



NEAA NEWSLETTER

~~~~~Special Conference Issue~~~~~

## President's Message

As most of you know by now, M. Estellie Smith passed away in October 2005. She was in attendance at the first NEAA meeting in 1960 and was a loyal and dedicated supporter of the organization throughout the years. There will be a special session in her honor at our May 2006 meeting.

Dr. Sean Rafferty and his assistants at SUNY Albany have been working hard to develop an exciting and stimulating conference. The date of the meeting, 5-7 May, is later than usual because of conflicts with so many other professional meetings. We also are hoping that there will be more student paper submissions with a date that is near the end of the semester at most schools. At our Executive Board Meeting on 9 January, Dr. Rafferty shared many details with the Board including: James Axtell as our Keynote speaker at the Banquet which will be held in the New York State Museum, organization of a chair's luncheon and a student luncheon. There also will be an opening night buffet dinner which I hope many of you will attend.

Four years ago when I assumed the presidency of the NEAA, 2006 seemed far into the future. How quickly time flies when one is having fun and being challenged at the same time. Each of the meetings in these four years has been (will be) outstanding in organization and breadth and depth. Thank you to our very talented colleagues at

University of Vermont, Dartmouth College, Potsdam/Plattsburgh/Clarkson/NCCC and the University at Albany.

Overall, I feel that the health of the NEAA is good – we have a small but steady membership, interesting meetings and financial solvency. I am concerned, however, about the increasing difficulty in finding hosts for our annual conferences. We use the NEAA to present our own and our students' work and seem to assume that the annual meeting always will be there for us. It *will not* be there if more of us do not volunteer to organize/host our spring gathering and/or run for office in the Association. Is this a little guilt trip? Indeed, it is. If you “use” the NEAA (and there are many of us) then you need to give back to the organization by hosting a conference or becoming a decision maker. Please do think about this; it is important.

Amy Gazin-Schwartz of Assumption College is the very capable incoming President. I know that she will maintain the vitality and well-being of the NEAA and have the pleasure of working with our fine Executive Board. Good luck, Amy; we all support you.

I look forward to seeing you in Albany, NY in May.

-- Grace Morth Fraser

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# Cultural Construction of “Community”

By Alan Hersker, SUNY Potsdam

To unpack the sometimes unwieldy cultural construction of “community”, I conducted fieldwork in an urban neighborhood popularly known as Dupont East in Washington, DC. This area, centering on 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, is a site where contestation over place is articulated through notions of “community”: “gays” versus “straights,” owners versus renters, visitors versus residents. I used site-specific citizenship discourses (which, as Bell and Binnie [2000] suggest, are increasingly tied to claims to locale and the “right” to occupy that locale) as a methodological tool to understand the complex networks of social relationships on 17<sup>th</sup> Street.

Data sources for this project include archival research on the history of the neighborhood, informal conversations with residents and others who use the area, formal collection of life story narratives of residents, and three years of intensive participant observation in the 17<sup>th</sup> Street locale. I found that residents have constructed two competing citizenship discourses and that much of the contestation over the spaces and places of 17<sup>th</sup> Street occurs when different sets of spatial practices collide. Those practices are fluid, however, and residents continually renegotiate space and place (and the normative standards inherent in the locale). Although altered, the two discourses remain.

While gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) individuals played an important role in the gentrification of the neighborhood that began in the late 1960s (a process which eventually displaced most of the resident African-American families) and the neighborhood maintains an iconic image for GLBT individuals world-wide, the population is diverse. While 17<sup>th</sup> Street itself is a commercial strip, the area is primarily residential. Its close proximity to Dupont Circle, though, ensures that 17<sup>th</sup> Street shops, restaurants and bars are visited frequently by out-of-towners.

Hersker continued on page 10

## NEAA NEWSLETTER VOLUME 28 NUMBER 1

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**Northeast Anthropological Association**  
**46th Annual Meeting**  
**May 5th-7th, 2006 Albany, New York**

*Anthropology Today: A New Era for Old Questions*

Abstract and Session submission deadline is *March 24th, 2006*

Forms and Registration information are available online at [www.neaa.org](http://www.neaa.org)

**Some highlights**

- Opening night reception, followed by music
- New York State Museum Banquet with keynote speaker
  - James Axtell (College of William and Mary)
- Guided tour of the New York State Museum Native People's Hall
- Behind the scenes tour of the New York State Museum
- Department Chairs luncheon
- Film screenings, book exhibits, and poster session
- All sub-disciplines of anthropology participating
- Graduate and undergraduate paper prizes
- Modest registration fees (includes Conference Fee and NEAA membership dues)
  - \$50 professional
  - \$30 student
- Canadian funds accepted at par
- Just a short drive from downtown Albany

**Conference Hotel:** The Clarion Hotel of Albany, (518) 438-8431, [www.clarionhotelalbany.com](http://www.clarionhotelalbany.com)

We encourage all attendees to register at the Clarion Hotel. The NEAA receives a significant discount for use of the conference center based on hotel room registrations.

