President’s Message

Greetings, everyone!

Well, what a fantastic conference we had in Long Beach this year! I want to thank everyone who attended and made it such a great two days. Conferences don’t just magically take place—many people worked hard throughout the year, planning and taking care of all the details. I especially want to thank Jayne Howell, our outgoing President, and Janet Page-Reeves, our outgoing Board President for all their work. As always, Board members Andre Ye-rexian, Eric Canin, Jonathan Karpf, Hilarie Kelly, Michael Eissinger, Andrea Kalvesmaki, Suzanne Scheld, Lawrence Ramirez, Liam Espinoza-Zemlicka, and incoming grad student member Dolores Duran worked tirelessly to make everything run smoothly. I’m also so grateful to all the student volunteers, without whom our conferences would be much harder to run.

I’m excited [see photo] to be the SWAA president for 2023-2024. I’ve been involved with SWAA for about 30 years! Like some of you (both long-term and new members) I gave my very first professional conference paper at a SWAA conference as a grad student—it was a great experience, as I have always found SWAA to be such a welcoming group. That’s why I’m still here—so many good and interesting people to meet and interact with. This is my second time being president; the first was 2007-2008. Since that time, I’ve been the Newsletter Editor. Thus, I find myself wearing two hats right now. Speaking of which . . .

I hope all of you have seen the email [from Membership Chair Eric Canin, dated 5/27/23] about nominations for open Board positions [one is NL Editor]. If you’re new to SWAA, our Board terms of office go from conference to conference [most are 3 year terms]. So, if you are elected this summer, your official term will begin at the end of the 2024 conference. As a reminder, here are the open positions: Vice President and 2024 Program Chair; Secretary; Newsletter/Program Editor, and Graduate Student Member. Please consider nominating yourself [and see page 3 for full instructions].

I also want to encourage the presenters from the 2023 Long Beach conference to submit their manuscripts for consideration of publication in the Proceedings. Please see the SWAA website for full instructions.

The 2024 Conference: March 29-30, 2024

The theme for the 2024 conference is “Transcending Boundaries.” In newsletters to come and in the call for papers this fall, I’ll talk more about the theme. In the meantime, I want to put it out there so you can be thinking about it. As always, we attempt to have a broad theme that can be engaging not only to the traditional “four fields” but also to applied and practicing anthropologists. We’ll have more information on the SWAA website shortly.

Although we wanted to have the 2024 conference in San Diego, please believe me when I tell you that we just could not find a venue that was affordable that would also meet our needs [e.g. the number of session rooms, hotel room rate for attendees, cost of banquet and reception, parking, and so forth]. Therefore, we are having the 2024 conference at the Hyatt Regency in Garden Grove, California. Some of you will remember that we had the 2014 and 2019 conferences at this hotel, and it was a great location.

Enjoy the Newsletter!

Best wishes,
Barbra Erickson
SWAA President 2023-2024
In This Issue:
President’s Message, by Barbra Erickson ........................................ 1
Call for Nominations, SWAA Board positions [to begin 2024] .................. 3
Meet Our Newest Board Members, 2023 .............................................. 4
Images from the Long Beach Conference
[Photos by Hilarie Kelly and Daniela Gonzalez] ................................. 5
Student Paper Competition Winners .................................................. 8
Student Paper Competition Winner Abstracts ................................... 9
Student Poster Competition Winners .............................................. 10
Student Poster Competition Winner Abstracts ................................ 12
Museums and Exhibits
On the Seasonality of Museums and Exhibitions and Why It Matters
by Hilarie Kelly. ................................................................................ 13
First Place Student Paper Competition Paper
‘Hopping the Broom’ in Murphy Village: Matriarch Authority in Irish Traveler Marriages
By Zara Browne .............................................................................. 20
SWAA Board .................................................................................... 24
Membership Information .................................................................. 24
Want to Contribute to the Newsletter? ............................................. 24

Make this Newsletter Work for You!
♦ Send us events you want to announce, any items of interest to anthropologists, events in your departments, information about your publications, and more . . .
♦ Want to discuss a current event or issue?
♦ Have an interesting photo, or a book review?
♦ See last page for submission information

**Send postings for Facebook or Instagram to Social Media Chair Hilarie Kelly**
Call for Nominations/Self-Nomination for the SWAA Executive Board

The Southwestern Anthropological Association seeks to fill the following open board positions:

- **Vice President & 2024 Conference Program Chair** (1-year; the VP then becomes SWAA President for the 2025 conference).
- **Secretary** (3-year term)
- **Newsletter/Program Editor** (2024—future; 3 or more years)
- **Graduate Student Member-at-Large** 2024-2026 (2-year term)

Please consider nominating yourself or others (with their approval) for one of these positions.

If you wish to stand for election for any of these four positions, email your statement of interest to Terri A. Castaneda, SWAA Board Chair. TerriACastaneda@gmail.com

The deadline for receipt of these statements is: **Tuesday, August 1, 2023** (11 p.m. PST).

---

STATEMENT of INTEREST should contain the following:

**List the position for which you are running (choose from below)**

- **Vice President & 2024 Conference Program Chair**
  (1-year; the VP then becomes SWAA President for the 2025 conference).
- **Secretary** (3-year term)
- **Newsletter/Program Editor**: 2024—future (3 or more years)
- **Graduate Student Member-at-Large**: 2024-2026 (2-year term)

**Provide the following information:**

- **Last name, First name**
- **Academic background** (degrees and institutions)
- **Current institutional affiliation (or your employment)** if a non-university applied anthropologist; we encourage interest from all spheres of anthropological work).
- **Areas(s) of specialization/interest** within the field of anthropology
- **Other relevant background** (work/volunteer/field school experience/other board experience, etc.)
- **A personal statement** (no more than 250 words) outlining your motivation to serve SWAA in the capacity of board membership.
- **Optional**: you may also include a photograph to be placed alongside your statement.
Meet our newest Board Members!

**New Board Chair Terri Castaneda**
Terri is a Professor of Anthropology at CSU Sacramento. She was SWAA President 2006-2007, and was previously the Board Chair from 2010 to 2014.

(Photo taken by Daniela Gonzalez at the 2023 conference reception)

**Graduate Student Member Dolores Duran**
Dolores Duran is a current master’s student in Applied Anthropology at California State University, Long Beach. Her research focuses on feminism in science fiction and media anthropology. She is currently working on her thesis, which looks at the intersectionality of fourth-wave feminism in science fiction fandoms, specifically the fandom of the CW’s “The 100” (2014-2020). She has also applied her educational background by working in Hollywood as a qualitative researcher analyzing audience insights for various genres and forms of media. Dolores has a BA in Anthropology and a Minor in Communications from California State University, Dominguez Hills.

