REMINDERS:

1. **Dues**
   a. Semester dues are $5.00! If you haven’t yet paid your dues, please consider doing so as soon as possible.

2. **Shirt Pre-Orders**
   a. Our NEW long-sleeved shirts will be on pre-sale until our next meeting on February 25th, 2013
   b. One pre-ordered shirt costs $15, while an after-purchase shirt will cost $20.
      i. With a pre-order, your shirt size is guaranteed!

3. **Field Trip to Chicago**
   a. Saturday, March 23rd, 2013
   b. Transportation will be provided via the Department of Anthropology
   c. A $20 non-refundable deposit is required to reserve your place.
      i. This fee covers general admission to the Museum, special admission to exhibits, and costs for our private tour of the Over-Sized Collections
      ii. This deposit is due February 25th, 2013

4. **AAA Membership**
   a. If you are interested in joining the American Anthropological Association at a highly-discounted rate via the MSU Undergraduate Anthropology Club, please make sure you bring the necessary information and your $30 to the next meeting (February 25th, 2013)
      i. Registration requirements were discussed at this meeting and can be found on the AAA webpage.
      ii. An email from the Club will also be sent out as a reminder

5. **Michigan Archaeological Society, Upper Grand Valley Chapter: Meeting!**
   a. Wednesday, February 20th, 2013
   b. 6:30pm @ 454 Baker Hall
   c. Ms. Kate Frederick will be speaking on “A Collection of Caching Research: Recent Work on Understanding Storage”

6. **Brown Bags**
   a. Every Friday, C102 McDonel Hall, 12:00pm
   b. Bring a lunch and learn with fellow Department anthropologists in a fun, informal way!

7. **Paper Contest**
   a. Entries for the MSU Undergraduate Anthropology Club Paper Competition are due March 25th, 2013
b. Information sheets with more details will be posted in Baker Hall and McDonel Hall, on our webpage, and on our Facebook page. An email will be sent out as well.

**MEETING:**

- We had a Kaplan representative come in and talk about a free test-prep this weekend for those interested in taking/preparing for the GRE.
- Dr. Medina:
  - Anthropologists involved with the legal case *Maya v. Belize*
  - What do you know about ‘the Maya’?
    - Mayans are used to market many tourist locations in Central America
      - “Used to sell”
      - Mundo Maya = Mayan World
    - 1990s map trying to market many nations as “The Maya”
  - Issue at stake: Maya land claim in Belize
    - The Maya of Belize vs. The Attorney General
      - *Maya vs. Belize*
    - There was no universal language of the Maya within the past 2,000 years and is currently in the same state
      - Typically divided into about two dialects
        - Mopan and Q’eqchi’ (sounds like: kick-chee)
    - Mapped the lands that each village used via geographers from American universities
    - “Maya Atlas: The Struggle to Preserve Maya Land in Southern Belize”
      - Written by two organizations representing both the Mopan and Q’eqchi’
    - Issue: reservations (with a rental fee) allocated via the government verses what the Maya truly believe to be their own land
      - Very large claims made by the Maya; very large discrepancy
  - Asserted relationship to ancient Maya via culture
    - Religious ceremonies and rituals conducted on ancient temples and lands
  - Key Players (Anthropological stand-point):
    - Chief Justice of Belize Supreme Court
      - Previously from Sierra Leone; not Belizian
      - Expert on British Common Wealth law, but not on Belize culture, let alone Mayan
    - Mopan and Q’eqchi: one female and one male representative
    - Solidify international indigenous rights laws: one representative working with the Mopan and Q’eqchi
  - Official History
    - Based on interpretations of early archaeologist, Sir Eric Thompson:
At Spanish conquest Belizean territory divided into 3 regions:
Yucatec in north, Mopan in center, Manche Chol in south
   o Fewer Manche Chol people; less densely settled compared to the Yucatec and Mopan
Spain removed Chols and Mopan; Belize ‘empty’ on British arrival
   o Spain never settled here, but ‘claimed’ it
      ▪ Tried to convert natives, but were unsuccessful
   o Moved them westward to Guatemala in ‘diminishment camps”
Current Mopan and Q’eqchi’ are 19th century immigrants
Did ethnography and archaeology; ‘general anthropologist’
   o “Wrote well-beyond archaeology”
Why are there still Mopan and Q’eqchi in Belize?
   o They flew the despotic rule of the Guatemalans and returned to Belize (British Honduras at the time)
      ▪ Preferred British rule over Spanish rule
▪ Official language ideology
   • How do you know who somebody is?
      o “You are the language you speak!”
         ▪ Whatever your first language is, that is what you are
         ▪ Language confers identify
   • It is not articulated as a language ideology
      o It is VERY widely believed that this is the way that Mayans gain their identity
         ▪ Important!!!
         ▪ Even if Mopan was spoken by parents, the children must also speak Mopan to claim to be Mopan
            • If they speak Spanish but don’t live in Spain and parents don’t speak Spanish, they get very confused over their own identity
▪ Questioning assumptions of the official language ideology
   • You cannot genetically inherit a language!
      o This plays a part in the legal case
   o Belizian State’s legal argument:
      ▪ Original inhabitants of Southern Belize were Chol
      ▪ corroborated by Director, Belize Institute of Archaeology
         o Jaime Awe
         o Claims that all Chol speakers have died out
            ▪ Not enough evidence to demonstrate this!!!
            ▪ Did not first-hand conduct any excavations; only looked over what had previously been done
▪ Only Chol-speakers can be indigenous to southern Belize
- Q’eqchi’ immigrated during 19th century; Mopan may be indigenous to west/central Belize
- Neither can claim indigenous rights to southern Belize