- Free Wireless in Every Room
- Rooms starting at \$89/night (single occupancy)
- Centrally located in the Capitol District
- All sessions, movies and displays under one roof

Forms, information and registration: [www.neaa.org](http://www.neaa.org)

**Questions:**

General questions: Sean Rafferty and Kris Primeau; SUNY Albany ([neaa@albany.edu](mailto:neaa@albany.edu))

Student liaison: Steve Moragne; SUNY Albany ([smoragne@yahoo.com](mailto:smoragne@yahoo.com))

Book display: Richard Koenigsberg; Library of Social Sciences ([lssbookexhibits@earthlink.net](mailto:lssbookexhibits@earthlink.net))

Film exhibit: Robert Gordon; UVM ([rgordon@zoo.uvm.edu](mailto:rgordon@zoo.uvm.edu))

Museum tours: Christina Rieth, New York State Museum ([crieth@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:crieth@mail.nysed.gov))

## Welcome from the Organizers

We are very pleased to host the 46<sup>th</sup> annual meetings of the Northeastern Anthropological Association here in Albany, New York. Albany is a vibrant and cosmopolitan city and we are sure that all attending the conference will find a lot to like about the venue. From the Hudson waterfront, to the Empire State Plaza, to the SUNY uptown campus, Albany is full of attractions for visitors to the area. While the conference itself will be an engaging and entertaining event, we hope that everybody can take some time to appreciate the many other diversions Albany has to offer. We've listed some links to local information below, and a comprehensive visitor's and dining guide will be included in your registration material.

### This Year's Theme

The theme of the 46<sup>th</sup> annual meetings is "*Anthropology Today: A New Era for Old Questions*". Our goal was to highlight the fact that, as Anthropology looks towards a new century, so many of the core questions of years past are still very much with us. Is Anthropology science, or subjective interpretation? Does the four-field structure make sense in the modern world, or are we really four (or more) separate disciplines under one name? What are our scientific and ethical obligations to the subjects we study, the "others" of Anthropology? How should Anthropologists be accountable to diverse public constituencies? Are there real, public benefits to Anthropology? These questions, and others, are just as pertinent today as they were in the early days of Anthropology.

While we will entertain a variety of topics during the conference, proposals that deal in some way with these large questions will be especially favored by the session organizers.

### Local Information

These links will take you to a variety of online resources for touring the Albany area. If you have any questions, please email us at [neaa@albany.edu](mailto:neaa@albany.edu).

- Clarion Hotel of Albany (with directions to the conference center) ([clarionhotelalbany.com](http://clarionhotelalbany.com))
- Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau ([www.albany.org](http://www.albany.org))
- Discover Albany New York ([www.albany.com](http://www.albany.com))
- Albany2Go ([www.albany2go.com](http://www.albany2go.com))
- University at Albany, SUNY ([www.albany.edu](http://www.albany.edu))
- University at Albany, Anthropology Dept. ([www.albany.edu/anthro](http://www.albany.edu/anthro))
- New York State Museum ([www.nysm.nysed.gov](http://www.nysm.nysed.gov))
- Albany Institute of History and Art ([www.albanyinstitute.org](http://www.albanyinstitute.org))
- Crossgates Mall of the Capitol District ([www.shopcrossgates.com](http://www.shopcrossgates.com))
- Capitol Dining ([www.capitaldining.net](http://www.capitaldining.net))
- Map of the Albany Area (<http://maps.google.com/maps?oi=map&q=Albany,+NY>)

**See you all in May!**

-Organizers of the 46<sup>th</sup> annual meetings-

**CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM**

46th Annual Meeting of the NEAA

May 5th to 7th

Clarion Hotel of Albany

Email completed forms to: [neaa@albany.edu](mailto:neaa@albany.edu)

This form is for conference registration for the 2006 NEAA meetings and for NEAA membership. You must register to attend the 2006 NEAA meetings and all registrants must be NEAA members. Registration must be completed before presentation proposals will be accepted. PLEASE FILL OUT ONE FORM PER REGISTRANT. Please use your PERMANENT ADDRESS.

