

An SfAA Oral History Interview with Susan Andreatta

Applying Anthropology at the Intersections of Food Production, Health, and the Environment

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Susan Andreatta is Professor of Anthropology at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG), where she has taught and worked since 1996. She is also Director of Project Green Leaf, a program that supports sustainable local agriculture by promoting community between farmers and consumers. She has also played a key role in developing community supported fisheries. Her commitment to teaching is reflected in her successful efforts to establish student/community gardens on the campus of UNCG and in her textbook, *Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective* (co-authored with Gary Ferraro), now in its 11th edition.

Susan Andreatta received her Master's degree from Iowa State University and her Ph.D. in anthropology from Michigan State University. Her wide-ranging areas of research, both international and domestic in scope, deal with environmental and medical anthropology. Her work has focused on human and political ecology applied to small-scale farmers and fishermen, as well as resource management and environmental change in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Southeastern United States. These research interests are also shaped by concerns regarding the impacts of climate change.

Susan Andreatta has had a long history of involvement with the Society for Applied Anthropology, which continues to this day. She has served on a wide range of committees, in various elected positions on the SfAA Executive Board, and was the Society's President from 2007 to 2009.

This interview was conducted in Portland, Oregon by Barbara Rylko-Bauer on March 22, 2019. It was edited for accuracy and continuity by John van Willigen and Barbara Rylko-Bauer; added material is presented in brackets.

RYLKO-BAUER: Welcome, Susan, and thank you for agreeing for the interview. We've been trying to do this for a while.

ANDREATTA: Yes, we have.

RYLKO-BAUER: I'd like to focus on your background and education, on your very long history of service to the Society, and on your research, teaching and community engagement at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where you're currently full Professor in the Department of Anthropology, correct?

ANDREATTA: Yes.

RYLKO-BAUER: So why don't we start at the beginning. What led you to choose anthropology as an area of study and as your career?

ANDREATTA: I think I owe it to my father, who is Geno Andreatta and was Dean of [Student Affairs at] the Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse, New York for thirty-three years. His area was admissions and it was always about students and student involvement. And in his capacity, he knew a lot of professors there and it's a teaching hospital. And he provided me with opportunities to be a candy striper and work in the labs, for people doing research on cancer. And was really hoping I'd be a medical doctor.

RYLKO-BAUER: So, can I stop you for a minute? He was a medical anthropologist in an administrative position?

ANDREATTA: Yes. He was at Syracuse University and then got picked up by the medical school to teach future doctors and nurses cross-cultural medical issues.

RYLKO-BAUER: And this was in what time period?

ANDREATTA: Um ... see, I was born in 1961, so he was Associate Dean by 1968.

RYLKO-BAUER: That's an unusual position for an anthropologist at that time.

ANDREATTA: It's so unusual because all he had was an MA. And he lasted through all the [University] Presidents until he retired in 1994.

RYLKO-BAUER: Okay. So, go ahead with his influence on you.

ANDREATTA: His influence ... [his] first language was in Italian, and we spoke Spanish and English. Our trips were always multicultural, and I think that was subliminal. And by the way, being an Italian, we always had a garden and he was a little winemaker. So, there were things that were just in our upbringing and that you learned vicariously. I began my undergraduate education at the University of Delaware and started pre-med as I had been groomed, after candy striping and working in labs for cancer research. And I found other things of interest, and anthropology and Spanish really made a deeper connection for me than being pre-med.

RYLKO-BAUER: So, when did you take your first anthropology class?

ANDREATA: The very first semester.

RYLKO-BAUER: Oh. And what about it captured your imagination?

ANDREATA: I think the professors were wonderful. We were four-field and I loved all of it. Even if I go back a little bit, in our high school we had the opportunity to work on digs near the Iroquois nation and so I think I was getting a little bit from social studies and just a really rich experience. [So,] I already knew what anthropology was. And I was not going to miss out on the opportunity to take it at the college level.

RYLKO-BAUER: This was in Syracuse that you were in high school?

ANDREATA: In high school. The University of Delaware, at that time, was cheaper than staying in New York. So, I think taking [anthropology] right away and then having some capacity and knowledge of Spanish too, early on—we had it through high school—it was an easy double major. And that was very exciting. I did my sciences and I think what I left with was a good foundation in liberal arts.

RYLKO-BAUER: You graduated what year?

ANDREATA: 1984.

RYLKO-BAUER: You graduated with a BA in ...

ANDREATA: In anthropology and Spanish. And I had two, three, four wonderful professors. Juan Villamarin, who was department head at the time, took me under his wing and I did a lot of independent studies with him, learning a lot about Latin America and using my Spanish. And then, Norman Schwartz was a delightful buddy of Mike Whiteford and Scott Whiteford. And "Stormin' Norman" said, "You've got to go to graduate school, and I'll help you make that happen. And you've got to look at Iowa. So, I applied to a number of schools and I got accepted with a full scholarship to Iowa State University.

RYLKO-BAUER: Wow.

ANDREATA: And I got to work with Mike Whiteford. There were only two in our entering class. It's right when Apple [2e] computers came out, and Mike was all into this technology. Rob Sams and I were the first two of his students to be able to type on a computer and complete our master's thesis. Mike gave me the key to his office and said, "You know you can work on it at night, and I get it during the day. You're funded for two years; you're going to be finished."

I was still interested in Latin America, women in development, women in agriculture. And we scrambled for grants and then he said, "I know how this could happen."

[Mike] had a friend, Fred Lang, who said, "I've been working in Guanacaste, Costa Rica and they're trying to do something to that community that's going to tear it apart. They want to build two hotels in the area. And I've been doing archeology here with field schools." Mike suggested that I do an impact assessment on a village. So, I went down and documented what's going on. I didn't know about applied anthro before that, but this was Mike's entrée for applied anthropology. I was there for six months working on data collection, came back, and [completed] a master's thesis.

It was a terminal MA program and Mike said, "I think you should apply to Michigan State and work with my brother."

RYLKO-BAUER: Oh, that's right. You were at Michigan State.

ANDREATA: I applied to Michigan State, was accepted there and I carried on with Latin America and women in development and then things just blossomed. I just saw applied in a variety of different ways and realized if I'm going to do things with environment, health, nutrition ... I started thinking about it [as] a bicycle wheel, and the applied anthropology was the center. And all these other things were the spokes, and the rim, the wheel held it all together.

RYLKO-BAUER: Oh, that's an interesting image.

ANDREATA: Yes. So, I took courses in natural resource management, I took courses from sociology in farming systems. I took courses in nutrition and health, I was all over the place—ag economics. And it was all of these things that began building my foundation as an applied anthropologist in these areas [of] environment, health, and nutrition.

