Interview: Education, educating, field study, and the public

The following conversation is a recorded conversation between alumna Betty Belanus, PhD '89, and student Gregory Hansen held on March 12. Betty is an education specialist at the Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies at the Smithsonian Institution. Gregory is a doctoral candidate in folklore. He worked as a public folklorist for nine years before coming to Indiana University in 1994.

The edited transcript begins after Betty explains that she was working on her PhD while completing minors in instructional systems technology and anthropology.

Betty: What I was really doing was a minor in museum studies.

Gregory: Did you come to Indiana specifically to plan to do that type of study along with the minor in education and the graduate program in folklore?

Betty: Well, I'm not sure if it was what I was doing consciously. But that's what I was interested in. I came in with some museum background and got the museum bug, and I wanted to continue with that. I knew that there was public sector work out there, and it attracted me a lot more than the academic side of things.

Gregory: What was the attraction?

Betty: It tied into the idea of the museum, with presenting things to the public and making media productions. It all seemed more interesting than teaching.

Gregory: How did this interest in public programming jibe with the academic orientation here at IU?

Betty: At first, I was chafing a bit with all of the theory that I was going to have to learn. But Bess Lomax Hawes came here to give a speech, and I was designated to take her from point A to point B. I was talking to her and saying that I was more interested in the public side of this field and that I didn't see why I had to take all these heavy-duty theory courses. She gave me a bit of a talking to and told me how important it is to be based in the theoretical part of the discipline. You need to come from a common place and be able to express what the discipline is all about in a public setting. I really took that to heart.

Gregory: Yes. I had encountered the same

From the chair

Keywords: Innovation and integration

We focus this issue of Traditions on the ways that the Folklore Institute integrates public work with academic ideas. These ways range from the exciting student-sponsored conference in which invited professionals talked about how folklore theory works in public life to the courses for students to explore public and applied folklore from an intellectual and practical perspective. Most significant, next fall, for the first time, we will have a folklorist based at the Folklore Institute to carry out public work. Erin Roth, a graduate of Western Kentucky University experienced in public sector work in several states, will manage the Indiana Folk Arts Survey project. Funded by NEA, this project represents a new level of university-community cooperation by folklore groups in the state of Indiana. We envision that our students will gain from working with a public sector folklorist who is part of the institute.

We also invite you to join us on Oct. 21-25 as we host the Society for Ethnomusicology meetings in Bloomington. We look forward to the alumni luncheon on Friday, Oct. 23, when we will have a reunion of many students who studied at the Folklore Institute. We will also host our usual reception at the American Folklore Society meetings and look forward to greeting many of you there.

— Ruth M. Stone
Putting theory to work

On Jan. 23, the Folklore and Ethnomusicology Student associations presented a one-day conference on applied and public sector folklore titled “Putting Theory to Work: Cultural Interpretation and the Public.” Sponsored by the associations as well as the Folklore Institute and the Archives of Traditional Music, the conference featured six project directors from around the nation. The goal was to explore the relationship between current cultural theory models and models of practical application and to provide a forum to challenge and re-evaluate those relationships. The theme of theory and practice was chosen as a way of opening up common dialogue between scholars and programming coordinators.

Although many issues and topics were discussed, one unifying residual message was the importance of abstracting useful and important ideas from folklore theory and making them applicable in different contexts. Deborah Kodish pointed out the importance of using multiple theories to figure out which ones would allow for the development of programs that address community needs. Shalom Staub demonstrated how he drew upon folklore theories and methodologies in his consulting company to illustrate basic issues in communication and encourage “folkloristic thinking” in corporate training sessions.

Martha Ellen Davis discussed how folklore theory can be applied to ethnic festival productions, and Gail Matthews-DeNatale challenged folklorists to recognize that neither structure nor theory is static when working in applied situations. Doug DeNatale demonstrated the relationship between folk art planning and the long-term administrative aspects of urban planning and impact studies.