Name (Last)

(First)

Address:

Affiliation:

City:

State/Province:

ZIP/Postal Code:

Phone ( )

Fax ( )

Email:

**CONFERENCE FEE AND NEAA MEMBERSHIP DUES**

Employed professionals: Check Box  \$50.00  
(includes \$25 conference fee and annual \$25 NEAA membership dues)

Students, Adjuncts, and Avocational: Check Box  \$30.00  
(includes \$15 conference fee and annual \$15 NEAA membership dues)

Please check if this is a membership renewal  or for a new membership

**PLEASE CHECK THE BUFFET OPTION(S) OF YOUR CHOICE**

NEAA BANQUET (Saturday, May 6th, Keynote address to follow)  Professional: \$35.00  
 Student: \$22.00

WELCOME RECEPTION (Friday, May 5th, Entertainment to follow)  \$16.00

Total: \$

**ABOUT PAYMENTS**

Please make payments in advance of the conference. Canadian funds are accepted at par. Please send a check or money order (made out to "NEAA") for the total amount above to: NEAA, Department of Anthropology, University at Albany, 1400 Washington Ave., Albany, NY 12222.

Email this completed form to: [neaa@albany.edu](mailto:neaa@albany.edu) If you would prefer, you may print off the completed form and send it with payment to NEAA, Department of Anthropology, University at Albany, mail address above. Questions about your registration should be emailed to [neaa@albany.edu](mailto:neaa@albany.edu).

This form does not register you for a room at the conference hotel. You may make reservations at the Clarion Hotel of Albany by calling: (518) 438-8431. For the special conference rate be sure to state that you are attending the NEAA conference. Rooms start at \$89/night. We encourage all attendees to register at the Clarion Hotel. The NEAA receives a significant discount for use of the conference center based on hotel room registrations.

**ABSTRACT SUBMISSION FORM**

Email completed forms to: [neaa@albany.edu](mailto:neaa@albany.edu)

46th Annual Meeting of the NEAA

May 5th to 7th

Clarion Hotel of Albany

PLEASE COMPLETE and SAVE THIS FORM, then EMAIL IT TO THE ADDRESS ABOVE.

**Abstracts are due by March 24th, 2006**

Paper/Poster Title:

Author(s):

Address:

City:

Phone: ( )

Subfield:

Three Key Words:

Affiliation:

State/Province:

Fax: ( )

Area:

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email:

Is this a... Paper?  Or Poster?

If this is a paper, is it part of an organized session? Yes  No

Name of Session:

Name(s) of Organizers:

Audio-visual requirements:

Slide  Projector  Overhead Projector  VCR  PowerPoint\*  Other

**\*Please Note:** *Presenters using PowerPoint are responsible for providing their own laptop computer or arranging for use of a laptop though the chair of their session. Projectors will be provided.*

Abstract (200 word maximum)

All papers submitted by undergraduates must be accompanied by a note from the student's advisor or a professor from their department, indicating that the work is an original piece and that the professor believes it to be appropriate for presentation at the conference.

**\*Please note: a completed registration form must accompany the paper abstract and abstract form. Membership in the NEAA is also required to present.**

**\*\*If you would prefer, you may send this completed document via mail to: NEAA, Department of Anthropology, University at Albany, 1400 Washington Ave., Albany, NY 12222.**

**SESSION PROPOSAL FORM**  
*46th Annual Meeting of the NEAA*  
*May 5th to 7th*  
*Clarion Hotel of Albany*

Email completed forms to: [neaa@albany.edu](mailto:neaa@albany.edu)

Paper/Poster Title:

Author(s):

Address:

City:

Phone: ( )

Affiliation:

State/Province:

Fax: ( )

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email:

List the participants of the proposed session below. A session is limited to 6 presenters.

Please note: a paper abstract for each presenter must accompany the session proposal. Also, a registration form must accompany each paper abstract. It is the responsibility of the session organizer to ensure that all abstracts and registration forms for presenters are received.

1. Name: Affiliation:

Address/Phone/Email:

Paper title:

2. Name: Affiliation:

Address/Phone/Email:

Paper title:

3. Name: Affiliation:

Address/Phone/Email:

Paper title:

4. Name: Affiliation:

Address/Phone/Email:

Paper title:

5. Name: Affiliation:

Address/Phone/Email:

Paper title:

6. Name: Affiliation:

Address/Phone/Email:

Paper title:

Discussant(s):

Audio-visual requirements:

- Slide projector
- Overhead projector
- VCR
- PowerPoint (*session organizers must provide their own laptop for each session*)
- Other (please specify)

**If you would prefer, you may send this completed document via mail to: NEAA, Department of Anthropology, University at Albany, 1400 Washington Ave., Albany, NY 12222.**

## Luncheon R.S.V.P.

Two special luncheon events are sponsored by the Anthropology Department of the University at Albany. Both events are held on Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, during the conference lunch break. Please indicate if you will be attending either event so we have an idea how many people to plan for. Details for these events will be provided with your registration materials.