  Maya counter-arguments:
  - Mopan and Q’eqchi Maya are indigenous
  - Mopan and Q’eqchi’ enjoy indigenous rights to land on the basis of practice of customary tenure, according to international indigenous rights law
  - S. James Anaya
    - Legal counsel for Belizean Maya

- Indigeneity:
  - Grant Jones:
    - First important anthropologist to submit an affidavit
    - Historical anthro/ethnohistory
    - Belize as a “region of refuge” for multiple cultures during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries
      - It was a place uncontrolled by anyone!
    - “The Conquest of the Last Maya Kingdom”
      - Southern Belize as region of refuge
      - Linguistically and ethnically diverse
      - Chol absorbed by Q’eqchi’
      - Q’eqchi’-Chol, Mopan-Q’eqchi’
        - Perhaps more accurate names for people who inter-married in different regions
        - There are a LOT of Chol names in the Q’eqchi’ language
        - Very complex and diverse communities!
          - Possible alliances between communities through marriage

- Cultural Anthropology:
  - Rick Wilk and Liza Grandia
    - Mopan and Q’eqchi’ manage the lands they use through a system of customary tenure
    - Wilk
      - Customary tenure similar to customary law in W. Africa context
      - Reiterates Grant Jones’ findings
    - There are things that the Belizian government doesn’t understand and cultural anthropologists can help!!!
      - This is NOT about Maya being indigenous or not!
        - This is about who spoke what language in what location in what time!
  - Decision
    - Awe, government archaeologist’s testimony as compromised, not ‘expert’
• Issues with being un-biased because he was hired by the government
  o “Job is on the line”

- Wilk’s testimony most convincing:
  • Mopan and Q’eqchi’ indigenous
    o Q’eqchi’-Chol, Q’eqchi-Mopan
  • Practice of customary tenure produces indigenous rights to land
    o They have the right to own the lands upon which they practice traditional rituals, etc.
  • Belize MUST negotiate with the Maya to demarcate the boundaries and give each community a communal title to their land
    o Under international law and national indigenous laws

- Query: any DNA evidence?
  o Archaeologists use one criteria, linguists use another criteria, government use one criteria, cultural anthros use another criteria
  o Can it REALLY tell us who they really are?
    o Same people speaking different languages!!!!!!!!!!

- Abdullai Conteh, Chief Justice, Supreme Court

- Still not a completely settled issue
  • Belize refused to accommodate the Maya
  • Judge rules again in the Maya’s favor
  • Prime Minister of Belize decides the judge is too old and forces him into retirement
  • Still in contention!!!!!!
    o Will go as far as it can possibly go, legally, before anything is actually done

  • ‘Maya’ hasn’t been a meaningful term in Central America until very recently
    o No one is saying that these people aren’t Mayan
      • Everything is on the language!!!
      • “What identity you claim vs. what others claim you to be and who accepts those claims”