RYLKO-BAUER: So you created your own applied program?

ANDREATA: I sure did.

RYLKO-BAUER: Because there was no formal program then?

ANDREATA: No. And then I got an opportunity to work on a project in Jamaica on agroforestry. I'd taken forestry classes and was nicely funded, and they sent me there for a year. And I ended up staying thirteen months to work on a forestry project. My role was to figure out where to plant the trees and in which community and for what reason. That was really fascinating. One of my contributions in that project was [that] everybody thinks about farmers homogenously, and what my data was able to reveal is not all farmers were the same. There are women farmers, poor farmers, rich farmers. This was a [sugar cane] plantation where people were forced to relocate

because they were removed from the mountains for the Jamaican government to enable bauxite to be extracted from the land. Mining. And the people farming didn't know how to work in sugarcane. And there was rapid turnover, there were some new people, old people. Cane production was just not on anybody's radar. The erosion level was amazing. So, they wanted to plant trees to help the cows but also [to] retain the soil. Who do you work with, who are your models? I was able to disaggregate what farmers looked like. And that helped [to plan] the next step, [which] was where to plant the trees. That was exciting. Then I got a postdoc. There was a conference I went to for the forestry project and I met David Watts. And, lo and behold, when I finished my PhD, I was just idling in California for a while in San Diego teaching across the border. I was a migrant worker, teaching peasant studies in Latin America at COLEF [El Colegio de la Frontera Norte], and I get a telephone call from David Watts, who said, "Could you come to England and work with us on a postdoc in the Caribbean?"

RYLKO-BAUER: Wow, what an opportunity.

ANDREATA: Oh my, yes. I was two years at the University of Hull and then they sent me island-hopping to look at environmental conditions. And they wanted ... it was on water issues, and I said, "Well, the best people, the canaries for me are farmers and their need for water." My whole dissertation was on absence of water. And that's what we were finding at the time that we were in the Caribbean, [there was] drought and they had missed three rainy seasons, so the number of cattle that were dying ... and you're not going to be planting many trees during the drought.

RYLKO-BAUER: Right, no, absolutely. So, when you were at the University of Hull, where were you based?

ANDREATA: I was in the department of geography and natural resources with two human geographers. David Watts, [who had] longtime Caribbean experience and wrote the seminal work on the history of the English Caribbean. And Terry Marsden, my other coworker, and they were the ones that got this Erasmus+ grant to work on this project. He was a human geographer interested in natural resources.

RYLKO-BAUER: Tell me again where was the project based?

ANDREATA: We were in three ... they sent me to Antigua. [There was also] Barbados and Saint Vincent. It was different islands in terms of the degree of agriculture and where tourism fit in. But we all concentrated on the agriculture sector and water use.

RYLKO-BAUER: How did doing this postdoc expand your knowledge in anthropology?

ANDREATA: Well, I had ... I need to backtrack just a little bit. While a graduate student at Michigan State, I had the opportunity to get employed by USAID [United States Agency for International Development] and they sent me to Antigua.

RYLKO-BAUER: As a graduate student?

ANDREATA: As a graduate student to work in Antigua. I hadn't finished my PhD. [It was] to look at pesticide use among cattle producers to help eradicate a tick from the island of Antigua

that was causing a disease in the cattle that would give them mange and kill them. Or they weren't sure it was causing that spongiform stuff in the brain. So, they wanted to control that. I had pesticide training in how to assess what the farmers were using to treat their cows. I think working with farmers doing social impact and environmental assessment from graduate school, [was] anthropology applied on to these other projects. I think that there was always a connection—environment, health, and food.

RYLKO-BAUER: Un-huh. Also, you were working with geographers as ...

ANDREATA: Yes, interdisciplinary, and ag economics.

RYLKO-BAUER: I can see how that really fleshed out and broadened your experience and your knowledge base and theoretical base too because ...

ANDREATA: Absolutely.

RYLKO-BAUER: ... every discipline comes at these things from a different perspective.

ANDREATA: That's right. I was still in graduate school when I had read Piers Blaikie and Harold Brookfield's work on political ecology of the environment. And that one really shaped [me]. Then there were other people, David Campbell and Jenny Olson, who created something that I really like using. It's called the Kite and it was a model where you had a kite that had political, economic, cultural, and environmental systems all connected in the shape of a kite. And connected to [the] local, national, state, region, and global. They said, "Well, all kites fly. It's got a braid and strand that includes time and history, power, scale, like local; the three positions of the kite and space. And that theoretical approach [of political ecology] and visual connection is how I do my research when [in] the field. And being in these different islands, you could see space, exposure to pesticides, or where do you plant trees or who's doing what? Where does the power lie? What's going on with women versus men, class,

[and so on].

RYLKO-BAUER: When you were doing your doctoral studies, was it ... I mean obviously you have a very strong applied orientation. Was it the teaching of people like Mike Whiteford or Scott Whiteford that really helped to shape that, in addition to this other work that you were doing? And obviously, working for USAID gave you a sense of what it's like to work for someone else. Because you never took any courses in applied?

ANDREATA: Not at MSU, no.

RYLKO-BAUER: It's interesting to know how people, who aren't in an applied program, end up getting this applied orientation and applied knowledge to do [this] work, and the desire to do work this way.

ANDREATA: I think Mike [Whiteford] exposed me in a variety of different ways. You know, to do good applied work you need to be a good ethnographer, and so I think [of] the kinds of courses that we were exposed to. He had a colleague working in Africa as an applied person, and I don't think I took many courses from him, Mike Warren. There were only five faculty members at the ISU [Iowa State University] then. But, I think what I left with from anthropology, [was that] I wanted it to be put to use. I wanted it to be applied to the real world, and I knew in my heart I just could not go to a community, a country and just describe culture. That, to me, just felt so ...

RYLKO-BAUER: Like that's [just] step one?

ANDREATA: Step one and there should be a purpose to it. Otherwise, I'm wasting my time and their time. And I also felt that I, somehow, wanted to be invited and not impose myself on a community. So, my networking through USAID and other opportunities, what's out there? How do you make those kinds of connections so that people know your skillsets, your interest, and that you want to help in some capacity? Mike was a runner and oftentimes we'd just go run five miles. But you talk and run. And I knew he was the newsletter editor for the Society for Applied Anthropology. So, I was learning all about this and when I finished my thesis, he says, "Well, now, you need to go to the meetings and present." And I did. My first SfAA meeting was with Mike, and my first night was spent with Linda Whiteford [his sister, who is an anthropologist and later also served as President of the SfAA].

RYLKO-BAUER: When was this?

ANDREATA: Probably in like '86? In Reno.