Anthony Seeger turned the conference theme on its ear by suggesting that folklorists should make theory the crucible of practice rather than the other way around and emphasized the importance of being active outside of academia. To emphasize his point, Seeger stripped off his flannel shirt to reveal a Smithsonian Folkways T-shirt.

The conference was well-attended and the formal presentations sparked off discussion throughout the evening. We hope that it helped facilitate communication between the institute and our colleagues working in the not-for-profit sectors. We ask scholars to accept Seeger’s challenge to develop ways to theorize practice: Put work to theory rather than theory to work. We hope the conference was a step in this direction, and we encourage future discussion and collaborative engagement.

— Lisa Gabbert, Gregory Hansen, Joan Zaretti, Alex Perallo, and Peter Alyea
Folklore Student Association
Ethnomusicology Student Association

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Interview (continued from page 1)

type of thing after working in the public sector and coming back for the doctorate. What I found was that what I really valued the most in classes was the theory. It helps to think about the issues in new ways and to do some soul searching about my own theoretical assumptions when working in the public sector.

Betty: You went to Western Kentucky University for a master’s, right?

Gregory: Right. I began that program back in 1983. After coming back to school I found that what really helped me here at Indiana was that I had the chance to go out and do fieldwork and do programming in the public sector. In coming back to graduate school, I had the context to understand the theory better. It’s a good way to go to school because then you’ve got a rich background to reflect on issues about what you are reading in the heavy-duty theory classes.

The conversation shifts to other topics and Gregory mentions Betty’s work as the state folk arts coordinator for Indiana.

Gregory: As you know, there are plans to put together a new folk arts program here in Indiana. I was wondering what you would like to see in the plans for a new state folk arts coordinator?

Betty: I think it’s great that the arts commission is willing to work with the university. I tried to forge relationships between the university and the arts commission and to use some of the graduate students as fieldworkers. But it was hard.

There’s a great opportunity in Indiana because Indiana is one of the only states with a PhD program in folklore. It doesn’t make sense not to have the arts council be involved with what is going on at the university.

I would hope that they build on what’s happened so far at the arts commission. With the history of Egyle Zygas, PhD’92, Geoff Gephart, MA’80, and my having been there as folk art coordinators, there’ve been good programs that have happened in the past. There is also the opportunity to start some good programming, such as systematic surveys of the state’s folklore. It’s a very rich state in terms of its folklore.

The conversation meanders a bit and Betty suggests that graduate students at the Folklore Institute use resources at the university, including the Education Department, the radio station, and the museums.

Gregory: One of the things that I would recommend for graduate students here is to take advantage of the opportunities at the university. Students need to gain as many diverse experiences as they can while going to school because they can be applied in all kinds of settings in the workplace.

Betty: And teaching isn’t a bad thing to have under your belt either. I see teaching as a form of public sector folklore because I do that here now. We have a seminar here at the festival where we train teachers for recertification. You might think you’re being an academic folklorist by teaching these courses, but you’re really being a public sector folklorist, right? (Laughs)

Gregory: Right. (Laughs) Well, I think any form of public presentation is ultimately teaching. So the dichotomy begins to fall apart that way.

The conversation closes with Betty’s recommendation that students interested in public sector work should apply for internships at the Smithsonian, American Folklife Center, and other agencies, and that they should also apply for contract fieldwork positions over the summer. Both Betty and Gregory agree that these experiences help to provide focus for students in deciding what issues to explore in various classes.
Around the Institute (continued from page 2)

Institute hosts Folk Arts Tour/Conference

On Feb. 5-6, the Folklore Institute hosted a meeting of folklore and arts specialists to plan a Regional Performing Arts Tour for 2000-2001 and to initiate a regionwide collaboration in folk arts programming. Folklorists in attendance were Richard March, PhD’83, and Karen Genshew from the Wisconsin Arts Board; Inta Gail Carpenter, PhD’88, Marsha MacDowell, and Yvonne Lockwood from the Michigan State University Museum; Phil Nusbaum, PhD’82, Minnesota Arts Board, Dennis Holub, South Dakota Arts Council; Vickie Hutter Arts Midwest; Barbara Bayless, Ohio Arts Council; Riki Saltzman, Iowa Arts Council; Sue Eleuterio, educator/folklore consultant; Troy Keist, North Dakota Council on the Arts; and Dorothy Ilgen, Indiana Arts Commission. The following information was gained from interviews conducted in February 1998 with Richard March and Phil Nusbaum.