**Member-at-Large and Local Arrangements John Norvell**
John Norvell earned his doctorate in anthropology at Cornell University based on an ethnographic study of racial identity in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. His research and teaching interests include race and ethnicity, food, language, science and technology, religion, Latin America, and the United States. Current research projects focus on yoga as spiritual practice and amateur radio. He teaches cultural and linguistic anthropology at Mt. San Antonio College in the Los Angeles area. In addition to his new role on the SWAA Board, he currently serves as president of the Society for Anthropology in Community Colleges. Free moments find him hiking, camping, and baking sourdough bread.

**And...**

**Our most sincere thanks** to outgoing Board Chair Dr. Janet Page-Reeves for her service to SWAA.

She became the SWAA president in 2019, but due to COVID we had no conference in 2020, and a virtual conference with three guest speakers in 2021. After being the president for 3 years, in 2022 she was finally able to have the conference in Albuquerque NM that would have taken place in 2020. As she stepped down after the conference in 2022 from serving as president, she then became the Board Chair, serving 2022-23.

Janet: You are a rock star!
Images from the Conference
Photos courtesy of Daniela Gonzalez and Hilarie Kelly. These and other photos will be posted on the SWAA Facebook page and Instagram.
The Saturday night banquet with our guest speaker, Dr. James Diego Vigil
Hello! My name is Zara Browne, and I’m a fifth-year doctoral candidate of cultural anthropology at the University of Nevada, Reno. I'm especially interested in peripatetic religious separatist communities in the United States and Europe. My dissertation fieldwork is concerned with the Irish Travelers of Murphy Village, South Carolina, and how the community navigates aspects of legal consciousness and collective identity in a legally plural landscape. When I am not interviewing Travelers you may find me hiking, kissing my dog and cats, throwing knives, and going on spontaneous solo road trips.

Zhiyi Wang is currently a Ph.D. student in Anthropology at the University of California, Riverside. She is pursuing a Designated Emphasis in Southeast Asian Studies, with a focus on Cambodia. Her research project originates from an interest in the idea of urban in the form of infrastructure, specifically the urban transportation infrastructure and its capabilities in shaping people’s everyday lives and the urban landscape. She is also interested in how the current urban infrastructure, perceived as a site of technopolitis, is entangled with emerging smart city initiatives, playing an important role in local, regional, and international relations.

My name is Sarah Queneau, and I am currently studying anthropology at California State University, Fullerton. I have always been fascinated by anthropology because it allows me to explore diverse ways in which humans understand their world. During my studies, I have developed a strong interest in the topic of death and dying because I am curious about how different cultures approach these important aspects of life. Right now, I am pursuing a master's degree in cultural anthropology with a main focus on exploring the relationship between how cultures navigate death and dying and its implications for individual and societal well-being. In the future, I hope to contribute to the field of anthropology by furthering the knowledge and dialogue on death and dying with fellow scholars and by promoting education about death in communities, so that we can create positive changes and empower individuals to face these topics with knowledge and compassion.
**First Place Paper:** Zara Browne, University of Nevada, Reno
‘Hopping the Broom’ in Murphy Village: Matriarch Authority in Irish Traveler Marriages

Abstract: The Irish Travelers are a Catholic indigenous minority community from Ireland. They are often pejoratively referred to by “outsiders” as “Gypsies.” During the Great Famine of the mid-19th century, some Irish Traveler families migrated to the United States. The Irish Travelers dwelling in the separatist community, Murphy Village, geographically situated in South Carolina, practice what non-Irish Traveler social norms and South Carolina state laws regard as inappropriate or unlawful marriages. In Murphy Village, Irish Traveler female elders arrange marriages, sometimes between under-aged cousins, with dowry supplied from a clandestine source of income. These marital customs follow Irish Traveler laws, and female elders are regarded as the primary players in Irish Traveler kinship organization. Based on six months of ethnographic research, which consists of participant observation and open-ended interviews with Murphy Village participants, this paper explores how Murphy Village Irish Travelers conceptualize their customary marriage laws with what is considered legally and/or socially acceptable in the broader, non-Irish Traveler community. Furthermore, I examine the role of female elder authority in regulating separatist, traditional marriage laws in Murphy Village and how elder women strategize about and govern arranged marriages and divorces within their families. In the context of Irish Traveler marriages, I argue that the legal consciousness of a legally plural landscape is shaped by and preserves a collective identity—one which resists “outside” notions of legality and authority in terms of marriage and regards Irish Traveler female elders as power-wielding actors.

**Second Place Paper:** Zhiyi Wang, UC Riverside
Moving in/to the Smart City: Technology and Transportation Infrastructure in Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Abstract: Phnom Penh’s “City Bus,” as part of its 2018 Smart City Network initiative, is one of Cambodia’s hallmark public transportation projects. However, few residents choose to use this service. This paper explores the interaction between smart technology and urban infrastructure in a smart city initiative in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. It seeks to understand why the “smart” buses are ambiguous infrastructure, desired by some and rejected by others. Based on preliminary fieldwork conducted on the bus and with residents in Phnom Penh in Summer 2022, along with archival research on media discourses of the bus development, I approach smart transportation not through the short-term lens of “failed” infrastructure but through the long-term lens of “glitches” in a system that is constantly becoming “smarter.” I draw on Henri Lefebvre’s idea of “polyrhythmia” to argue for attention to the incompleteness or “arrrhythmia” of smart technologies and their ongoing “debugging” to optimize performance. In doing so, I consider the social, political, and symbolic significance of a public bus system that is constantly under renovation or technological “updating.” “Polyrhythmia,” as a method and theory for studying urban mobility and state modernization projects that are meant to bring prosperity to post-disaster Cambodia, raises critical questions about the limitations of “smart” fixes to social and economic problems encountered in the urban Global South.

**Third Place Paper:** Sarah Queneau, CSU Fullerton
Celebrating the Spiritual Border

Abstract: Many people refer to the afterlife as a place where one goes when they die and leave their physical body behind. Phrases like “Heaven above,” or “the other side,” or “underworld” give an indication in one’s mind that it is another location. If this place is another location, it then follows that there is a border between these worlds that acts as a barrier, where the living and dead are unable to fully interact. While some religions and cultures believe that this border cannot be crossed, others believe that during a certain part of the year, the border between realms weakens, allowing spirits to enter the world of the living. Using secondary research, participant observation, and interviews, the focus of this research is to analyze how people perceive spiritual borders and their celebratory reactions to the removal or thinning of said border in relation to the respective cultures. This research will include the origins, beliefs, and practice variations of the Ghost Festival, known as Obon in Japan, Samhain, also known as Halloween in the United States, and Dia de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, in Mexico.
Mary Reush is an MA Candidate in Applied Anthropology at California State University, Long Beach. Her current work documents how fat women resist marginalization in virtual spaces. Her areas of interest include critical medical anthropology, fat studies, digital anthropology, resistance studies, and feminist theory.

