazine.

A screen shot from Google Maps shows another saber-toothed cat housed in the Santa Maria Historical Museum, bequeathed by George Allan Hancock, oilman, railroad owner, developer and one-time owner of what is now Hancock Park (location of the La Brea Tar Pits and associated George C. Page Museum of La Brea Discoveries: https://tarpits.org/la-brea-tar-pits-history). Allan Hancock College in Santa Maria, California is named after him.
Top left:

- A very large dental hypodermic needle device, stored in a drawer with other older medical tools. Medical/dental museums are not a rarity. There is one in the Sacramento area: [https://californiathroughmylens.com/sierra-valley-museum/](https://californiathroughmylens.com/sierra-valley-museum/) and another in Stockton: [https://dental.pacific.edu/dental/faculty-research/dhes](https://dental.pacific.edu/dental/faculty-research/dhes). There is even a National Museum of Dentistry located in Maryland: [https://www.dental.umaryland.edu/museum](https://www.dental.umaryland.edu/museum). Curator Anne Collider is planning a future exhibit relating to medicine in the time of COVID and had already collected a few new potential display items. This raises an interesting general question of who in our world is collecting now the material items that will represent our era in the future?

Middle left:

- Tiny shoes for bound feet. These will soon be no more than historical relics, as there are few surviving Chinese women who still bear the burden of bound feet. Scott Antes, retired former senior lecturer at Northern Arizona University and a former SWAA President, has a collection of such shoes and once gave a lively conference presentation on the topic.

Bottom left:

- A set of unfired clay tableau were recently donated, depicting remembered scenarios of gatherings of elder Jewish men in Eastern Europe. They require some immediate repair and preservation. The job of a single, overworked curator often involves juggling conflicting priorities. To learn more about these items, see the story in [ULV Campus Times](https://www.ulv.edu/ulv-campus-times) from March 2022.

At right:

- A long view of cabinet drawers at the Smithsonian Institution—the same type of cabinets used at Jaeger House. Even in a museum as vast as the Smithsonian, this type of storage system is vital for housing and protecting the greatest numbers of items in the least amount of space.
In the Shadow of Tungurahua: Disaster Politics in Highland Ecuador
By A.J. Faas

Rutgers University Press, 2023
246 pp.

In the Shadow of Tungurahua relates the stories of the people of Penipe, Ecuador living in and between several villages around the volcano Tungurahua and two resettlement communities built for people displaced by government operations following volcanic eruptions in 1999 and 2006. The stories take shape in ways that influence prevailing ideas about how disasters are produced and reproduced, in this case by shifting assemblages of the state first formed during Spanish colonialism attempting to settle (make “legible”) and govern Indigenous and campesino populations and places. The disasters unfolding around Tungurahua at the turn of the 21st century also provide lessons in the humanitarian politics of disaster—questions of deservingness, reproducing inequality, and the reproduction of bare life. But this is also a story of how people responded to confront hardships and craft new futures, about forms of cooperation to cope with and adapt to disaster, and the potential for locally derived disaster recovery projects and politics.

In the Shadow of Tungurahua: Disaster Politics in Highland Ecuador: Faas, A.J.; 9781978831568; Amazon.com: Books

A.J. Faas is an Associate Professor of Anthropology and Graduate Coordinator at San Jose State University. He studies disasters, environmental crises, and displacement and resettlement. He focuses on the anthropology of the state, postcolonialism, cooperation and reciprocity, economic anthropology, organizations and bureaucracy, and the politics of nature, culture, and memory.

Faas is co-editor, with Eric C. Jones, of the edited volume, Social Network Analysis of Disaster Response, Recovery, and Adaptation (2018); and co-editor, with Roberto E. Barrios, of the 2015 special issue of Human Organization on “The Applied Anthropology of Disasters.” He is the editor of the 2016 special issue of The Annals of Anthropological Practice on “Continuity and Change in the Applied Anthropology of Risk, Hazards, and Disaster” and the 2017 special issue of the Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology on “Changing Practices of Andean Cooperation and Reciprocity in the Twenty-First Century.”

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The SWAA Newsletter is published quarterly in Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter by the Southwestern Anthropological Association.

We welcome your submissions!

Submissions should be sent to: beerickson@fullerton.edu or to Barbra Erickson at CSU Fullerton, 800 N. State College Blvd. Division of Anthropology, Fullerton, CA 92831. Phone: (657) 278-5697

Due Date: 1st of the month of publication for Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter issues (approximately March 1, June 1, September 1, December 1).

Authors, please include a brief statement describing your interests and affiliation.

Newsletter Editor, Barbra Erickson.
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