According to Richard March, the process taking place at this meeting was really more important than the specifics of programming. The tour organizers hope that their initiative will inspire other collaborative projects, whether in media, visual arts, or publications. Hectic schedules of grant writing, producing, lobbying, and managing leave little time for collegial communication, yet part of the essence of public sector work is networking. Thus, opportunities to meet, to discuss ideas, methods, and goals are not only a means to an end but also provide the possibilities for dialogue.

It seemed an appropriate moment to ask for an assessment of the state of public folklore, given that folklorists Bill Ivey, MA’70, and Bill Ferris have been selected to direct the NEA and the NEH. Phil Nusbaum, was confident that funding for arts agencies would grow. He speculated that perhaps as academic centers of folklore struggle with an identity crisis, created in part by budget cuts and retirements, public folklore will strengthen and expand.

Because practitioners cannot exist without institutions to train them, I asked both March and Nusbaum, as Indiana University alumni, to discuss how the Folklore Institute could help prepare students for careers. Both stressed the importance of gaining experience in the field as essential for outreach and community involvement. March suggested that there must be clear, mutually beneficial, and active links between university programs and the community. Students interested in pursuing a career in public sector must become skilled networkers, lobbyists, and activists and must begin to see themselves as part of a movement to change cultural policy. The best way to teach reflexivity, he added, is to get students actively involved in working with groups within the state. He also noted the importance of residencies on university campuses for public sector folklorists to facilitate dialogue with their colleagues in the academy.

— Nicole Kausales

NOTE: The Folklore Institute, together with the American Folklore Society, initiated Public Folklore Residencies in 1992. Since 1995-96, these have been rotating among folklorists nationally.

Team teaching History of Ideas: Folklore in the Public Sphere

In spring semester 1998, Visiting Assistant Professor Jennie Michael and Inta Carpenter teamed up to teach F470 History of Ideas: Folklore in the Public Sphere. Fourteen students enrolled in the class, which offered an overview of public and applied work, as well as a chance to collaborate on community projects.

Activist-pedagogy group joins ‘Visions’ project

What will Monroe County look like in 2010? That’s the focus of “Visions of Place,” planned as an intensive communitywide discussion about the future growth of Bloomington and the surrounding area. Bloomington Restorations Inc. recently received funding from the Indiana Humanities Council for this initiative. The activist-pedagogy group, composed of several Folklore Institute faculty, students, and alumni (see Traditions, summer 1997), has agreed to take part. As a means to ground the future in an examined past, they will identify significant private photograph collections and conduct oral history interviews with the owners. These materials will be scanned into computer files and used for archiving and programming purposes by the Monroe County Historical Museum and the Herald-Times newspaper. P131 American Folklore students will have the option of participating in this project, which is being called “Common Ground.”

Indiana Folk Arts Program launched

In partnership, the Folklore Institute and Indiana Arts Commission are launching an effort to develop a sustainable, statewide program for identifying, documenting, preserving, and promoting traditional arts and artists in Indiana. This collaboration has benefited substantially from the dedication of Dorothy Ilgen, executive director of the IAC, who promoted folk arts programs in Kansas and Missouri.

