

E-Newsletter August 2008
American Anthropological Association (AAA)

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News and Highlights

NSF-DoD Issue Joint Solicitation for Minerva Initiative

In a recent advocacy letter, the AAA urged that NSF oversee the funding process for the Minerva Research Initiative—a program that would fund university-based social scientists to study topics of interests to the Department of Defense. Shortly after, NSF signed a memorandum of understanding with the DoD, allowing collaboration between the two agencies, and announced a joint solicitation for proposals.

AAA President Setha Low responded to reporter questions about the Minerva Initiative during a media conference call on July 31, 2008. Although, the AAA is pleased with NSF's involvement, additional clarification is needed about the participation of DoD in the selection and review process. The association is also concerned that only a portion of Minerva funding is being routed through NSF.

Read Setha Low's Letter (May 28, 2008): <http://www.aaanet.org/issues/policy-advocacy/upload/Minerva-Letter.pdf>

AAA member commentaries on the topic include a recent article by Hugh Gusterson in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists: <http://thebulletin.org/web-edition/columnists/hugh-gusterson/project-minerva-revisited>.

Laptop Searches at the US Border

The Fourth Amendment requires that federal authorities have a warrant to conduct a search and seizure of personal property. Routine border searches have long been considered exempt from this law, and “reasonable suspicion” is required to conduct non-routine and invasive searches. This recently changed when the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that federal officials—namely, Custom and Border agents—can randomly search and seize electronic information stored on laptop computers, cameras, cell phones, MP3 players, and other devices without “reasonable suspicion.”

This policy poses evident risks to anthropologists and their research participants. AAA President Setha Low issued a letter (<http://www.aaanet.org/issues/policy-advocacy/upload/AAA-Letter-on-Homeland-Security-Laptop-Searches.pdf>) last month urging Homeland Security to re-evaluate its policy. In addition, the Electronic Frontier

Foundation, Asian Law Caucus, Muslim Advocates, and Association of Corporate Travel Executives have also protested electronic searches. Senator Zoe Lofgren recently introduced the Electronic Privacy Act of 2008 in opposition to the searches. It has been referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary.

Read the AAA Letter on Electronics Searches: <http://www.aaanet.org/issues/policy-advocacy/upload/AAA-Letter-on-Homeland-Security-Laptop-Searches.pdf>

What's Coming Up?

New Journal Issues/Articles Coming in September:

- **From *Ethos*** - special issue, "The Cultural Politics of Treating Mental Health in Native North America." Articles explore stress, Navajo healing rituals and critical evaluations of substance abuse programs in Native North America.
- **From *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*** – special issue, "White Privilege and Schooling." Articles examine the concept of "acting white" and student experiences with race and racism in U.S. schools. Features new article by Signithia Fordham with reflections on "acting white," a concept which she brought to fame with John Ogbu in the landmark study, "Black Students' School Success: The Burden of Acting White."
- **From *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*** – "Being Anorexic: Hunger, Subjectivity and Embodied Morality." Anthropologist Sigal Goodlin challenges predominant assumptions about anorexia through an ethnographic study of young women who were diagnosed with the illness and admitted to an outpatient hospital unit in Israel. Articles features candid and insightful excerpts from patient interviews that will surprise many readers.

Articles from the above journals will be available in September 2008. Full press releases with additional information will be issued in advance of journal publication. If you would like to receive future notifications about the above articles, contact jsteffensen@aaanet.org.

Save the date! The AAA 2008 Annual Meeting will be held November 19-23 at the San Francisco Hilton and Towers in San Francisco, Calif. Stay tuned for more information in the months to come.

*** For more information about association news and advocacy, visit the AAA Public Affairs blog: <http://aaanewsinfo.blogspot.com/>.

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