RYLKO-BAUER: Okay. And you roomed with Linda?

ANDREATA: Yes, until her roommate came and then I roomed with Carole Hill's students. That was my first meeting and that really solidified and changed everything—this is what I'm doing. And changed my focus for how to approach what I was going to do at MSU. Having come with a master's thesis, it advanced me at MSU [to] being a teacher and a TA. And over time, I did well and won the outstanding teaching award. Teaching became a part of how I wanted to apply anthropology and make it useful for people who might only take one class.

RYLKO-BAUER: Right. So, what was your first postgraduate job, once you finished the postdoc?

ANDREATA: I didn't apply in time for tenure track. I went to San Diego and [was] working in Mexico. I had more connections [there] than living with my parents (laughs). I went back there and became an adjunct to SDSU [San Diego State University] and that allowed me letterhead, library privileges, and I could apply for nontenure [positions]. My first visiting assistant professor position was at UNCG [University of North Carolina at Greensboro]. Then they had to do a new search because I was only a one-year replacement and I came out on top and the rest is history.

RYLKO-BAUER: So, interestingly enough, from early on, you had made this commitment to application and to scholarly research but also ...

ANDREATA: [To be] useful.

RYLKO-BAUER: ... pragmatic and useful and yet, at the same time, you also pursued an academic career.

ANDREATA: Right, right.

RYLKO-BAUER: You had two parallel paths ...

ANDREATA: That's right.

RYLKO-BAUER: ... or intersecting paths.

ANDREATA: And with another parallel [being] interest in international projects as well as domestic.

RYLKO-BAUER: I know [from] looking over your different writings and presentations that your research focus has been in environmental and medical anthropology, and more specifically on food and food production, both land based and fisheries, and also the importance of sustainability.

ANDREATA: Yes.

RYLKO-BAUER: That's been, I think, a real important thread. It's clear that this started with your dissertation. But people oftentimes will shift from what they did in their dissertation. In your case, there's been this real continuity. So, what helped to sustain that and to move it forward for you?

ANDREATA: Well, I think sometimes different projects could take on the environment and different projects might take on health or food and sometimes, they intersect quite beautifully. Because I don't always feel like I'm doing the same thing, I'm not bored (laughs). But I think I'm making differences in different kinds of communities ... I have had, what, almost twenty-five years', thirty years' worth of success in this.

RYLKO-BAUER: Well, let me rephrase it. You arrived at University of North Carolina at Greensboro. And you started to teach and come up with some kind of research that you wanted to do. Was it an opportunity or was it purposeful on your part that you were going to look [at certain issues] because you really were committed to these areas of work, and they were areas of great interest to you?

ANDREATA: Right.

RYLKO-BAUER: So, you specifically looked for projects that would continue in those areas?

ANDREATA: I knew being an academic and being in a position where you had to get tenure [meant] that you have to publish. I'm coming off of two years of the postdoc and a lot of data, so the easiest articles to get out quickly were the Caribbean experience. But then you're also looking for funding. And what I was not in the position to do right away was jump on another project far, far away when I needed to keep publishing and creating new classes. So, I reached out to a local agriculture extension [agent] and shared my innocence. "I've never worked in local ag. I worked in tropical agriculture. I know tropical trees and ways of working with cattle in that scenario. Can you help me?" And I said, "I've really only worked with small farmers, with hand tools." And he said, "Oh, easy. We have small farmers, and the smaller farmers are the organic farmers." And he told me all about community supported agriculture. We became great friends, and we cowrote and co-did things.

RYLKO-BAUER: What was his name?

ANDREATA: John O'Sullivan. He opened the door [for me]. He said, "Well, I know the first farmers you should go meet, [they were Pat and Brian Bush], and they're in your area and they are so organic, they hate plastic. They're going to do everything

without plastic." So, I got to meet them. We went to their farm and then I went to another farmer a little bit further south, Alex and Betsy Hitt. They had college degrees in agriculture from North Carolina State University, and he thought it was the funniest thing: "We've arrived as farmers to have an anthropologist sitting on our couch."

RYLKO-BAUER: Studying us, right.

ANDREATA: Studying them (both laugh). Then I started working with farmers markets,

making connections and helping small farmers connect to farmers markets. It became obvious—for these to succeed, the community has to be involved. And it was ripe for students to get involved and help with the research.

RYLKO-BAUER: That's interesting. We don't really talk about how we got into the work that we [do], when we're at meetings or formally. I think it is good for students to read about this and realize that people take different paths.

ANDREATA: It was a different way to say, how do I make my approach or interest in applied international work also useful to our local community. At the time, we had a lot of first generational students that might not have the opportunity to work overseas in this capacity. How do we create these opportunities for students to even do it locally and make a difference in their communities? And we spent a lot of time doing that and then bringing the students to the SfAA and presenting their work.

RYLKO-BAUER: Out of this came articles and lots of presentations?

ANDREATA: Yes, for me and them.

RYLKO-BAUER: So, as you were doing this work, which was new to you, were there anthropologists who served as models? Or did you jump into this?

ANDREATA: Oh, I jumped into it. My first presentation was on the Caribbean with pesticides and Tom Arcury and Sara Quandt picked me up, and I got involved in their sessions. They were doing local agriculture in North Carolina with migrant workers. I did just a little bit of work with them but nothing major. [I felt that] for me to get tenure, I need my [own] projects and so I politely parted. And then, I think it was the farmers market project—it doesn't matter, but I presented on it and then Garry Stephenson, an anthropologist at Oregon State University, heard a presentation and we started collaborating and working together and making sure we had sessions. For six, seven years, could be longer, Garry organized the farm tours wherever we were at the SfAA meetings. He was a huge inspiration for me. Garry and I worked with small

farmers [who] diversified and their connections to farmers markets, but [we also] met up with Don Stull and Kendall Thu and Mark Grey, who worked with livestock.

RYLKO-BAUER: Okay, so another aspect of farming and food production.

ANDREATA: Yes, CAFOs [concentrated animal feeding operations] and pollution and all sorts of impact on the environment. So, it's all come full circle. We did a number of sessions together and that was very supportive and encouraging.

RYLKO-BAUER: I think I'd like to turn to your work for the Society for Applied Anthropology. In looking through your CV, I was amazed at your long involvement, which started in 1998 [and continues] today. And it went through a variety of committees and leadership positions all the way up to President of the Society. I would like to talk a bit about that really remarkable, remarkable history because that's amazing.

ANDREATA: Thank you.

RYLKO-BAUER: I don't think there was a year when you weren't involved with the SfAA. You already [told us] about your first meeting [in Reno] and that it was an important meeting.

How did you get involved with the Society's committees? Because your first involvement, I think, was with ...