Mary Reush is an MA Candidate, California State University, Long Beach CA

**Methods:**
- **Observation:** Over eight sessions, I observed and recorded more than 60 videos, documenting language use, content themes, and responses to the video.
- **Participation:** I created a video in which I addressed medical bias, posted it, and engaged in informal discussions with people who responded to it.
- **Informal Discussions:** I recorded over a dozen conversations in comment sections and direct messages.
- **In-depth Interviews:** I conducted semi-structured interviews with two TikTok creators and fat activists via Zoom, focusing on their life histories, activism, and experiences as online creators.
- **Visual Analysis:** I categorized images taken from TikTok during sessions (a total of 317 images from 240 videos) to codify the themes uncovered in the initial observations and interviews.

**Theoretical Framework:** Everyday resistance

Everyday resistance is about how people act in their everyday lives in ways that might undermine power. Everyday resistance is not easily recognized as public and collective resistance, but it is typically hidden, disguised, individual, and not politically articulated...[Vethagen & Johansson, 2013:2]

**Early Results:** [Some identified themes]
- Community of Practice: On TikTok, thousands of fat women have created a space where they share their experiences of living in a marginalized body, which many refer to as FatTok.
- Language: FatTok has its own distinct discourse, signaled through hashtags. These hashtags index different domains or categories of experience for fat women. For example, the term #FatTok comes from creators who wish to identify within this community...[Vethagen & Johansson, 2013:2]
- FatTok and Gender: FatTok is a highly gendered space; with 95% of the documented videos posted by women or female-presenting creators, with a smaller subset of gender-nonbinary people...[Vethagen & Johansson, 2013:2]
- Taking Up Space: Existing within the space by posting videos or even commenting, subjects’ women’s experiences...[Vethagen & Johansson, 2013:2]
- Empowerment: While not a fully “safe space,” FatTok is a space where women feel empowered to share their experiences and respond to harassment at a higher rate than in other spaces...[Vethagen & Johansson, 2013:2]

**Preliminary Conclusion:** Each day on FatTok, women upload videos highlighting different aspects of their experience living in a marginalized body. These videos reflect the gendered stigma that fat women experience in their lives, and the interpersonal harassment they endure...[Vethagen & Johansson, 2013:2]

**Next Steps:** Research is ongoing; currently focused on exploring intersections of race, ethnicity, and disability status.

"I can’t speak for the rest of the world. But in America, we are conditioned to believe that smaller bodies are morally superior bodies, that they are more attractive, that they are more deserving...."

-Breonna Grey, 2022

"You know, we talk about resistance and all of that...sometimes just existence is resistance." [Brew, 2022]
My name is Michele Falk. I am an undergraduate Anthropology student and also the office manager for the Department of Recreation Administration at CSU Fresno. My emphasis is in cultural anthropology, with a special interest in food and culinary applications. I also work with an emeriti professor cataloging 15 or so years of folklore collections that will be sold to the Library of Congress later this year, and play contrabass clarinet with the Wind Symphony of Clovis. In my spare time, I have a small food blog (forktravel.com) and give cooking demonstrations (live and videotaped) for the Fresno County Library several times a year. I am a few semesters away from completing the Bachelor's degree, with the goal of teaching an Anthropology-based cooking class when I'm done. I find the commonalities of food across cultures fascinating, and enjoy helping people connect whenever possible. On a personal note, I am married, have two children, three grandchildren, three dogs, and two cats, and I collect cookbooks (currently around 1,400, with the oldest being from 1865).

INTRODUCTION
This project examines the relationship between students’ information seeking behaviors and their food choices. Specifically, how do Fresno State students find nutrition and cooking information and how does that affect their food and food preparation decisions? When people do have access to fresh food and time to cook it, how do they decide what to cook?

THEORY
How do we make decisions on what to eat? In the current college culture, many factors come into play when students need to make food and preparation choices. Understanding how material conditions such as access to food and technology, lack of available time or facilities, and cost of food influence those decisions. These practices are further influenced by factors like socioeconomic status and cultural background.

RESULTS
• Three main challenges for students: time, cost, and access to prepare and store food.
• Preferred information sources for food choice and preparation were social media and internet sites.
• Take-out meals were preferred over restaurants due to cost and time.
• TikTok and Instagram reels were the most popular; YouTube and cooking videos were viewed as more trustworthy.
• Students use social media for quick information regarding food choices due to lack of time and easy access.

CONCLUSIONS
Preliminary findings show students prefer social media over traditional sources (family or cookbooks) when making food or preparation choices. Social media is readily available to most college students, while the preferred platform is a matter of personal preference. TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and Pinterest were mentioned as the resources of choice when making food and preparation decisions.

Additional factors that directly influence students’ food choices are a lack of:
• time needed to purchase and prepare food due to school and work
• access to a kitchen and/or storage
• healthy food that is less expensive

Survey respondents indicated they utilized pre-made or fast food that they viewed on social media because of time and cost, even when consuming such resulted with negative health feelings.

Study results will be shared with the Student Pantry and Health Center to help target resources and messaging to the student population.

REFERENCES
~Third Place Poster~
“What Gene Editing Could Mean for Our Society”
By Sahar Zahir

Photo, Bio, and Poster not available for Sahar

ABSTRACTS of WINNING POSTERS

**First Place Poster:** Mary Reush, CSU Long Beach
**FatTok: Everyday Resistance in a Virtual Space**

Abstract: Western attitudes about fatness, often articulated through medical discourse and “healthism,” or the idea that health is something we each have the power to control and a moral duty to pursue, positions the fat body as a vessel of ill-health and self-imposed degradation. To live in a fat body, particularly in a fat female body, in the West, is always to be “other,” perpetually violating the social contract of thinness, subject to the repercussions of this violation. Consequences include high rates of discrimination in jobs and housing, medical disparities and higher mortality, and harassment in various settings. My research explores resistance to this position in online spaces, which represent a brave new world to explore social action and cultural movements because of the way they collapse temporal and geographic distances. Starting from the position that inhabiting a fat female body is by its very nature a transgressive state of being, this poster documents the experiences of unruly fat women (coining Roxanne Gay’s 2017 term) on the social media platform TikTok who refuse to comply with the oppression that they experience across a variety of cultural, economic, medical, political, and social fields.

