

# editor's *welcome*

A couple of years ago I taught my department's Senior Thesis course. All of our majors designed and executed individual research projects, many of them ethnographies. The class was intense, filled with new data, and covering a range of anthropological and sociological topics. And then...all their papers ended up shelved under my desk. I began to imagine all of the wonderful projects sitting on shelves or gathering digital dust on hard drives. That is not the goal of academia. So what to do with these papers?

In his recent essay in the American Sociological Association's Community and Urban Sociology Section's newsletter, Jon Smajda smartly outlines a possible answer to the question. He writes, "Publishing early, often, and out in the open requires a change in our culture and attitude towards our writing, our research, and our image as scholars."

The *Journal for Undergraduate Ethnography* is such a place. This is an open-access, online journal. There are no subscriptions or paywall. The goal is to create an engaging set of new ethnographies. We hope to encourage current undergraduates.

This journal seeks to counter lingering skepticism towards online academic writing in the social sciences and humanities. We see our endeavor as part of a broader movement to create open-access content in the academy while maintaining peer-review practices. We use a board of undergraduates to staff our Student Board. These students conduct the initial rounds of reviews. Our Senior Board members then supplement with follow-up reviews.

We are thrilled with the international, multi-disciplinary response. We chose a set of papers that stake out a large territory covering consumption practices, identity navigation, and community recognition. Using a combination of methods – ethnography, interviews, content analysis, and historical records – these new scholars show a breadth of findings. Alfredo Aguirre interacts with the lives of international migrants as they develop a sense of identity and progress via consumerism. Mary-Lynn Allar conducts fieldwork in a small, rural cemetery to understand a community. Victoria C. Moré discovers an informal market premised on the non-monetary exchange of goods. Caroline Womer gives a nuanced account of the self-understandings undertaken by women in relationships with sex offenders. We conclude with Will Gossett's review of the new edition of Robert S. Carlsen's *The War for the Heart and Soul of a Highland Maya Town*.

Thank you to the Student Board and Senior Board for your amazing work. Thank you to all the different contributors of ideas. Finally, if you are interested in contributing a paper or review please contact us.

Now, to the field!