ANDREATA: Well, I think, way back. I graduated with my MA in '86 and my first meeting was probably in '96, so a bit of a gap, and Mike Whiteford and I always stayed very good friends. When I came to the [SfAA] meeting, I saw Mike, and he goes, "Did you bring your running shoes?" So, Ed Liebow, Mike, and the running group—that was our sightseeing. You get up early and you go run for an hour, hour and a half and come back. And [at] that meeting he told me how to network and get connected. Mike was gracious as ever and introduced me to all these people and then being in sessions, you're connecting. And I think I went to two years' worth—it would be '96, '97, and '98. I'm not sure how it happened, but I was observing leadership, and I said, "Sorry, Mike, the Board's old."

RYLKO-BAUER: Needs young blood (both laugh).

ANDREATA: "You need some young people." And I remember being at the bar, and Tom May came up and said, "I hear you're interested in being on a committee," and I said, "Where'd you hear that from?" and it was Mike. He really opened all these doors for me. I just owe a lot to Mike.

RYLKO-BAUER: Well, you were on the finance committee, membership committee,

and several program committees?

ANDREATA: Yes. So, finance was Tom [May] appointing me to work with Tom Arcury. That was the connection, and I forget who else was there, but Tom Arcury was chair.

RYLKO-BAUER: And more recently, the legacy committee, the policy committee and the advisory board podcast project.

ANDREATA: Right.

RYLKO-BAUER: Also the Founders Endowment, so you've had your finger in every pie.

ANDREATA: And [I've] been a judge for posters. This is my first year not judging in I don't know how many years, probably close [to] ten years.

RYLKO-BAUER: You obviously went step by step, because you became an Executive Board member first.

ANDREATA: I was [on the] finance committee and from that, nominations reached out and said, "Would you consider running for the Board?" So I did. And to my amazement and delight, I was elected a Board member. And I served there probably a term or two and then ran for secretary, and that happened. Then I was asked again, via nominations, to run for President. And, well, to share a little more, I declined.

RYLKO-BAUER: Oh, really?

ANDREATA: And not even a month later, I answered the phone and there was Tom May. He said, "I hear you're not running. Would you please reconsider?" I did and I guess that part's history.

RYLKO-BAUER: You got elected in 2006? And then served from 2007 to 2009?

ANDREATA: Yes. And at that time and I'm not sure if it's still done, they had a good design where it was male, [then] female, every other year. I had good training from Linda Whiteford and Don Stull [former SfAA Presidents], just sharing the time and being on the Board for so many years prior to becoming President, you could see the roles and responsibilities.

RYLKO-BAUER: Well, you knew how it worked.

ANDREATA: That's right. And having been secretary, I really knew how it worked.

RYLKO-BAUER: That's true. That was actually a really good model, an ideal way for [becoming] President of the Society.

ANDREATA: Yes. And they had a student rep on there and that was a really good thing. I wasn't a student rep, but I was a very young Board member, coming in as an

assistant professor. I think that helps provide insight into what are the different kinds of needs of people at different levels of their career.

RYLKO-BAUER: When you think back on those years, I mean [also] as President-elect and past President—because in the SfAA, it's actually a fairly long term [of] four years—what do you feel are some of the achievements that you would like to be remembered for?

ANDREATA: Well, small, quiet ones ...

RYLKO-BAUER: Those are sometimes the most important ones.

ANDREATA: ... that have had an impact. We went through some transitions to be a little more efficient with our agendas. Our meetings had been close to ten hours long and very exhausting. Under previous leadership, we made consent agendas that helped expedite our meetings, but we lost a little bit of continuity with the committees. One of the things I did was liaison directly with committee chairs and committee members to get back on board, [to learn] what are they doing, and learned very early on that they needed more connection with the Board. I said, "That's an easy fix." I asked that all the Board members pick a committee and be the liaison. I think direct communication helped make a more lasting connection and purpose [as] to why this particular committee exists. The other thing that I really wanted to complete were the books, but we called them booklets at the time, that were the expectations of what each committee was supposed to do, what was their charge. And they weren't quite finished during my presidency. But [I wanted] to get that done, so that people knew their charge, roles, and responsibilities, and that they had a mission.

RYLKO-BAUER: That's very important. Otherwise you're starting from ...

ANDREATA: ... from scratch every time. And when there's change, there's no continuity, [institutional] memory. The other thing we did was that we formalized accessibility to the meetings. We had an informal way to reach out to our colleagues if they needed assistance. But given how things were changing, we needed to step up and have formal arrangements made so that if people were challenged in certain kinds of ways, if they needed assistance, they could alert the Society to know how their needs could be met. That took a little bit of discussion. We needed to work with the Board and the treasurer in terms of our [financial] limits, in terms of our capacity [in] what we could provide. That everybody's entitled to equal access to the meetings.

RYLKO-BAUER: How is that formalized now within the Society?

ANDREATA: When you register, you can spell out what you need and you can check the boxes. So, it's on the application forms, it should be on the website. And then accommodations would be made. Before, it was just by word of mouth.

RYLKO-BAUER: Does the Society have a statement in terms of people with disabilities and other needs?

ANDREATA: Yes, the Society does and it's now not just the hotel's responsibility. It's also the Society's.

RYLKO-BAUER: That's an important achievement. What were some other issues during the time you were [President] that had to do with either changes within the discipline or political changes, that the Society had to address or that impacted the Society in some sense?

ANDREATA: That's a real interesting question. If my memory recalls correctly, 2008 is when we had an economic crash. We would have been in Tampa, and we did see a little bit of a downturn in terms of attendance. And I know our discussions in the Board were very much about future meetings because the Society is so dependent on the success of the meeting for its financial stability. It was also a time when many of us were very excited. Barack Obama gets inaugurated and we're anticipating great changes. What would be the impact for the Society down the future? And if you recall, his mother was an anthropologist, so we were able to bring that into our future meetings as well, which was also very exciting, for we could, in a different way, put anthropology and applied anthropology on the map. That was really a wonderful opportunity. But I think, how to weather [the economic crisis] and be very thoughtful about where does the Society hold its meetings, what's its role, what's its connections to the communities, to the towns, to the cities. And I think those conversations really changed, and we brought Tuesday [as a day] for being able to do local [topics at the meetings]. That started at the Santa Fe meeting in 2007. We did a whole day celebrating what was going on in the community, and from the success of that meeting, it was our second time back in a short time; and [now] every four years, I think, we're coming back to New Mexico because of what we're able to do in the community. Attendance is wonderful.

RYLKO-BAUER: It's a great place, people like to go there.

ANDREATA: And so, with the Board's blessing, thinking about and working with PMA [Professional Management Associates], thinking about where we go and the

willingness [of] people to step up to be the program chair and work with the local areas on how to put together an exciting meeting. That's the bread and butter for the Society.

RYLKO-BAUER: I think it's actually very important that the Society connects with the local community.

ANDREATA: Yes, absolutely.

RYLKO-BAUER: Who were some of the people you worked with during your presidency?

ANDREATA: I know I had a lot of conversations with John van Willigen, just about history of applied. I was very curious, from reading and using his book, how it's grown, how it's expanded. We are close to three thousand in membership, but it's changed over the years and taken on new roles and responsibilities, and we've partnered with so many other groups over the years.

RYLKO-BAUER: That's true.

ANDREATA: And keeping that an active, dynamic part of the agenda for the Society. Sometimes, we partner with different groups to combine organizations and people stay. I'm not sure we should get bigger than three thousand [members]. But the most exciting thing that the Society should feel proud of is that, say we're three-thousand-members strong, we get close to two thousand or more coming to our meetings. And when you think about percentagewise the walk-ons, that community engagement, the daily walk-ins that come in and say, "I'm just registering for the day," that is all fantastic. I also appreciate working with graduate students and carrying them on for a legacy.

RYLKO-BAUER: Sure, very important. So, to conclude this part of our conversation, what advice would you give a newly elected President of the Society?

ANDREATA: Work very closely with your Executive Director, and be in touch, maybe weekly but more than monthly, so that you know what's going on and they know what's going on with the committees. There might be times when you need to reach out to the program chair and just be in the loop. When you're leading the Board, you need to know what's going on behind the scenes. And the only way that you know is to stay active and involved.

RYLKO-BAUER: Well, I can imagine that your decision to really interact with all of the committee chairs and find out what's going on with each committee must have been

helpful [in giving] you this overall sense of where the Society was going.

ANDREATA: Absolutely. Needing to know for myself and not just reading about it or to be told [at the] last minute. And sometimes, some of the things that they're working on take a little time or need early encouragement to get going. I think that's a good way to inform and empower one's self.

RYLKO-BAUER: Was there anything else that pops into your mind before we switch over to your work at UNCG?

ANDREATA: I'd like to actually mention some other people that were really instrumental. A good friend that I was on the Board with [was] Nancy Parezo. Nancy is just a wonderful person in so many capacities, and supportive. And she gave me a turtle who, she said, was her spirit guide. And that guide was given to her by one of her informants; she works with Native Americans in Arizona. She thought that the turtle would be a wonderful spirit guide for me. I could be hard on the outside and loving and mushy in the middle.

RYLKO-BAUER: (laughs) That's great.

ANDREATA: When I was President, I wore that turtle very faithfully. In all my challenging moments that turtle [has been] my guide.

RYLKO-BAUER: Describe the turtle for us.

ANDREATA: The turtle is a beautiful sterling silver pin, and on the top of it in the center it has a gorgeous piece of turquoise. And then, on the Board the treasurer was Diane Austin. And she was a phenomenal treasurer and helped really clean up, shape up, and best of all, inform us how to read a spreadsheet on the budget. Because the Board is responsible for and votes on the budget, so how are these allocations being made? Diane was very good [at] that. Merrill Eisenberg was another Board member and later became President, so we overlapped in time. Again, having those two women there. [Also] Robert Rubinstein, who wasn't on the Board at the time but was also just a good colleague, and I got him involved in some of the policy work and his project for SAR [School for Advanced Research]. All of these things fostered friendship and support. Then Tim Wallace took over from Mike Whiteford to do the [SfAA] newsletter.

RYLKO-BAUER: And he was a great editor, too.

ANDREATA: And he changed us from a paper piece and put us online.

RYLKO-BAUER: Un-huh. Dragged you into the twenty-first century.

ANDREATA: Yes. I had really good people, mentors that really helped, I think, lead

the Society in different directions and we grew, and we'll continue to do that. You had asked, what else? I would inform a new President to tap into the young people, reach out, make sure you're there for the graduate or student meetings, introduce yourself. I went to the, I think, 2007 meeting, introduced myself to the graduate students. The president [of the SfAA Student Association] then was Cassandra Workman. Just last week, we hired her in our department to be a new colleague in applied anthropology. You never know [about] networking and connections; stuff comes around. So, to be able to have all of these friendships over these many years; they come and go, and then they come back and surprise you. So, tapping into our younger people and new assistant [professors] or new PAs, practicing people, and reaching out. Also, we are a group that is not all anthropologists and might be working in other areas, so how to get them involved and retain their interest and their support and get them involved in leadership.

RYLKO-BAUER: You're talking about geographers, sociologists, psychologists, other people? Because it is an interdisciplinary [Society].

ANDREATA: Interdisciplinary, yes.

RYLKO-BAUER: The point you made about reaching out to students is really important. I have heard many people say that they feel more comfortable coming to the SfAA meetings [because] they feel that, as students, they're on an equal footing.

ANDREATA: That's right.

RYLKO-BAUER: I think students can oftentimes feel lost [at meetings]. And overlooked. And when you feel invisible, you don't feel welcome.

ANDREATA: We also have the opportunity for grad programs in applied to set up booths and recruit. At UNCG, we're just an undergraduate program. I was bringing undergraduate students, and said, "Now, you go look and see what's available. Introduce yourselves and see where you might fit in and consider applying." And that was a wonderful opportunity. So, we're not just looking at graduate students, we are also encouraging and professionalizing our undergraduate students to consider how to apply anthropology to the real world or how to apply social science to the real world where people come first. I think that's what attracts a lot of people here who are trying to make a difference from the bottom up.

RYLKO-BAUER: I think this is a good segue to your work at UNCG. You talked a little bit about teaching. I don't know if you want to add anything more? I mean, you teach a variety of courses.

ANDREATA: Well, I began teaching intro and really loved it, and I got that from Mike Whiteford. He [said that] if you're going to get people hooked, that's where you do it. Get them in from the intro and that was great advice. Then I developed classes in applied anthropology, environmental anthropology, food and culture. It's more food and agriculture. And I teach methods and medical anthropology. I think applied runs through everything. I believe so much in teaching and applied. I had met Gary Ferraro at the AAA meetings over a number of years. Gary Ferraro is author of a textbook called *Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective*, and I'd never used that. [Probably in 2006, he contacted me]: "I'm encouraged by what you do and I'm in need of a coauthor." So, I met his editor at Cengage and she said, "I'd like you to send me some samples of your writing," which I did, and then she said, "Okay, I'd like you to be Gary's coauthor."

RYLKO-BAUER: The textbook had already existed?

ANDREATA: Yes, editions one through six.