### Contact Information

Name (Last)

(First)

Address:

Affiliation:

City:

State/Province:

ZIP/Postal Code:

Phone ( )

Fax ( )

Email:

### Department Chairs Luncheon

The Department Chairs Luncheon is held on a biannual schedule. This event provides a venue for senior faculty to discuss the unique range of issues that heads of anthropology departments deal with in a relaxed and informal setting. The event will be held at a local restaurant. Attendees are responsible for their own meal. This year the event will be hosted by Dr. James Collins, Chair of the Anthropology Department of the University at Albany.

I will be attending the Department Chairs Luncheon

### Anthropology Student Luncheon

The Anthropology Student Luncheon is open to both graduate and undergraduate students in anthropology. This event is an opportunity for undergraduate students contemplating graduate studies to interact with graduate students from a variety of anthropology departments. Graduate students may use the opportunity to discuss their research and fieldwork with their colleagues in other anthropology departments. Most importantly, the event gives anthropology students of all backgrounds a chance to socialize away from the prying eyes of their faculty mentors. The event will be held at a local restaurant. This year the event is sponsored by the Department of Anthropology of the University at Albany, and the Anthropology Graduate Student Organization of the University at Albany.

I will be attending the Anthropology Student Luncheon



## 2006 NEAA Student Paper Competition

Each year the NEAA awards prizes of \$200 each to the best graduate and undergraduate papers presented at the annual meeting. Guidelines for submissions are:

1. Separate graduate and undergraduate prizes are awarded. The undergraduate prize is known as the M. Estellie Smith Undergraduate Student Paper Prize. The abstracts are published in the NEAA newsletter and publication of the articles in professional journals may be facilitated.
2. **To be eligible, the papers must be presented in a conference session by the author at the 2006 NEAA meetings in Albany, New York.**
3. The topic may be in any sub-field of anthropology and the paper may be given in French, Spanish or English.
4. Only the “conference version” of the paper (i.e. **the version that is actually read**) is eligible; this is a paper of 8-12 pages, double spaced, exclusive of bibliography. It is anticipated that few presenters could get through more than 12 pages in the 15 minutes allowed for presentation. The bibliography should be included with the paper.
5. Six copies of the conference version of the paper must be submitted by **April 15th, 2006**, to:

Amy Gazin-Schwartz  
Dept. of Soc/Anth Assumption College  
500 Salisbury Street Worcester, MA 01619  
[agazin@assumption.edu](mailto:agazin@assumption.edu)
6. A cover page must be attached with the author’s name, address, phone number, institution, department and program, and the name of the session and session organizer where the paper is to be presented. Entrants must specify the competition (graduate or undergraduate) that they are entering.
7. Shared authorship papers are eligible provided that the category in which they are entered (i.e. undergraduate or graduate) is that appropriate for the most senior author. Papers co-authored with professionals are not eligible for the competition.
8. All papers submitted by undergraduates must be accompanied by a note from the student’s advisor or a professor from their department, indicating that the work is an original piece and that the professor believes it to be appropriate for presentation at the conference. (Such a note is required for all undergraduate papers at the conference)
9. The submissions will be evaluated by a panel of judges under the direction of the President-Elect of the NEAA.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### Session Honoring M. Estellie Smith

Estellie Smith passed away on October 25, 2005, she was 74 years old. She and her husband Charles Bishop have been members of the NEAA from its inception; and Estellie served as its President. Estelle was a loyal friend and inspirational colleague.

Estelle's scholarship interests were broad: the political structure on the Taos Pueblo; the evolution of the state and political evolution; culture change; and economic anthropology, especially the informal economy and fishing/maritime issues. An afternoon session in Estellie's memory is being planned for which papers are invited. It is hoped that those papers will reflect topics on which Estellie worked, and especially topics inspired by interactions with her.

Ken Jacobson will chair the session and present a paper entitled *The Business of Learning Disabilities*; much of the data for which will be based on clipping supplied by Estellie over the course of several years. Please send proposals to Ken Jacobson at [kenjay@bu.edu](mailto:kenjay@bu.edu). Your proposal will be promptly acknowledged.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Hersker* continued from page 2

This diversity is the source of contestation over citizenship, spatial practices and the built environment.