For its first year, the Indiana Folk Arts Program is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Indiana Arts Commission, and the Folklore Institute to conduct a survey of folk arts as a necessary first step to developing a permanent program. The Folk Arts Program will be housed in Bloomington in the Special Projects Office. This campus location maximizes access to the rich human, technical, and facilities resources of Indiana University. At the same time, the partnership brings to the program the expertise of the IAC in arts, public programming, networking, and resource building.

After a national search, Erin Roth was hired as program manager. Erin brings a wealth of experience to Indiana. A native of Iowa, she completed a master’s degree in folklore at Western Kentucky University. For five years, she directed a women’s homeless shelter in Washington, D.C., giving her significant skills in administration, management, and outreach education. In addition to writing grants for her own projects in Kentucky, she has designed and implemented a variety of public programs in other states. For the Iowa Arts Council she developed a series of tours of ethnic neighborhoods. She has been a contract fieldworker and presenter for the Smithsonian’s Festival of American Folklife and a consultant and fieldworker for the National Parks Service.

Erin will conduct research as well as develop program policies concerning the field survey. She will also recruit and train student interns and community-based volunteers, establish ties to the Folklore Institute’s field school, and develop resources for project continuation beyond the survey phase. She will work closely with Inta Carpenter at the Folklore Institute to carry out the vision of the IAC partnership.

F404/804 Field School: Indiana Folk Arts Survey was offered this summer to pilot-test student participants in the folk (continued on page 4)
Around the Institute  
(continued from page 3)

arts program. Facilitated by Inta Carpenter, this class attracted undergraduate and graduate students from folklore, continuing studies, and education. In addition to discussing readings on folk arts, the students worked together to create forms and a database for survey work, conducted individual and team fieldwork, and recorded their findings on film and in field logs. Their documentation will be integrated into the statewide survey. The class will be repeated next spring, with Erika Peterson-Veatch as assistant.

SEM Conference 1998

The Folklore Institute is involved in a variety of ways as the ethnomusicologists on campus host the 43rd annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology in Bloomington on Oct. 21-25. The pre-conference, in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Archives of Traditional Music, takes place on Oct. 21 and is titled “Ethnographic Futures: Issues in Documentation and Fieldwork.” The conference itself begins on Oct. 22 under the theme “Communities of Collaboration.” Regular meeting sessions will feature the topics of music and work; brain, body, and culture; performance in transnational contexts; ethnomusicologists in the field; music and healing; music and technologies in context; and artists and ethnographers in the academy and beyond. An IU alumni luncheon will take place on Friday at noon in the Federal Room. Johnny Otis will bring his band from California and play a show on Saturday evening, featuring rhythm and blues music. For registration information, contact the Conference Registrar, IU Conferences, P.O. Box 249, Bloomington, IN 47402-0249, or call (800) 933-9330.

JFR fall issue focuses on topic of applied folklore

For some years now, the editors of the Journal of Folklore Research have sought to publish articles and special issues written by folklorists engaged in the public side of our profession. In its fall 1998 volume, JFR is pleased to have achieved this goal by collaborating with David Shuldiner and Jessica Payne, editors of the newly named Journal of Applied Folklore (formerly Folklore in Use).

The articles in this issue sample the panel presentations on applied folklore at the 1996 AFS in Pittsburgh. Editorial staff of both journals worked together to solicit, select, and edit articles that not only represent the spirit of the 1971 Point Park Conference on Applied Folklore and its anniversary commemorated in 1996, but that also contribute to the ongoing conversation about the contributions and challenges folklorists offer to the field and to the world.

Traditions is published by the Indiana University Alumni Association, in cooperation with the Folklore Institute and the College of Arts and Sciences Alumni Association, to encourage alumni interest in and support for Indiana University. For membership or activities information, call (800) 824-3044 or send an e-mail to iualumni@indiana.edu.

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Congratulations!

Bill Hansen and John Johnson congratulate each other at a book party on April 12.

The Folklore Institute celebrated the latest books published by our folklore faculty. Authors featured that day included Linda Digh, Henry Glassie, Bill Hansen, John Johnson, and Ruth Stone.
Faculty updates

Mary Ellen Brown has been appointed director of the Institute for Advanced Study.

Inta Gale Carpenter spent summer '97 in Latvia, completing research on women's narrative strategies in reforming reproductive health care delivery. Her work was supported by an Advanced Research Fellowship from IREX. Inta has been promoted to associate scholar.

Hungarian Folktales: The Art of Susanna Pariko, by Linda Dégh, was released in spring 1996 by the University Press of Mississippi.

Henry Glassie's Art and Life in Bangladesh came out in fall 1997 from the IU Press. In January, Glassie was in Bangladesh, where he lectured at the National Museum on the role of the museum in the 21st century, and where he arranged for the publication of his book by the Bangla Academy. On the trip, he delighted in giving copies of the book to the artists featured in it.


William Wiggins, joint faculty in folklore and Afro-American studies, has been appointed dean of African-American Affairs.

Farewell, Visitor!

We salute Jenny Michael, who was our visiting assistant professor for 1997–98.

Jenny received a master's degree in folklore from the University of California at Berkeley in 1988 and a PhD in folklore and folklife from the University of Pennsylvania in 1995. This past year, she taught courses on belief systems, dress and adornment, public sector and applied folklore, as well as other courses.

Student notes

Folklore degrees granted

• BA Degrees: Peter Knopczyk, Jody Sarich, Derrick Smith, Ann Stevenson, Cynthia Stout, Sheryl Swinson

• MA Degrees/MA Exams: Esther Clinton, Jennifer Core, Hilary Finchum, Antonio Goodwin, Fernando Orejuela, Alex Painter, Sheila Priest, Natalie Underberg

Student notes
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Images on Whale Tooth and Bone”
Zoe Schefty, “Displaying Sápmi: Contemporary Saami Art and Museum Exhibition in North America”

* PhD Degrees/Dissertations:
Linda Adams, “The Interrelationship of Myth and Legend in a Mexican-American Community in Chicago: The La Llorona Legend as an Inversion of the Adam and Eve Sacred Narrative”
Cynthia Ainsworth, “Alaskan Folklore and the American Philological Tradition”
Alan Burdette, “Ein Prosit der Germitüchkeit: Heightened Experience and the Creation of Context in a German-American Singing Society”
Maria Hetherington, “Comomnyacyon and Good Words: Margery Kempe at York, A Speech Genre Analysis”
Jennifer Livesay, “Women at the Church Doors: Gender, Protest, and Belief in a Midwestern Women-Church Group”
Laura Marcus, “Moving Towards Nizaad: Exploring the Dynamics of Navajo-Anglo Interaction Through Trading and Art”
Cathy McAleer, “Markets and Modernization in the People’s Republic of China”
Ed Pavlic, “Crossroads and Consciousness: Communal Underground Space and Diasporic Modernism in African-American Literature”
Jill Rudy, “A Folklorist’s Progress in American English Departments: An Historical Case Study”
George Schoemaker, “Contemporary Shadow Theater in France: Performance and the Politics of Culture”

First-Year Graduate Class, 1997-98

Front Row: Fernando Fischman, Gustavo Ponce, Gyo Im Yun, Lisa Akey.
Back Row: Andrew Heyman, Mohammad Salabuddin, Subeyla Cavusen, Dina Bennett, Christopher Geyer, Maria Hnaraki. Not pictured: Marquesa Macadar.

Alumni news

Linda Adams, Ph.D’98, has received a tenure-track position in the Department of International Communication at Bakojo Gakuin University in Japan.

Doug Boyd, MA’98, is presently working for the Kentucky Historical Society as the senior archivist of the Oral History and Folklore Collection.

For the second year in a row, Alan Burdette, Ph.D’97, will serve as our visiting assistant professor here at the Folklore Institute.

Bruce Conforth, Ph.D’90, has been appointed dean of the School of Integrated Studies at Penn College in Williamsport, Pa.

Giovanna Del Negro, Ph.D’98, is teaching in the Department of Folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Nina Fales, Ph.D’93, is now an assistant professor in the music department at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Jean Harrah, Ph.D’92, has received a position with the Nevada Arts Council.

Jolie Hess, BA’96, is currently working as an insurance underwriter in Philadelphia, Pa.

Joseph C. Hickerson, MA’61, will be retiring after 35 years at the Archive of Folk Culture of the Library of Congress.

William J. Ivey, MA’70, was chosen by President Clinton to head the National Endowment for the Arts.

Greg Kelly, Ph.D’96, has recently received a visiting-professor position in the English department at Indiana State University.

After working 27 years in the Department of English at the University of Northern Colorado, Kathleen E.B. Manley, Ph.D’79, retired in August 1996 in order to read, write, teach one class this fall, hike, backpack, ski, and dance.

Margaret MacDonald, Ph.D’79, has recently published Scapio Storytelling: Talk in a Southern Indiana Community (University Press of America, 1996). She was the Fulbright Scholar at Maha Sarakham, Thailand, for both winters of 1996 and 1997.

Nan McEntire, Ph.D’90, has been awarded a tenure-track position in the English department at Indiana State University.

Ramengi Osotsi, Ph.D’95, has been appointed visiting assistant professor of the Department of English at James Madison University.

Ed Pavlic, Ph.D’97, is currently work- (continued on page 7)
Remembering when —
You can write our next edition of Traditions!

In our next issue of Traditions, we will be going back to your days as a student at the Folklore Institute with a collection of stories and photos.

Please take a moment to remember those humorous or meaningful events that took place in class or at a pig roast, party, or some other event during your academic career at the institute.

WHERE WERE YOU? Ronald Smith, Chris Bobbitt, Ken Pimple, and Barbara Truesdell listen to Sandy Dolby perform, April 1986.

SEND YOUR STORIES and PHOTOS to
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• E-mail: reaten@indiana.edu
• Fax: (812) 855-4008
• Telephone: (812) 855-5864
• Folklore Web page: http://www.indiana.edu/~folklore/

Alumni news
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Neil Rosenberg, PhD '70, is the first Memorial University faculty member to win a Grammy. He won in the Best Album Notes category for co-authoring the notes for the Anthology of American Folk Music, re-issued last year by Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings.

Robert E. Walls, PhD '97, is now teaching courses through the American Studies Program and the Values and Science/Technology Program at Lafayette College in Pennsylvania.

Marie L. Walter, MA '57, has been working as an intern at the Library of Congress, assigned to a variety of projects.

Bert Wilson, PhD '74, recently received a 1998 Utah Governor's Award in the Arts in recognition of his many years of working to publicly honor traditional arts and artists.

In memoriam
Blanton Owen
On June 5, Blanton Owen, a public sector folklorist and former student of the Folklore Institute was killed in a plane crash. Blanton had been doing aerial photography in Washington state while conducting an architectural/archaeological survey.

In trying to offer a fitting memorial to Blanton, who was considered to be a great fieldworker, friends have established a fund to present awards to people doing fieldwork. Donations to the Blanton Owen Trust Fund may be sent to the American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20540.

Roderick Roberts Jr.
Roderick J. Roberts Jr., PhD '73, admired for his teaching in the Cooperstown Graduate Program in American Folk Culture, died in June. He was active in public folklore projects in the state of New York, helped organize the Archive of New York State Folklore for the New York State Historical Association, and was for many years editor of New York Folklore Quarterly.

He is mourned by the folklore community who recall his devotion to scholarship and concern for the community life. Memorials may be made to the Louis Busch Hager Cancer Treatment Center in Cooperstown, N.Y.
What’s new with you?  

Please fill in as much of the following information as you wish. Its purpose, in addition to providing us with your class note, is to keep IU’s alumni records accurate and up to date.

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