**Second Place Poster:** Michele Falk, CSU Fresno
**What Information Sources Do Fresno State Students Use When Making Food Choices and Preparation Decisions?**

Abstract: How do we make decisions on what to eat? This project examines the relationship between students’ information seeking behaviors and their food choices. Specifically, how do Fresno State students find nutrition and cooking information and how does that affect their food and food preparation decisions? The objectives for this study seek to explore that when people do have access to fresh food and time to cook it, how do they decide what to cook? The data collection methods included flyers with web link and QR code to an online questionnaire and a follow-up virtual interview. The flyer distribution consisted of posting the flyers around campus, in the Health Center and Student Pantry, and emailed to students by faculty. The interview subjects were randomly chosen based on voluntary opt-in to participate in an interview, and sorted by self-described low, medium, or high internet use. Given the diverse population of Fresno State, the demographic ratios of the study participants were very similar to that of the University. Preliminary findings show a link between social media being a primary influence on student food choices and preparation information, regardless of the age of the participants. The results of this study will enable the Student Pantry and Health Center to target their information messaging more effectively to students.

**Third Place Poster:** Sahar Zahir, Saddleback College
**What Gene Editing Could Mean for Our Society**

Abstract: Gene editing could become the next advancing step in our society but many oppositions have arisen to the practice. CRISPR, a collection of DNA sequences which allows for the cutting and repairing of DNA, has become the most recent development in gene editing. For modern medicine, that could mean things like correcting major organ defects such as the heart or lungs but it also reaches into realms of correcting neurodivergent defects. Although benefits could be seen from this, the detriments seem to outweigh them. When it comes to the neurodivergent communities, we must be careful and sensitive with our approach towards gene editing. For one, to claim that these differences need correction poses a problem within itself. Not to mention, if we were to “correct” every genetic difference that we are exposed to, there would be no variation or diversity present in our society. Diversity is very important to a society and its presence should be achievable through multiple means to insure a well rounded society.
On the Seasonality of Museums and Exhibitions, and Why It Matters

While those of us in the academic world can now celebrate the onset of our summer break, even those outside of academia can feel the allure of warmer weather and associated travel and entertainment opportunities that come with the season. This seasonal pattern (and privilege) enjoyed by the Global North has a world-wide impact and inspired this column.

In a past column from January this year (2023), I promised to describe items on display at the renovated Mission De Oro Hotel in Santa Nella, California, as well as the unusual history of the hotel itself. Of particular interest to many anthropologists might be a small collection of California Indian basketry, a fascinating and tightly-packed wine museum, and a surprising link to Tepoztlán and the Mexican Revolution. The story raises some interesting issues regarding how art, architecture, and object displays play a role in how we remember the past...or sometimes selectively forget it.

The Mission de Oro Hotel is not actually a mission or even associated with one in California. The name is clearly meant to evoke a nostalgia for early California history and its aesthetic, which has attracted tourists and immigrants to the state for decades. The architecture, especially the bell tower, which is beautifully lit at night and “rings” on the hour during the day, is very attractive, as are the grounds, which includes a small vineyard and lovely landscaping as well as shady gazebos (kiosco) and an expansive patio with tile decoration. Western-themed art, especially statuary and paintings, are prevalent in the interiors of the buildings. A single, crowded display of California Indian basketry (identified as being Yurok) placed in an antique-style wooden cabinet was located in the hotel dining room, but signage was minimal and no one on site knew anything about it. It contained some amazing pieces that deserve more study and better signage.

The Mission de Oro Hotel includes a small but packed wine museum, open 24 hours to guests. Here, the signage is fairly detailed and the displays, taken together, provide a fairly holistic view of the history and process of winemaking in this general region of California (especially the Greater Bay Area). Hundreds of tools and machines reflect the evolving technologies of growing and vinting, while all manner of paraphernalia give viewers a glimpse of many material elements of wine culture. The sheer number and variety of wine-cork openers is impressive. Archival photos, magazine illustrations, and diagrams illustrate many of the dynamic social and historical elements of wine culture as well. I did not know that Chinese laborers played a role in California winemaking, but apparently they did. A small reference guide was available on site but I hope that the hotel will put some additional
resources into curating and maintaining this amazing collection and in producing a catalog for wider distribution to the public. Perhaps they will, given that the wine industry has grown tremendously in the Central Valley in recent decades and may continue to do so, depending on how global climate change impacts the region and the state’s water supply.

"The Vintage in California". Famous print from the Harpers Monthly magazine Oct 5th, 1878. It illustrates the historic winery of Buena Vista in Sonoma, Cal. It is showing its founder, Agostin Haraszthy, during the Fall wine crush with Chinese laborers working the harvest and is illustrating the process of wine harvesting at this time in history. (ADV59)

Clockwise, from top left: Chinese wine press labor in Harpers magazine illustration; Signage for Harpers illustration; Brandy still; Signage for brandy still; Wine making machinery.

19th C. BRANDY OR COGNAC STILL.

This exceptional, finely crafted copper piece is an “alembic” style still the design of which goes back to the 9th century. This device is a simple distillation apparatus often related to the study of alchemy. The design with its “onion head” shape is typical to earlier ones. This one dates to around 1900 or earlier. It is two pieces fitted together, hand hammered with dovetail construction. D146.
The backstory of Mission de Oro Hotel turns out to be more interesting than I realized while there. It was originally built by Jesús Monroy (1932-2017), who was born in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico. His father was a general in the Mexican Revolution serving under Emiliano Zapata, and was subsequently recognized by the Mexican Government. Jesús (Jesse) was educated in Mexico, began a career there in business, and later served in the US Army. He relocated to California, working in restaurants in the Bay Area, until he was invited to partner in opening a restaurant in Los Banos, in the Central Valley. When Interstate Highway 5 was completed, Jesse managed to build a new hotel and restaurant next to it at Santa Nella. That was 1974. It was built in the style of the zocalo of Tepoztlan in Morelos, Mexico, where Jesse’s father had been stationed during the Mexican Revolution. He named it Mission Tesoro. (You can read more about this remarkable man and his close connection to both the Mexican and Mexican American community here: https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/mercedsunstar/name/jes-s-monroy-obituary?id=15433566 The story of how Mission Tesoro became the Mission de Oro hotel of today can be found on the hotel’s website, here: https://hotelmissiondeoro.com/our-story/ There, you can take a virtual tour of the history of the area and the hotel. This particular element of the website could use some graphic improvements, but it demonstrates the potential for private establishments to contribute to archiving and curating some of the most interesting evidence of local history for future generations. Historical archaeologists, take note.

It has been a year since I visited this hotel, immediately adjacent to Interstate 5, which is the major long-distance artery through California’s Great Central Valley. (This graphic from the website of the American Museum of Natural History illustrates the dramatic seasonal fluctuations in temperature and water distribution there. https://www.amnh.org/learn-teach/curriculum-collections/grace/grace-tracking-water-from-space/california-central-valley) Santa Nella is close to the turn-off point for the Pacheco Pass, through which the planned bullet train between Southern and California will perhaps be built, causing some concern among environmentalists and local residents in the coastal mountain range there. (https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/09/us/california-high-speed-rail-politics.html ) A bullet train could eventually bring considerably more business to this hotel, which is designed to be a destination in itself, with entertainment options, art, the wine museum, and conference facilities. Santa Nella is also a suitable stop-off point for those travelling between such important population centers as Sacramento, the San Francisco/San Jose area, and “Greater Los Angeles” – which might indicate anywhere from Santa Barbara to the Mexican border. When I visited the hotel, I was on a week-long trip to and from the annual Strawberry Festival in Grass Valley, a musical camping extravaganza in the Sierras, halfway between Sacramento and Reno. This Memorial Day festival has been going on for forty-one years and is a multi-generational and multi-genre cultural experience. As with Pow Wows and Pacific Islander festivals, late spring through summer is the peak season for such outdoor festivals, which are well worth anthropological attention.
Clockwise, from top left: Impromptu jamming; Allison Russell Group performing on stage in the forest, Nevada County Fairgrounds; Camping and listening in the forest; Camping “the Strawberry way”—the festival has evolved a friendly code of conduct; The forest dwarfs everything; Samantha Fish on stage.
Travel and serendipity are features of the life ethnographic. When family members in California’s Central Coast region took me to the Baileyana, Tangent & True Myth Tasting Room outside of San Luis Obispo [at right] I was intrigued to find that it is housed in a one-room schoolhouse that was built in 1909 and once served the historic rural community of Independence, located in the Edna Valley area. The school closed in 1956. The schoolhouse/tasting room is now on private land situated in rolling hills filled with vineyards and cow pastures, and is open to the public from 10 am to 5 pm daily.

In a previous newsletter I described some of the wineries along the Russian River that have created small wine museums on their premises. Wineries these days may feature a varying quality and amount of information and materials on the rich histories of the surrounding areas of California in which they are located. Some wineries flesh-out these rich histories, while others use only a few “antique” material items and archival photos to lend an aura of authenticity and distinctive character to their brands. Vineyards and winemaking came much more recently to some areas in California than others, starting with the missions and expanding ever since. The unsavory facts about early land appropriation from Native California Indians and the coercive exploitation of their labor are often left out of wine-making historical narratives. The cultural interactions between indigenous peoples, early Spanish and Mexican settlers, Californios, and later immigrants from the eastern United States, Europe, Africa and Asia in relation to winemaking could be a fascinating read, so I welcome recommendations from readers on what resources might be available on this specific topic of local histories and cultural impacts of winemaking. The anthropology of wine is a current topic of serious interest more broadly in our discipline, as multiple publications make clear. As Kerri Lesh (2019) wrote in Anthropology News, “Wine allows us to enjoy a connection between a people, their culture and land, and our palate. It reflects much about and in response to a culture, but also takes on agency when used as an instrument to shape social relations and practices.” [https://www.anthropology-news.org/articles/anthropomorphizing-wine-in-our-current-climate/], Lesh, Kerri, “Anthropomorphizing Wine in our Current Climate.” Anthropology News website, February 25, 2019. DOI: 10.1111/AN.1100.

The history of human wine consumption encompasses all four fields of anthropology, as a recent article in Sapiens describes. (https://www.sapiens.org/archaeology/evolution-wine/) A global perspective is offered by the 2013 anthology, Wine and Culture: Vineyard to Glass, edited by Rachel Black and Robert C. Ulin (Bloomsbury Academic Publishers.) I would like to see more on the interactive culture dynamics of wine at the local level here in California.

The Wine History Project of San Luis Obispo County includes on its website only a small amount of information on the Independence Schoolhouse and the rural community it served, but offers some detail on how the land itself in Edna Valley was transferred from Spanish to Mexican control, then rapidly taken over by wealthy “gringos” following the Mexican American War, continuing through the discovery of gold, and the admission of California as a state in 1850. The project further documents in much more detail the development of ranches, towns, and – later – vineyards. https://winehistoryproject.org/edna-valley-ava/ None of this really explains the relevance of having the old schoolhouse serve as a winery tasting room today, but perhaps that story will be expanded in the future. For now, the old building essentially symbolizes “tradition” in a highly competitive industry where winemaking arrived relatively recently.

To get an idea of what an actual one-room schoolhouse of this area looked like when still functional, visitors interested in more than wine-making history are better advised to travel just a little further north to the town of Arroyo Grande and explore the fully restored Santa Manuela Schoolhouse [below], built in 1901 and operational through 1957 before being relocated from the neighboring Lake Lopez area when a dam was built and local ranches were flooded. The schoolhouse is maintained by the South County Historical Society, which also presides over four other historical museums and a research library on the same block in town, known as Heritage Square. https://www.southcountyhistory.org/museums.html
The story behind this schoolhouse suggests some of the historical power dynamics in California. Once again, it is a story of sequential displacement and rural gentrification. A 2011 county visitor’s guide explains:

Lopez came into being in 1969 flooding farmland, strawberry fields, and all, to become the water supply for the growing Five Cities area. Two Chumash villages located near the present dam are now under 160 feet of water as is the original ranch belonging to Juan and Jesus Lopez. Trees and buildings were removed in preparation for the flood. It wasn’t long though before area residents recognized that this was a great recreation spot and Lopez Lake became a popular county park. https://www.slovisitorsguide.com/exploring-lopez-lake/.

This pdf titled “The Lynching” tells a darker story about the area and its social divides: https://slorrm.com/2017/The-Lynching.pdf This blog site notes that the dam creating the lake impacted some community members in the area, leaving behind few structural clues on the social life that was lost: https://griebranchlife.wordpress.com/2016/09/23/vasquez-canyon-lake-lopez-history/.

On July 4, 2023, a contingent of Chinelos Dancers will be participating in the Huntington Beach 4th of July Parade, the largest Independence Day celebration west of the Mississippi. Chinelos are Mexican dancers whose tradition goes back to Spanish colonization. They are especially popular in Morelos state, where several Huntington Beach families have their roots, and in the Mexican diaspora. Attendance is free and the parade itself is also broadcast on ABC television and may be seen online. I have written about Chinelos dancers, the origin and meaning of the art form, and the cultural politics of these performances in a previous newsletter. The entire parade is a complex and highly entertaining cultural exhibition, with iconic “Americana” displays being a central feature. This being Southern California, participation by local groups displaying Pacific Island, Asian, and Mexican dance has increased over the years, but only the Chinelos dancers have evoked controversy among a few locals. This, too, is part of the local cultural dynamic. I plan to attend, so if any reader is interested in more information, email me at hilarie.kelly@gmail.com.
The Bowers Museum in Santa Ana, Orange County, California is a real jewel of a cultural museum that has been featured in this column before. During the month of June they are in a slight lull, preparing to open up two new exhibits in mid-summer, but there are continuing attractions at the Bowers that are worth stopping in for any time. Annual memberships make it easier to casually and repeatedly drop by for exhibitions and events. For example, I will be renewing my $60 annual educator’s membership, and include a $20 annual fee for parking. Check the Bowers’ website for further details: https://www.bowers.org/.

The two new exhibitions opening at the Bowers over the summer are Ubuhle Women: Beadwork and the Art of Independence, which opens July 1 and runs through August 27, 2023; and the 112th Gold Medal Exhibition of Impressionist Art, which opens July 9, 2023 and runs through Sept. 10. I will be viewing the Ubuhle exhibition, composed of contemporary beaded canvasses made by a community of South African women, because I was entranced by the concept and this single promotional image [below].

There are eight permanent exhibitions and many events and lectures throughout the year. Unfortunately, the exceptional Sacred Realms: Temple Murals by Shashi Dhoj Tulachan will be out of view until January 2024. (Information on this worthy exhibit can be found at https://www.bowers.org/index.php/upcoming-exhibition/sacred-realms-temple-murals-by-shashi-dhoj-tulachan-from-the-gayle-and-edward-p-roski-collection ). I will attend the reopening and describe those remarkable pieces (with photos, if permitted) in a future column. Meanwhile, this delightful article on a California-based Nepali artist working in the Tibetan tradition but with a diasporic twist is a lively counterpoint and introduction to the form: https://hyperallergic.com/821401/tserin-sherpa-corrupted-thangka-art/.

On June 17 there will be a lecture at the Bowers on “Two Spirit Artists Imagining Otherwise” with Damien Paul Montaño, a lecturer at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo who identifies also as having Yome/Papago/Purepecha ancestry. https://www.bowers.org/index.php/programs/event/3516-two-spirit-artists-imagining-otherwise-with-damien-paul-montano Attendance and online viewing is moderately priced. The Bowers has expanded its online menu of virtual offerings and these can be enjoyed even by those not visiting the museum itself. Please browse their website for other virtual opportunities.

Why does seasonality matter? Seasonality in general is part of the rhythm of human life, and of life in general. Many anthropologists and other social scientists have pointed out that ignoring seasonal factors can lead to avoidable cultural errors, both academic and practical, that are especially problematic when it comes to policy-making and development planning. A large proportion of significant, recurring cultural events are seasonal and originated as such, but there are also ongoing practical seasonal considerations to participating in events, such as accessibility, transportation, and coordination with work calendars and social circumstances. Temporality is socially constructed, and not just a by-product of climate fluctuations and other “natural environment” factors. (See this helpful resource: https://culanth.org/fieldsights/the-anthropology-of-time-reading-list-in-the-making). Temporality affects our willingness and capability for partaking in a wide variety of potentially enriching activities. For example, the renowned Louvre was closed both times I passed through Paris in the early summer, much to my disappointment, as one of my favorite childhood books was my father’s copy of the classic 1951 book, Art Treasures of the Louvre by Rene Huyghe. Those closures were related to important renovations and necessary rotations of exhibits which are often scheduled just before the heaviest summer crowds begin. These are issues that museum professionals are quite familiar with, but members of the general public do not always have the luxury of planning their schedules accordingly. My suggestion, as we head into summer, is that we give some thought to planning our time to take optimal advantage of the plethora of museum exhibitions and cultural festivals available in this season. Do a little research. Beyond that, we might also think about how to incorporate more such activities into our schedules and lives beyond the summer months.
Introduction

“Traveling men are only afraid of two things: the police and Traveling women.” This half-joke was made by an Irish Traveler participant in his family living room during my preliminary ethnographic fieldwork that took place between March and August 2022. The participant, aged 59, requested to go by the pseudonym “Terrible Traveler”; he said that’s what the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) indictment officer named him during the Murphy Village Traveler raids of 2016. Terrible Traveler is one of many Travelers who uses means like his nickname to reclaim autonomy and dignity.

My dissertation project is an ethnographic examination of a self-described minority Catholic community known as the Irish Travelers, or as they more simply refer to themselves, the Travelers, living in the separatist community of Murphy Village, in South Carolina. Murphy Village holds approximately 1,500-3,000 Travelers, depending on who is counting, as Travelers do not exactly enjoy U.S. demographic efforts. The Travelers are historically itinerant and share parallels with Romani communities such as an inclination towards separatism, a clandestine economy, experiences of marginalization and stigma vis-à-vis the pejorative “Gypsy” label, and a collective identity. In Murphy Village, Travelers maintain an identity apart from what they view as mainstream America, or as Travelers refer to it, “the outside,” yet grapple with being geographically and legally situated within its cultural, state, and federal confines. Conflicts between Murphy Village, the outside, and the state sometimes result in FBI raids, female minors being seized by the Department of Social Services (DSS), and societal discrimination. Cultural nearsightedness on the part of authorities has resulted in lingering distrust and trauma in the Murphy Village community.

Research Methodology

I have been conducting ethnographic research in Murphy Village for approximately 13 months – part-time since March 2022 and full-time since September 2022. So far in my fieldwork, Traveler participants talk frequently about gender roles and female authority, especially in the realm of kinship and marriage. Through participant observation and ethnographic interviews, I have been examining Traveler marriage practices, how these practices differ from what they view as outside marriage norms, and the ways in which marriage hinges upon the elder women in the community. I attend weekly services and ceremonies at Murphy Village’s St. Edward Church, accompanying participants as they shop for outfits for important religious and social events and carefully choose their unique domestic adornments. I join women and families at their doctor’s appointments, share meals at participants’ homes, attend weddings, and their most frequently talked about, “parties.” In these contexts, I consider how individuals—especially female heads of households—negotiate and conceive of their marriage rites in relation to the outside, the state of South Carolina, and the federal government.

In my undocumented conversations with Travelers, I have been learning about how and when arrangement betrothals are contracted, how concepts like class and relatedness affect marriage; what solemnizes a marriage union, how dowry is negotiated, and what importance the Catholic Church and the priest have in these matters; what strategies Traveler boys, girls, and their corresponding families employ to declare their marital desirability; and what divorce entails. I also learned how Travelers think about and/or respond to the reactions of non-Travelers—or as the Travelers refer to them, ‘country people’—to their marriage practices; how the state might impact their marriage practices and how they might grapple with these challenges; and ultimately, how matriarchs manage all of this.

Literature

Carol Silverman, a noteworthy scholar of Roma societies and one of the original members of the Gypsy Lore Society examines Balkan Roma weddings and family roles in her research. In her 2012 book, Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora, she highlights how kinship and marriage practices underscore identity in traditionally itinerant communities, and how critical the role of women is in marital survival. For Travelers in both Europe and the United States, marriage practices similarly reflect these values. Gmelch and Gmelch’s 1976 ethnographic research on the Travelers in Ireland explains how social norms required Travelers to marry within their community (2012:226). Likewise, in the United States, “because of a limited pool of marriage prospects, marriages among teenaged cousins are relatively common” (Dowds 2013:9).
In the 1970s, anthropologist Jared Harper conducted some of the only ethnographic studies of the Murphy Village Travelers. In his chapter, “The Politics of Marriage” (1977:133), he highlighted the importance of marital practices to Traveler Catholicism. Harper’s research is one of the few works other than Andereck (1988), Dowds (2013), and Stygles (2009) that includes details on Murphy Village marriage practices. However, this previous literature has not yet addressed the role of elder women in Traveler marriage. I am parting ways with the previous scholars who discuss endogamy and criminality, and briefly summarize marriage practices, exploring how elder Traveler women are suppliants for outside societal, state, and governmental authority in ideas about marriage and family. This topic is of importance to the sparse prior Murphy Village research because it highlights the gender-specific dynamics of influence in the community and the unique power Murphy Village Traveler women wield in the face of what they deem as their insignificance in the United States arena. Rather than adhering to what country people and the state consider to be valid marriages and family systems, Travelers respect and obey their matriarchs. This inner societal system of authority based on age, gender, and family devotions combats outside oppressive forces which misunderstand, disregard, and homogenize a culture.

**Arrangement and Marriage**

Within the structure of arrangements and marriage exist many forms, which serve different social and economic objectives. An example of a technique Traveler mothers use is called “placing.” A mother who has arranged dozens of family marriages explained,

> [Trading is] when you have two children, like me and my brother; and my mother, a suitor’s mother, and aunt put it together. My husband’s sister and my husband was marrying me and my brother – a ‘double head’ thing. My husband’s mother was getting a man for her girl and a girl for her son. The advantage of this was even if they separated (her brother and her husband’s sister) she would then have to tell her husband to leave her ‘because that’s just how it is.’ If she and her husband separated, her brother would have to go back to his wife and repair his own marriage to now repair the other couple’s marriage. This is so no one divorces. They end up going back because one starts loving another one and he insists to his mother, the person in charge of it all, ‘I love her, I want to be with her.’

One couple puts pressure on the broken-up couple to get back together, so they don’t have to split up. With placing, one couple splits or has problems having the other couple break up until they work it out. It can help settle disputes but it’s also a huge risk because a family can lose both couples too. These strategies exist in Traveler camps in both Europe and in the United States, according to the participants I work with.

Traveler marriages are paramount to the survival of the community, and the responsibility for marriage arrangements and marriage customs falls upon the elder women of the betrothed families – namely, the mothers and grandmothers of the couple. When a couple divorces, this rite too is dealt with by the matriarchs. In my research, I want to contextualize the specific constructs of the ways in which matriarchs in the community navigate aspects of class, inter-family connections, relatedness, dowry, and love in order to safeguard their younger kin and preserve their community’s history and future. Women play the primary role in arranging marriage partially because the men spend the majority of the year “on the road” while the women run the family and social frameworks (Harper 1977:134). Traveler communities in both Europe and the United States are matrilocal. The husband moves into the wife’s family home inhabited by her various family members and starts to work with and under the older men of the wife’s family.

Based on my ethnographic fieldwork, most Travelers are arranged for marriage when they are in the womb and families discuss who would be appropriate for whom based upon “clan” (immediate family marked by a “last name nickname”) name lineage and reputation, familial alliances, status, and relatedness. Other Travelers who have yet to align potential unions devise scopling out marriage prospects at important community events such as confirmation, First Communion, weddings, “coming out” parties to promote young men for dowry (Harper 1977:141), “coming of age” celebrations, teenaged boys’ “car parties,” and informal gatherings in their homes and out in “the Village.” An example of the latter from my participant observation occurs spontaneously in Murphy Village: Travelers engage in social networking activities known as struttin’ and loopin’. These are gender-specific, female and male respectively, dating strategies that involve Traveler mothers dressing up their teenaged-daughters and directing them to walk, or “strut” in groups in the village, showing off their beauty and expensive attire to potentially interested boys and more importantly, the mothers of teenaged Traveler boys. Loopin’ consists of groups of Traveler boys driving in the Village in nice work trucks and luxury lorches (cars) to sooney (look at) and interact with struttin’ girls and other loopin’ Travelers “on the road.” During an interview with a 63-year-old female Traveler who will go by the pseudonym Mary, she describes arrangement planning: “You look around and see what would be the best for her. The girls don’t have a lot of say but you talk to them. Talk about nice looking boys. Mainly the mother runs it. The father has to approve it, but the mom runs it.”