In the early to middle stages of gentrification, the area continued to be marginal. GLBT residents and others created spatial interpretations and practices that challenged the inherent urban heteronormativity (Leap 1996). As gentrification proceeded, though, people began moving to the area not because of its reputation as a gay "ghetto" but because of its perceived diversity. Housing prices increased as middle- and upper-class families began to move back. Retail establishments began to consider the needs and wants of heterosexuals as well as homosexuals. Restaurants became more "mixed." Many GLBT individuals began to complain about the intrusion of straights into "their" space.

Categories of citizenship have expanded to include not only one's relationship with the state, but also socio-cultural citizenship: who is a "worthy, valuable, and responsible" community member? (Painter and Philo 1995). Rights and obligations also figure importantly into these citizenship discourses (Weeks 1995). As citizenship expands into the sociocultural sphere, it has increasingly determined citizens' relationships with other citizens as well as with non-citizen populations. Thus, the "public" becomes a template with which to construct and perform "proper" behavior: who and what can be "public" in public space (Tetreault 1998). We construct these local standards vis-à-vis people outside of "our" space but also people within it.

There are two competing citizenship discourses that residents use to organize their spatial practices and relationship to the built urban environment in Dupont East: the citizen-activist and the citizen-consumer. Somewhat unexpectedly, this divide does not fall along GLBT/straight lines. As my research progressed, it became apparent that it is the distinction between "renter" and "owner" which most influences this division.

Neighborhood preservationists (the citizen-activists) emphasize the area's history. They tend to own rather than rent their houses and apartments. Citizen-activists have constructed a citizenship based in obligations to the locale and to other property owners. Their strategies for "preserving" the built environment include protecting the area from incursion by "outside" elements (such as the homeless, bars and restaurants, non-resident consumers), maintaining a mix of retail and food service businesses, and preserving diversity. Citizen-activists often discursively position non-citizen-activists as outside of the local community and construct a public which is ill-informed, manipulable by local business owners, transient and a threat to the care and stewardship of the built environment. Much of the work of citizen-activists has been in fighting the increasing number of bars and restaurants on 17<sup>th</sup> Street. They have twice, in fact, successfully lobbied the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board to place a moratorium on new liquor licenses in the area.

Citizen-consumers choose to privilege the consumptive aspects of the built environment – what products and amenities does the area offer? – over a sense of historic depth. This group emphasizes rights (specifically the right to consume the products of 17<sup>th</sup> Street and 17<sup>th</sup> Street as a product) over obligations. Citizen-consumers are admittedly disconnected with local political processes. They portray the citizen-activists as anti-business and often anti-gay because of their opposition to the (mostly gay) bars and restaurants in the neighborhood. However, many citizen-activists are gay, lesbian or bisexual themselves. Citizen-consumers have, in effect, commodified Dupont East: not only the bars, restaurants, shops and residences, but also the “public” spaces such as parks and sidewalks.

The opposing constructions of citizenship point at different ways of imagining and using urban space. For the citizen-activist, the base unit (of exchange and use values) is the home. The home is the focus of place-attachment and commercial spaces exist *only* to make the home a better (and more convenient) place. Alternately, for people who are not concerned with capital accumulation in real estate (such as renters and those who live in other parts of the city and suburbs who “merely” use the area), the base unit is consumption. Rather than a place to purchase goods and services, 17<sup>th</sup> Street becomes a product itself. Although high rents prohibit many minority community members and working class persons from becoming residents, these groups can access neighborhood amenities as consumers of both products and spaces. Citizen-consumers then become a more fluid and amorphous “community” occupying this locale. Tensions arise as these two discourses and communities clash and this will likely continue as the area becomes increasingly diverse. Or until – as one participant in my research succinctly stated – *the baby carriages get so thick the queens can’t roller blade down the street.*

Alan Hersker [herskeal@potdam.edu](mailto:herskeal@potdam.edu)

## Works Cited

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**Travel! Meet New Friends! Network with Professionals in Your Field! Build Your Resume!**

We are currently looking for a graduate student representative for the NEAA. If you are interested, please contact Grace Morth Fraser, Plymouth State College, [gfraser@mail.plymouth.edu](mailto:gfraser@mail.plymouth.edu)

NEAA NEWSLETTER  
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY/  
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TO JOIN THE NEAA SEND this form and the membership dues to:

John W. Cole, Treasurer, NEAA  
Box 251  
45 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05601-2100

**Dues:** \$25.00 for full-time professionals; \$15.00 for students, adjuncts or sessionals.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_

Please check if this is a renewal  and/or change of address

**MEMBERS RECEIVE 3 ISSUES OF THE NEAA NEWSLETTER PER YEAR AND A  
REDUCTION ON FEES TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE**