



COMMUNITY STUDIES CENTER

The American Mosaic Highlights Fall Semester

Fall/Winter 2003

By Shana Van Valkenburg '04

"The Mosaic took over my life... and I loved it," said Lauren Smith, a sophomore in the semester long program here at Dickinson College, and I am sure her classmates would agree. Professors Marcelo Borges (History), Kjell Enge (Anthropology), Susan Rose (Sociology) and twenty one students dedicated their semester to the study and understanding of Mexican migration in Dickinson's own backyard. Participating in activities, meeting people and conducting interviews in Adams County, PA, USA and Peribán de Ramos, Michoacán, México, the students were able to see the lives that migrants lead in the United States and those of their families in Mexico.

The American Mosaic, referred to as simply "The Mosaic" by its

participants, engages students in ethnographic research. It involves the disciplines of American Studies,

Anthropology, History, Sociology, and Spanish. The program consists of three courses which complement each other



Sarah Hiller '06 and Shana Van Valkenburg '04 capture the November 20th Mexican Revolution Parade in Peribán.

Director's Notes

It just seems impossible that it is time for another newsletter, but, as you see within, there is much of interest to report. The Community Studies Center sponsored a second summer Oral History Institute which was a "basic training" for a dozen more faculty including our guests, Professor Fernando Arcas (History) from the University of Malaga and Victor Casaus, Director of the Centro Cultural Pablo de la Torriente Brau, Havana, Cuba. Each faculty member is now prepared to use oral history techniques in their own research and

direct their students' work. Victor continued with us, in residence, doing subtitling of several of his films. Also in the summer, under the supervision of Professor Kjell Enge work began at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School and on site for our CHORD research on hypertension. Professor Marie Helweg-Larsen (Psychology) has been working with students analyzing the data gathered. This grant-supported work will get fully underway with our Qualitative Methods course in the spring. The Center hosted a photographic exhibit on Cuba that included the work of Phillips Bourns (1984) and Sumner Matteson (1904) that was part of the Latin American

Studies Symposium and a preamble to our January term work in Cuba. We also sponsored the three-day residency of Mexican ethnographer Juan Gutierrez who worked with our current Adams County-Mexican Mosaic classes, preparing students for fieldwork in both Mexico and Adams County. And we have been steadily working on our new WEB site on the Three Mile Island Accident, hoping to launch it in mid-March for the March 28th Twenty-Fifth Anniversary. Look for results of these projects on the WEB. Best wishes to you all.

Lonna M Malmshemer

COMMUNITY STUDIES CENTER

in order to provide a thorough background on Mexican migration before students move out into the field to begin their research. The 2003 Mosaic is a follow-up to the 1998 Mosaic, in which Professor Kjell Enge was also involved. The first Adams County Mosaic laid the foundations for the work of the 2003 group, which interviewed people both in Adams County and Peribán de Ramos.

Adams County is just south of Carlisle and home to many agricultural businesses. Apple, peach and pear orchards line the small windy back roads. The farm owners are highly dependent on migratory work to harvest their crop each season. Although workers hail from Puerto Rico, Haiti and other Latin American countries, the largest population of migrant workers is from Mexico, specifically the state of Michoacán. The seasonal lifestyle of migratory workers leaves them without a consistent home or services on which they can rely. However, many organizations have been created in the area to help migrants while they are here.

Students took on internships in Adams County to gain hands on experience. They focused on the lives of Mexican migrants and immigrants in Pennsylvania. Some internships took place at: Ardentsville Elementary school, James Getty High School, Gettysburg Area High School, Generation Diez after school programs, English as a Second Language classes, Human Services, Rural Opportunity Incorporated, Head Start Daycare, and Healthier from the Start, aimed toward working with pregnant women.

Junior Jenny Portillo describes what the time in Adams County meant to her: "Traveling through York Springs will never be the same again...Now every bit of land has a different meaning. Every apple in those orchards has a history behind it.



Adams County apple picking

From the person that planted it to the person who picked it..."

The group spent September and October in class; visiting the migrant worker camps, orchards, human service agencies and schools; and interviewing people who were seasonal migrant workers, farmowners, factory workers, social service workers, and town officials. At the end of October the large group split up into two smaller groups. Ten of the students departed for the town of Peribán de Ramos, Michoacán, México to study the origins of many migrants who now live in Pennsylvania. The other 11 students continued their internships in Adams County, studying topics ranging from health, food, businesses, family relations, religion, and the acculturation of children.