Based on my preliminary fieldwork, Travelers engage in lospy (marriage) ceremonies they refer to as “hopping the broom.” These entail cultural customs that are available in Traveler laws but are not state recognized and bypass legal and religious regulations. For example, the couple’s family will announce the union over the phone and on social media in order for it to spread by “word-of-mouth.” The family will then throw a party, which counts as the wedding. In Traveler eyes, announcing the marriage formalizes the union, and it is recognized by the community. Requirements of state marriage laws (and consequently state divorce laws) are not considered, and state marriage licenses are not pursued. This separation of marriage from the state ties to legal consciousness and Traveler identity.
In an interview, Mary told me about how marriage happens: “It used to be just by law and have a party then get married at the church awhile later. Originally in South Carolina the marriage age was fourteen for girls, sixteen for boys. They changed it because of the Travelers and now it’s sixteen.” In my investigation into South Carolina state laws, I discovered a common law statute that has existed since South Carolina's inception; it allowed children as young as twelve-years-old to marry with parental consent. Attorney General Charlie Condon held a news conference in Aiken County on March 16, 1997, to announce plans to amend the law. He said then that common law in South Carolina "may well provide a loophole to allow Irish Traveler arrangements" (Folker 2016). While Travelers typically marry at around the age of sixteen and above since those amendments, Traveler matriarchs persist in navigating around state involvement in Traveler marriages. They accomplish this with “hop the broom” marriages, which involve elaborate arrangement and marriage rituals in Murphy Village yet are unrecognized in the United States. The Travelers heed to their matriarchs rather than societal, state, and governmental enforcers. Mary continued:

They want them to get married, they want them to have children. Because we know they will have family to take care of them, we know they will be watched and taken care of. They can’t work or go to school. We take them out of school, so they don’t marry a country man and leave. We don’t put up for retirement because we know our children will take care of us. We pay dowry for the man. Show them off and both families to show their children to others. To prepare the boys and girls for marriage. It’s all about being fancy. Bling bling. Who can do the best. It has always been like that. We don’t have engagements, or men get down on a knee with a ring and proposing. The ‘hop the broom’ marriages never happened until they couldn’t get them married legally because of age. Travellers have always had a law that women must be married to have sex, or as we say, ‘live with each other.’ Our church is what matters when it comes to how we see legally married. We don’t get married legally until we know it’s for good and there will be no divorce.

Essentially, “hop the broom” marriages serve multiple purposes.

**Endogamy**

Traveler families almost unanimously eschew marriage with country people. When I talk about marriage values and taboos in Traveler culture, it seems that most Travelers equate their survival as a people with marriage endogamy. In my interviews, I ask about the importance of marrying within the Murphy Village microcosm. One female participant answered, “[It is] very important [not to marry outside] because we’re afraid they’re going to take him away. Our family will leave, our children will be gone, our grandchildren will be gone. We will hardly see them.” Travelers often talk about how things have changed over time in Murphy Village, marriage included. An elder mother of five and grandmother of seven commented on what she sees as most important to Traveler women in arrangement considerations: “[Our rules] in marriage first off is not mixing with country people, not allowing your children to mix, and Travelers marrying only Travelers was a huge law back in the day. If they break a law they shunned or black balled. It will reflect on their children and what kind of family would want to be a part of their family?”

**Class, Status, and Appearance**

A key social advertising strategy that is limited to Traveler female elders is what they refer to as “braggin’ on someone.” Class and status are prevalent in Traveler communities and critical to marriage success. Within Traveler camps there is a known hierarchy of class based on clan last name nicknames and the reputation inherited from generations before. Murphy Village Travelers often refer to the “wigs,” or the high class, wealthy, and desirable Travelers, and the “skids,” who self-deprecatingly refer to themselves as the unwanted back road Travelers. I work with both, including individuals who are considered “middle class” – somewhere along the lines of respectable but aspiring to be “mag” enough – constantly competing with other families in the spotlight of Murphy Village.

Matriarchs manage the complexity and stress involved in promoting their families based on the class in which they are cemented by using forces within their power such as social advertisement in community events and social media. Women concern themselves with “keepin’ up with the Joneses,” expending all available resources on traditional notions of beauty and fashion and maintaining a family “face” of beautiful women who keep a good home, will take care of potential son in laws, and healthy young men who do not abuse drugs or alcohol and have a strong work ethic that will benefit potential elder male in-laws. These gender roles require effort from all family members, but ultimately are strategized about, managed, and displayed by the matriarchs of the family. When asking one Traveler woman about the value and meaning of braggin’ on someone in the context of her 8-year-old granddaughter’s recent First Communion “showing” she said, “It makes you feel like you are counted, you mean something. That made me feel so good and like everybody respects me and I’ve done so well, and my family looks nice, and their clothes look nice, and it makes me proud.” This participant comes from a family clan stamped by the “skid” label in the community. All of the money and work put into improving that label for themselves is worth it because then their clan will continue and survive.
Legality and Authority

Marriage in Traveler societies often involves combating “outside” societal and legal persecution. Notions of age-appropriateness in marriage, legal legitimacy, and attacks against perceived incest are among the myriad battles families may contend with. There have been cases in Murphy Village’s history when the state claimed that these marriages violated state laws. In 2016, the aforementioned Condon formed the South Carolina Traveler Crime Task Force, and the FBI and DSS consequently removed female minors from their families. During this time, elder women grappled with precarity and trauma by imploring their Catholic spiritual figures and outside society for help. Women led prayer circles at St. Edward Church, held midnight masses in devotion to the stolen children, and rallied the priest and the church members to act.

The Legion of Mary is a female Traveler-led Catholic group that holds status in their church and works with the priest to make executive decisions for the community. During the DSS crisis of 2016, the Legion of Mary went from home to home of the families of the taken girls and offered emotional and spiritual support. They made elaborate offerings to paintings and statues of St. Expedite, who speedily helps with legal troubles, St. Teresa, who the Traveler women describe as aiding with children and pregnancy, St. Jude, the saint of desperate cases and lost causes, and to Mary, or as the Travelers refer to her, “the Blessed Mother.” The women also for the first time in Murphy Village’s sixty-year history took to the streets of North Augusta protesting and marching with signs, and unexpectedly were supported and joined by outraged local country people.

These attacks against the families were part of the larger persecution against the Travelers, which revolved around their sources of income. The authorities and government attacked what is known as the heart of the Traveler community in the name of marriage laws. Matriarchs continue to fight against these attacks and straddle their authority on a line that bifurcates Murphy Village and the persecutory outside.

Country people in the local surrounding area often joke that Travelers inhabit a 1950s-1980s “time capsule” in their names and nicknames, music taste, and fashion. Mary continued: “The party [and everything us mothers and grandmothers do] is to put them out there. So we know they are taken care of. Have you heard the song ‘You Never Can Tell’ by Chuck Berry?”

They had a teenage wedding
And the old folks wished them well
You could see that Pierre did truly love the mademoiselle
And now the young monsieur and madame
Have rung the chapel bell
"C'est la vie", say the old folks
It goes to show you never can tell (1964)

REFERENCES CITED

Andereck, Mary Elizabeth

Berry, Chuck

Dowds, Crystan

Folker, James

Gmelch, Sharon Bohn, and George Gmelch

Harper, Jared Vincent

Silverman, Carol

Stygles, John M.
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.
© Southwestern Anthropological Association 2023