The group of ten began ethnographic research in Peribán, a relatively small town of about 11,000 people located in the southwest of Mexico. The town relies heavily on the agricultural industry of strawberries, peaches and particularly avocados. While many of the residents travel to and work in the United States, there is a stable economy based on the natural resources of the land. Family is of great importance to the people of Peribán. Mosaic students got to know

some families who have up to 200 relatives in town, with as many as 18 children to a mother.

In Peribán, the students spent the first week: meeting the family and friends of Adams County residents; mapping the town; attending community activities; and getting the feel of their new surroundings. By the second week they were jumping into interviews and making more connections. Students met with entire households, individuals, business owners, educators and government officials. These informants helped the students paint a picture of life in Peribán.

Although they lived in a hotel, the student visitors were welcomed into the homes of many local residents, taken on day trips to beautiful ranchos and fed frequently. One of the young ethnographers, sophomore Sarah Hiller explains, "...In just one month I went from knowing Peribán as a little dot on a map, to knowing its streets, and its people. I can honestly say that this trip has changed my perception of Mexico and her people and how I live my life."

The Mosaic is a unique program which gives Dickinson students an opportunity to take their work out of the classroom and into the field. It is more than just a visit to a neighboring town or country. The program allows students to explore different cultures and people in a local as well as global context.

Viva Mexico

By Mara Waldhorn '06

As I watched the mountainous hillsides of Mexico pass by me, and let the rough wind blast against my face, it became evident that this particular ride in the back of a beaten-up Ford pickup truck would never be forgotten.

After first becoming acquainted with Adams County, and Mexican migration through the American

COMMUNITY STUDIES CENTER

Mosaic program, I spent a month living in Peribán de Ramos, Michoacán, México. Leading up to my Mexican adventure, I had already completed what seemed like a full semester's worth of reading and writing on the topic of Mexican migration; met a number of migrant workers; picked apples in an orchard; and interned at an after school program, where some of the children were from migrant families. Thus, I did not have much time to wonder about what my trip to Mexico was going to be like.

I had pictured a small town, with dirt roads, no running water, and little automobile transportation. Needless to say, my ignorance and misconceptions had the best of me. My primary assumptions turned out to be far off, and instead of a small drab town, I was introduced to a place full of culture, colors, and vitality. I felt secure and comfortable. Perhaps our professors provided an ambiguous perception of the town so that our first impressions would be genuine and unforgettable. Engaging Peribán without any preconceived notions turned out to be advantageous.

Our group stayed in a new hotel (The Hotel Reforma)- one of two in the town. It is located about a block away from the plaza, which is the heart of Peribán de Ramos. An understanding

of the plaza, and its importance to the town, is critical to understanding its culture.

Depending on the time of day, different groups migrate to the plaza as a social ritual. In the afternoon it is common to see groups of children in full school uniform laughing and chatting with ice cream cones in hand, from one of the four plaza *paletariás*. Throughout the day a gathering of old men sit on the painted white benches, playfully bickering with one another while they enjoy life in their town.

The side streets, which branch off from the plaza, are lined by: supermarkets, small general stores, butcher shops, arcades, pharmacies, other various *tiendas*, and residential houses. On any given street a diminutive, worn down home with a battered roof could be seen sitting next to a sizeable residence, painted in bright colors, and closed off by prestigious gates or fences. These constructions are largely built from avocado money or the money brought here by migrant workers. Most of the stores, buildings and houses are nestled close together, which adds to the intimate and charming atmosphere of the town.

The most rewarding aspect of staying in Peribán for four weeks was the profound and unforgettable relationships we formed with many of



Students and friends ride in the back of a truck.

the townspeople, and with each other.

By the end of the month, I think it is safe to say that our small group of 10 felt a sense of belonging and acceptance. Despite our vastly varied personalities and differences, the 10 of us were able to solidify one of the most potent bonds I have encountered in my life thus far. Although it was Peribán that brought us together, its absence is not going to diminish our compelling connection.

It was apparent by the color of our skin, the imposing tripod bags, and bulky cameras hanging from our necks that we stood out. Once we made general connections, however, the invitations to family *ranchos*, dinners, and events never ended. The daily routine of eating at our favorite restaurant El Portal; seeing the same people in the plaza; and visiting residents' homes gave me the feeling that I was leaving behind a loving family and not the strangers I had met only a month before.

In the end, I walked away having come across certain individuals who touched and enriched my life. While it is questionable as to whether or not I will see any of these people again, they will always be remembered as a part of my Mexican experience.

To avoid the cliché, I will not simplify



The central plaza of Peribán de Ramos, Michoacán.

COMMUNITY STUDIES CENTER

my adventure by describing it as a "life changing experience". Rather, I will say that it gave me a different perspective on my developing and dynamic life as a sophomore in college. I must realize that while it is easy to view things in an egocentric manner, there are still a plethora of experiences I have yet to encounter. I know I still have a lot to learn, but my hope is that by traveling and spending time in places like Peribán I will end up more knowledgeable about the vast and diverse world which surrounds me.

Dr. Juan Gutierrez Visits the American Mosaic

By Shana Van Valkenburg '04 and Mara Waldhorn '06

From October 6-8, 2003, Dr. Juan Gutierrez, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB), visited Dickinson's American Mosaic class to lead a series of lectures and workshops on ethnographic fieldwork and anthropological research. These are two primary components of the American Mosaic. Thus, Dr. Gutierrez's purpose as a guest lecturer was to prepare the students for their new role as ethnographers in Adams County, PA, USA and Peribán de Ramos, Michoacán, México.

Dr. Gutierrez was born in Querétaro, Mexico and attended university there. He received his PhD in Anthropology from the University

of California Santa Barbara. He currently resides in California with his wife, daughter (11) and two sons (15 and 16). Dr. Gutierrez has been a professor for six years in the US- three years as a visiting professor, two as a lecturer, and this year as assistant professor.

One unique aspect of Juan Gutierrez's career is the Ethnographic Field Research Simulator, which he created with a research team of students and other professionals. The simulator lets participants create a fictional identity based on age and gender- then takes him or her through an ethnographic journey of fieldwork, research and interviewing. The participant first begins in the city of Querétaro where he or she is given a budget, must book a hotel reservation, introduce him or herself to city officials, and receive official documentation. The next step is to get on a bus, and travel to smaller towns within the state. While in a smaller town, one has the option to meet a number of different informants and collect both qualitative and quantitative data regarding the logistics of the town. These data contain actual statistics on ages, family structure, and the occupations of informants to population size and other demographic and economic factors.

The simulator not only provides statistical data, but also introduces other cultural aspects of the Mexican state. For instance, photographs from Dr. Gutierrez's travels are used to depict informants, homes, buildings, and methods of transportation in Mexico. Specific examples of cultural dissimilarity, such as subtle signs of respect and the differing component of time, are incorporated into the program.



Juan Gutierrez talks with students.

For instance, these particular differences are brought up when the participant is required to meet with a local city official.

Dr. Gutierrez explained to the Mosaic students that the simulator was created in order to organize a plethora of information brought back from Querétaro after one of his intense ethnographic trips. The simulator, along with Gutierrez's lectures regarding how to document fieldwork, was helpful to the class as amateur ethnographers. Mosaic junior Jill Smith explains "The workshop was extremely useful, as Gutierrez lent his personal experience and knowledge to the nitty-gritty of fieldwork, ranging from field logs to consent forms, and guided us all with his experience." Dr. Gutierrez's knowledge as a professional anthropologist prepared the Mosaic students for the time they spent in Adams County and Peribán de Ramos.



COMMUNITY STUDIES CENTER

Dickinson College Participates in CHORD Program

By Caroline Chirinos '06

This past year Dickinson College received a four year \$4.8 million grant from the State of Pennsylvania to participate in a collaborative research group to study disparities in hypertension. The CHORD (Collaboration in hypertension to reduce disparities) project involves researchers from Dickinson College, Cheyney University, and the University of Pennsylvania. The goal of this four year research project is to examine the economic and non economic barriers to inadequate control of hypertension among African Americans. Involved in this project are four professors from Dickinson College in Psychology (Prof. Helweg-Larsen), Anthropology (Prof. Enge), Sociology (Prof. Rose), and Community Studies (Prof. Malmsheimer). The CHORD research project involves designing and testing strategies for control of hypertension and Professor Helweg-Larsen said "one of the primary strengths of the program is the collaboration among disciplines". One of the goals of the CHORD project is to train undergraduate students to become medical researchers. CHORD is already underway as undergraduate students from the three universities were involved in the research project this summer. Three Dickinson students (Kristyn DiDominick, Ally Meloni, and Laurel Peterson), 2 seniors and 1 sophomore, were selected from a competitive applicant pool and spent the summer in Philadelphia. There they underwent a two week intensive seminar of basic education in hypertension and medication adherence, learned to collect data

from patients, and had internships in the community such as working in shelter homes and conducting programs of aerobics for elderly people. The first year of the project is dedicated to initial planning and data collection and the students got hands-on experience by conducting research at the VA hospital. The students also worked in group projects with undergrads from the other two institutions. However, unlike the other students, Dickinson College students are more involved in the project after the summer because they are working with Professor Helweg-Larsen throughout the whole year analyzing their research about risk for health decisions. She said "the most fun part is getting to see what we actually found!" Once a

week the students and Prof. Helweg-Larsen meet to discuss the literature, analyze data, and examine the results. They plan to present their research this upcoming April at the Eastern Psychological Conference in Washington DC.

Several Dickinson undergraduates will also have the opportunity to be involved with the project the next academic year. Helweg-Larsen stated that "hypertension is a big problem that needs a big solution", therefore it is vital that undergraduate students participate in the program and develop research initiatives in the near future. Students can watch for applications in Spring 2004 to get out there and engage the world!



Professor Marie Helweg-Larsen and students analyze data collected for the CHORD research project.

Website Documents Three Mile Island Nuclear Accident

The Community Studies Center will launch a Three Mile Island website in recognition of the 25th Anniversary of the worst nuclear plant accident in United States history. Among other things, it will include a virtual museum, oral history interviews conducted in the four months following the emergency in 1979, as well as government and industry documents not yet easily accessible. The website will be available in mid-March at www.threemileisland.org.

COMMUNITY STUDIES CENTER

Cuban Photo Exhibit Adds Dimension to Symposium

On October 15th the Community Studies Center and the Latin American Symposium hosted a Cuban photo exhibit by Phillips Bournes. About half of the photographs were actually taken by Sumner Matteson in 1904 using nitrate-based Kodak roll-film. The negatives were discovered by Bournes in 1984 and carefully reprinted. The resulting photographs were exhibited in the Museo de la Ciudad in Havana, Cuba. On two separate visits, Bournes was able to photograph his own impressions of Cuba.

It was Dickinson's good fortune to be able to see the photographs of both Matteson and Bournes displayed together in one exhibition. When asked about the project, Bournes commented "It was always about images and places and people; everything, the ideas and events, the ideas about the events and the photographs seemed to bump into each other, through time. They still do."

It is the 100th anniversary of Sumner Matteson's work in Cuba and Bournes hopes to return to Cuba and re-photograph more of the sites of Matteson's work.

For more information about the exhibit, visit www.dickinson.edu/departments/Commstud/Photoexhibit.htm



Phillips Bournes in Havana, Cuba

Community Studies Summer Institute for Oral History

By Anna Harden '04

This past summer, the Community Studies Center held its 2nd Summer Institute from July 6th through July 13th. The Institute was organized by Professor K. Rogers and the Community Studies Center in order to offer oral history training to faculty who will direct programs abroad in the future, or who are already doing so.

Professor Kim Rogers, of Dickinson College, stated that the Summer Institute was held because of Dickinson's desire for students to do more serious research while studying abroad. The Summer Institute further provides professors with oral history tools and methods that may be useful in local institutions and communities, both in America and abroad. As faculty develop oral history skills, they are able to better help the

students, Professor Rogers emphasized.

The Summer Institute consisted of a weeklong program that brought in several well-known speakers. Each speaker had a distinct focus, ranging from community-based projects to the memory and perception of violence.

Linda Shopes, the American Historical Association's representative for public history, discussed the importance of ethics for oral historians. She also discussed methods that can be implemented in order to overcome the communities' wariness. Author Valerie Yow, who wrote *Recording Oral History*, discussed the use of oral history in biography. Yow also talked about the importance of interpersonal relationships in the field. Mary Marshall Clark, from Columbia's Oral History Research Office, discussed oral history and trauma, particularly as it related to the terrorist attacks of September 11th. She further discussed the phenomenon of hate crimes. Professor Alessandro Portelli held a session discussing the memory and perception of violence, as it pertains to the memory and politics of war.

Several Dickinson Faculty members attended the Summer Institute, including Associate Professor Mark Aldrich of the Spanish and Portuguese Departments. "The whole experience was kind of an eye opener," Aldrich said. He then confided that prior to attending the Summer Institute, he had not considered oral history as a "real" resource. He plans to use what he learned in the future for research.

Dan Cozort, Associate Professor of Religion, also attended the institute. He stated, "I found them all very interesting for different reasons. I got excited about doing oral history." Cozort, who is currently Director of the Dickinson program at the University of East Anglia in England, also plans to apply what he has learned at the Institute to further research.

Overall, the Summer Institute on Oral History was a great success, and the Community Studies Center hopes to sponsor this workshop again in future years.

COMMUNITY STUDIES CENTER

Victor Casaus Shares His Thoughts and Impressions of His Summer Fellowship

A Notion We Share
By Victor Casaus

My visit to Dickinson College as a Community Studies Fellow had two important elements that I want to point out. On the one hand, it allowed a fruitful exchange with professors and specialists attending the oral history summer institute and on the other hand gave me the opportunity to subtitle several documentaries.

Those attending the institute debated methodological and practical aspects of oral history. It was interesting to hear about the projects carried out by my colleagues in the United States and to listen to the presentation of Alessandro Portelli, a recognized authority in the



field of oral history. The workshop also had a certain informal spirit that helped, in my opinion, to narrow the bonds among the participants and transform the sessions into true moments of reflection and debate.

Personally, my visit to Dickinson College was enhanced in a special way, when I carried out, in a few days, with accelerated rhythm and very useful results, the subtitling of five documentaries produced by Centro Cultural Pablo de la Torriente Brau in Havana.

These documentaries are part of

the work that we have created for the preservation of memory, oral testimony and literature, with the support of new technologies. Hence, it was of great importance for our project to have copies subtitled in English of those works to expand their distribution in the future.

I wish to express my appreciation for the support of Dickinson College, especially Robert Cavenagh, Director of Instructional Technology, and Tom Smith whose time and efforts helped to make this urgent project possible.

Those days spent at Dickinson confirmed for me the possibility that the professors, specialists, and writers from the United States and Cuba can pursue professional collaborations in our respective disciplines. I have no doubt that we will find a lot to learn from each other.

In that spirit, we have hosted at the Centro Pablo in Havana professors and students from Dickinson College on more than one occasion. My colleagues Susan Rose, Steve Brouwer, Sinan Koont and Madelyn Campbell have participated in active encounters where we have shared our projects and discussed topics of mutual interest, while developing a solid basis for future meetings.

After my first visit to Dickinson, I was unable to participate in two events that were carried out in October of last year, the Annual Meeting of the Oral History Association and the Latin American Symposium held at Dickinson College. Both of these events were of great professional and personal importance to me. Although my visa application was submitted in a timely fashion, the United States chose not to grant its approval.

I think that these obstacles don't belong together with the desires for scholarly exchange. I believe that together we will continue imagining and carrying out common projects that gather us around our respective disciplines and a notion that we share and celebrate: friendship.



Mark Aldrich and Michael Poulton conduct mock interview.



COMMUNITY STUDIES CENTER

Dickinson College
P.O. Box 1773
Carlisle, PA 17013
717.245.1185

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 173
Carlisle PA

COMMUNITY STUDIES CENTER STEERING COMMITTEE

Lonna Malmshemer > Director
Madelyn Campbell > Assistant Director
Marcelo Borges
Joyce Bylander
Kjell Enge
Marie Helweg-Larsen
Laura Imgrund
Sharon O'Brien
John Osborne
Kim Lacy Rogers
Susan Rose
Dan Schubert
Cotten Seiler