RYLKO-BAUER: And this one?

ANDREATA: That's seven.

RYLKO-BAUER: That's when you came on?

ANDREATA: Yes. I was asked to write a chapter. And then I said, "Well, can I look at some of the others?" and she said, "Sure," so I got to edit all sixteen chapters. The deal was to take on four chapters every edition, and now ...

RYLKO-BAUER: Revise them, you mean?

ANDREATA: Yes.

RYLKO-BAUER: It's in the eleventh edition. That's very successful [and] it must be used by people not just in anthropology.

ANDREATA: I think that we're probably the only book on the market that has an applied perspective.

RYLKO-BAUER: There are some applied textbooks, but you're talking about focusing on cultural anthropology but with an applied perspective?

ANDREATA: Absolutely.

RYLKO-BAUER: It's for an intro course?

ANDREATA: Absolutely. And we work well, and it has been probably supportive for community colleges. I think Gary and I complemented one another, he was [focused on] art and business and I was environment, health, and all these other things, so it really worked. It's quite interdisciplinary for an intro course. I think we hit

on thirty-six different occupations of where you can take anthropology and have case studies, so I hope there's a twelfth edition coming.

RYLKO-BAUER: Okay. Well, I know in talking with you that you are very passionate about and engaged with a project at UNCG, which is the community gardens. You're also codirector of that project, so I'd like you to talk about that.

ANDREATA: A number of years ago, in the early 2000s, I approached our university for using space to grow a garden, and they said, "No, we can't do it."

RYLKO-BAUER: And what made you want to do that?

ANDREATA: I've always enjoyed gardening. Our campus had a lot of green space, and it once had a Victory Garden for World War I and for World War II. We had all these fruit-bearing trees here and there. Why not use this and provide students or whoever the opportunity to grow or learn to grow? There were some faculty members—I was an untenured professor—we wrote a white paper on how a garden would fit into sustainability for our campus before that was the buzzword. It went nowhere. In 2009, I had students in two different classes take on projects, how would a community garden benefit UNCG from a student's perspective. I had a group do it and they broke it down and then an individual in the environmental anthropology class did it. I took these two assignments to [the] administration and said, "I'm not asking. Students are asking."

RYLKO-BAUER: Smart.

ANDREATA: How would a community garden at UNCG work? Lo and behold, we get another budget crisis, and they said, "We'll give you the space. Depending on where you go, we'll give you the water, and that's all." I said, "I can work with that." We found a very nice space and we built fifty raised beds that are four by eight [feet]. And I and the codirector, Guy Sanders, who is associate director for Residence Life and could tap into students and email them, he and I helped build these [raised beds] and create relationships with different faculties. We had the interior architecture students design what the garden would look like. They resourced where we would buy previously used wood from old barns and then their studio put together how to build all these things and build benches, and so we had so much campus involvement. We've been there nine and a half years and growing. Over two thousand students have participated. We've had to rebuild the beds three times, so I make sure women can use power tools. And now, the city provides our dirt and woodchips.

RYLKO-BAUER: It's real university engagement with the community.

ANDREATA: Absolutely. And then alumni—the most recent donation just helped for building the bed—provide the wood or the expertise or the tools and we've got all of this happening with lovely networking and connections.

RYLKO-BAUER: Do people choose a particular bed or how does that work?

ANDREATA: They rent a bed for ten dollars a semester. Where I really need coverage is over the summer, and I said, "If you use it from spring through December, you can have it for twenty dollars," and then I provide the tools, the water and try and keep it neat and mowed around them and they get to work with whatever they want inside [the bed]. We keep it organic. And [with] people's plots who don't tend over the summer and all the ones that I take for student teaching, we'll harvest and share the food with whoever's working that day. I have summer workers and they take what they need or want to share out or we make donations to food banks, women's shelters and the elder shelters.

RYLKO-BAUER: You wrote an article about this in Culture, Agriculture, Food and Environment in 2015. I remember reading that the kitchen at the university had several plots.

ANDREATA: They had five plots.

RYLKO-BAUER: And they actually did the growing?

ANDREATA: They grew, they harvested and then they used it in the catering for the chancellor. And they would label it.

RYLKO-BAUER: That's great. And someone else at the library ...

ANDREATA: They're growing flowers in a bed and they were doing tea in another bed, so they could beautify their reception area in the library with flowers and they wanted tea to drink.

RYLKO-BAUER: Then someone else is growing flowers for hospice.

ANDREATA: Yes.

RYLKO-BAUER: It's very interesting. And students grow for themselves. So, how do you use it in your teaching?

ANDREATA: Well, in teaching for some classes and not regularly, I would ask that it be part of the grade and the experience, and then [in] others I would encourage it to be volunteer. In a different way, [with] co-curricular teaching, so no grade, no class. I'm the advisor for the student garden club. We meet every Wednesday from 5:15 pm, and depending on the light, to 6:15 or eight. We're out there, and I'm teaching

about growing. We can get anywhere from ten to twenty-five students every Wednesday coming out, wanting to be with one another. Even on rainy days, we're inside and we're taking single-use plastic bags and making plarn [plastic yarn], and crocheting bedrolls for the homeless. The [club] president and treasurer put together a slide show from the previous years of all we're farming and they're teaching about insects, what they've learned, and companion growing.

RYLKO-BAUER: The students act as teachers too?

ANDREATA: That's right. Another student was bringing in all of her accoutrement for what she wants to do for zero waste life. I bring farmers in. We've had evenings where international students would talk about food and culture and we bring food to share. And we've been holding potlucks for Thanksgiving. Last year, twenty-three students showed up. We laid out a table in the classroom and without cellphones except for taking selfies and groups shots, we had conversations for two hours with food.

RYLKO-BAUER: Which is also an important lesson.

ANDREATA: Yes.

RYLKO-BAUER: What do you think the students are learning from this? This is an extracurricular activity, but you're obviously seeing this as having an impact on the students.

ANDREATA: There are students who will say they just love coming down to weed. They need to be outside, and that repetitive [action]. I can tell when they're stressed. Their heads are so close together, I know to back away. They are doing whatever they need to be with one another, relax, recharge and tend to weeding. I know they're getting those kinds of skills of how to grow, weed, and harvest, and cook. And they're taking those skills with them when they leave. Some are buying or renting homes to make sure they can garden. I have at least ten students now who have bought farms. And one I buy from every week that I'm able to get to the local farmers market. It's a joy to see them and you don't know where they are going to take their skills. We also are a very diverse group where some students are physically, possibly mentally challenged. They're very welcoming and they teach us in different ways how to create community and negotiate how we work together, carry things and get jobs done. We talk, we listen, and I think these are different kinds of skills. It's not about yields and how much it costs. One person I'm extremely fond of, when she came as a freshman, was a very picky eater and now she can't wait to harvest. She wants to

make sure we're growing unusual things to take them home and cook. That's just transforming for people who might have microwaved or bought prepackaged [in the past] to now say, "I can grow it, and I'll cook it and share it with others." We had other groups growing for their members. They were clubs and they knew that their students were living in cars and couldn't feed themselves. They were recognizing that if you knew how to do it, you [could] share it with others and that's what they wanted to be able to do.

RYLKO-BAUER: Another project that I know you've been involved with—and I'm curious how this relates to the community gardens—is Project Green Leaf.

ANDREATA: Oh, that's a predecessor.

RYLKO-BAUER: So that doesn't exist anymore?

ANDREATA: Oh, we exist, but it's older. We had a horrible hurricane that destroyed a bunch of stuff in North Carolina back in 2001. Our local grocery stores were running on a generator. Our then-chancellor [Dr. Patrician Sullivan] was in the grocery store buying strawberries, and we talked and she said, "What are you doing?" I told her what I was dreaming of and she said, "Why don't you apply to my vision fund, and we'll see what we can do?" She awarded me a three-year grant of a hundred fifty thousand dollars to set up Project Green Leaf to do outreach for farmers in the community about local food and helping our local farmers stay in place and encouraging more local farmers, because I told her of the decline in people's interest in farming and knowing where their food comes from. Where is the future going to be? Then I wrote a lot of grants, got funded, and reached out to immigrant communities. [We] started a community garden for them, working with the Montagnards, who were refugees from Laos in Cambodia. We worked two years with that and then that project finished. We got them to sell at the farmers market. People who had come recently never had a bank account, but they were so successful at selling at the market that the women said, "I want my own money." And they were bringing their children who could speak English to translate and do math. And that's still going.

RYLKO-BAUER: I was going to ask how Bruce Springsteen got involved with this.

ANDREATA: Well, in 2008, I believe, Springsteen came into town. He has a wonderful quiet way about him. And apparently, every concert that he goes to, he offers a scholarship or some funding for an organization that helps others. What his PR person recognized in our website for Project Green Leaf is that we're trying to help

others to help themselves. She said, "This is the type of project that Bruce would like to support, so he's offering some money and we'll give you two pairs of tickets that you can auction off." We were generously funded fourteen thousand dollars, unsolicited, and it's a gift. Then they came back in 2016, [but] we had "bathroomgate"—where [the] North Carolina legislature ruled you could only use the bathrooms of the sex that you were born with [Public Facilities Privacy & Security Act of North Carolina concerning transgender use of bathrooms]. So, he wouldn't perform but he honored it and sent a check anyhow. I was completely shocked, not anticipated. And some of his loyal fans also sent checks.

RYLKO-BAUER: Oh, that's wonderful that he recognized Project Green Leaf, twice.

ANDREATA: He's done this for years, everywhere he goes. And yes, it shows how useful we've been. And that same website was picked up [by] a fishery specialist who phoned and said, "I've read your articles on community supported agriculture, could you help small fishers?" Fishermen, as we call them in North Carolina. And I said, "Well, I don't know fish, I'm usually working on land." He goes, "We'll teach you fish if you can help us with the marketing and what you've done to facilitate the connections with the local people." And I said, "Okay." I came down to Carteret County. They had already launched a logo for Carteret Catch and then I was helping with marketing for Carteret Catch for community supported fisheries.

RYLKO-BAUER: Can you back up and tell us where Carteret County is and also what Carteret Catch is? This is on the coast?

ANDREATA: Greensboro is four and a half hours from Carteret County, on the East Coast. Beaufort is a vacation town people might know. We're near some lighthouses and Harkers Island is an area [where] I would be working with small fishermen and in that whole area of Carteret. This fishery specialist, Barry Nash, was working with the local fishermen on this logo design that they wanted [for] a traceability program [for] restaurants and boats who were part of this membership. [So] that you could trace and guarantee that it was local fish. Oftentimes in some coastal areas, the fish is not local. It's imported, including our shrimp, and these areas were well known for shrimp and small crabs and flounders or soft-shell crabs. How can you guarantee that some of the things in certain restaurants are local? The logo was designed for a traceability program. Well, Scott [Baker, another fisheries specialist] thought we could go further with community supported and maybe prepay or work with the small-scale fishermen on different ways of connecting with people. So, I went to the

hotels and said, "We could design a package for your guests that if they wanted fresh shrimp or flounder, we could have a cooler waiting for them and have a traceability program that [shows] what they're getting would be local." I gave a number of talks to flesh this out, and that project went up to Nova Scotia, went down to Florida. It's on the West Coast. Uh, where else did it go? I think it went to Spain, Australia and a few other places.

RYLKO-BAUER: You mean community supported fisheries?

ANDREATA: Yes, CSFs.

RYLKO-BAUER: I went online to LocalCatch.org, and I've heard farm to table, but had never heard boat to fork! I think that's so great. They said there were 422 locations in North America. Talk about impact.

ANDREATA: Yes, that was a lot of people involved.

RYLKO-BAUER: And you were one of those people involved, too.

ANDREATA: Yes, early on and calling it community supported fisheries was something that I coined, but I wouldn't have had that opportunity if Scott Baker hadn't [contacted me after reading my work on community supported agriculture].

Fishermen are facing challenges, competition.

RYLKO-BAUER: And fisherwomen ...

ANDREATA: That's why the people in the north call them fishers. I [too] would fish on the boats. I'd do my interviews during the day and then I'd go out shrimping at night or floundering and have a really inside, emic perspective. I was a worker. I sorted shrimp. I was even a vegetarian until that point (laughs), and then I learned to eat fish. But this was different, popping heads off shrimp. I had never done that.

RYLKO-BAUER: But to really understand what challenges food producers face, you need ...

ANDREATA: To do it and to know their workday, because they would fish all night, land a catch in the morning and then maybe have to refuel, get ice, maybe sleep or get some food, do the repairs [on the boat as needed]. You never knew what was going on. They were exhausted. You could fish Sunday night through Friday afternoon, then [the waters were] for recreational people. I think the competition from imports is a threat and being able to know that you're buying local, selling at a premium [is important for the fishermen]. They still, in my mind, were giving it away. Some were very creative doing roadside stands, but I saw a price for beautiful shrimp for \$2.35 or \$1.75 a pound, you know? And I said, "If I'm a tourist driving by and I

don't know you, I'd think that's bait" (laughs). Because what I'm paying inland [is much more]. So, what community supported fisheries did—there was a group at Duke that picked up on it, they brought the fish inland. They created drop-off points around the area and people would buy in through the computer or become a member and preorder their fish just like [in] community supported agriculture, then they'd get their share. That was helping to create and support local fishermen.

RYLKO-BAUER: I can understand the importance of creating a brand, because then people know it's local. I think you may have mentioned already that if you've got a lot of imported fish, people aren't really aware. They want local, but ...

ANDREATA: Yes, and that's where the North Carolina fisheries people were really [helpful]. Barry Nash, working with different groups, and Scott Baker. Once Carteret [Catch] took off, then they started doing it with the other areas and local communities. You'll find along the North Carolina coast, where there are intense local fishermen, they'll all have their own logo. And that's good to look for at roadside stands or restaurants or just making sure, [for] tourists who come to the area, is this local? And if you're not sure ... because, for the record, salmon is not local (laughs). There's no salmon there.

RYLKO-BAUER: It's interesting because as we've become so globalized, there's so much that is universal. But I think that is changing. There is more value put on things that are locally crafted. We've realized at the same time how everything had become homogeneous, on some levels.

ANDREATA: And in a different way, this is sustainability all over again. Because it's helping people to connect to the local to stay in business. And if you like what's going on or [what you're] eating then you want to make sure the next time you come back, it's there.

RYLKO-BAUER: I did want to ask you one more question about your teaching. How many students end up majoring in anthropology in your program?

ANDREATA: In our program, we have just under a hundred first majors and probably another twenty-five to thirty second majors. They do the same amount of work. It's just how they declare [a major]. We're maintaining that per cohort and we graduate about thirty a year.

RYLKO-BAUER: And who are your other students who take not just the intro but additional courses?

ANDREATA: Every year, our department teaches probably twelve hundred

students a semester in different parts of anthropology—biology students, nursing students, environmental studies students. And because of our intro program—whether it's biological, cultural, or archeology—all students have to take these gen-ed classes and we're well poised to expose many students to anthropology. I think we are what we call a discovery major. And maybe because of the gen-ed [students] in those intro classes, you are able to retain [some] students for maybe a second major, if not a minor. They'll take the skillsets with them that help them do whatever else they would like to do; and the knowledge, and worldview—culture, time and place, and history.

RYLKO-BAUER: To conclude, how do you see yourself in terms of impacts that you have had? Some of this we've already covered. You've talked about your work in the SfAA and the work you have done on the community gardens. But in a more general sense, have you thought about that from time to time?

ANDREATA: Yes. I think there are a couple of tracks that come to mind right away. By working with local farmers for twenty-three years in Greensboro, I was worried for a period of time that we wouldn't have new farmers coming to the markets. And now, I'm seeing new people. They don't always have to be young. They could be back-to-landers. I am seeing some of my older farmers transition out, facing different kinds of life challenges, but new people coming along. And I think my next track is how to take the old knowledge and the new knowledge. We're expecting climate change and everybody's experiencing it; we are, too, in our campus garden. There are things we can't grow as we once did ten years ago. So, how do we bring [together] this shared knowledge and shared experience from our more experienced people and new ones? I'm currently working on that. Collecting the stories and the narratives of what's going on and how are they adapting to change.

RYLKO-BAUER: So, you're doing oral histories?

ANDREATA: I'm doing oral histories now with farmers. And along with that, seeing them come to market, so making sure farmers markets are staying alive and thriving. Over my career with Project Green Leaf [we] started three, but they dwindled. Now, we've got four in our area doing very well and that's probably enough. But it's the young people or new [people] coming back and being able to stay a year and then you see them another year, and that's good. Now we've got sustainability in the markets. When I first started doing domestic agriculture, I think that nationally we had twenty-five hundred farmers markets that were recorded, and now we're close to five

thousand. [In] all the work, whether it's anthropologists or communities doing it, what people are recognizing around the country is their importance. To support local, you have to support the farmers markets. And we're not talking about, are you making a lot of money or that kind of success, but we're maintaining a larger number of markets and that's community support. I want to thank many, many people who are now [working on this]. You look at our [SfAA] programs, you see how much local food ... that there's sessions on food and food insecurity. This isn't going away.

RYLKO-BAUER: Right.

ANDREATA: Another issue is that by 2050 we're going to be trying to feed ten billion people. How are we going to do this? So, we cannot stop talking about food and how to grow it, and make sure that agriculture production is alive and well. Not everybody should be a farmer, but people should respect and appreciate what's going into farming so that they have a meal no matter where it's growing. I think that's part [of the] exposure and value of what I'm teaching and many other anthropologists who are doing the same thing. I think a third area—it's got multiple angles to it, tied with climate change. A colleague of ours, Merrill Singer coined a phrase, syndemics. When you think about loss of potable water, soil health, loss of biodiversity, loss of our forestlands, loss of our energy sources, where is our food going to come from? How do we maintain all of this? I see the potential, if we don't radically change, of water wars, more starvation. This is another endemic problem, [with] diseases or secondary to all of this, with diets—climate change. This topic doesn't go away.

I'm very much interested in this social movement or philosophy or way of life, called Degrowth. They're [fairly] radical in what they're espousing, but it's a way to reduce our energy use and all the throughput, and thinking about if we “degrow,” we might be able to handle climate change. But it is a philosophy, a huge change in culture [where] we value time, our time, free time, enjoying nature, enjoying social relationships, mindfulness. And not GDP, not how much money you made.

RYLKO-BAUER: So, it's reducing consumption?

ANDREATA: Reducing consumption, reducing capitalism. The challenge will be that, for a period of time, a lot of people would be put out of work, so how do you avoid global economic collapse? What could be put in place? The pathway to some of these changes in the North would be very different from the South. Who's poor versus who's more privileged could be different.

RYLKO-BAUER: The North is essentially extracting from the South ...

ANDREATA: They're using extraction and colonialism, so how do you work through this? But at some point, we are going to be energy-deprived [of] our resources and ecological economists [are] saying green energy is insufficient to replace our dependency on oil globally.

We have to do it now before time runs out. And meanwhile the CO2 emissions keep happening and our climate keeps warming. What we've been experiencing possibly in the last three years are the worst storms, whether it's rain, or the worst droughts, the worst fires.

RYLKO-BAUER: Right.

ANDREATA: And if this is the path, we've got some challenges facing us. How to do this collectively, with community from the bottom up? And encouraging more people to work together towards this kind of change.

RYLKO-BAUER: You organized a session [on this topic] at these meetings?

ANDREATA: Yes.

RYLKO-BAUER: Did that include students or other colleagues that are trying to work with this philosophy or movement within anthropology?

ANDREATA: Oh, absolutely. I went to my first Degrowth conference in Malmö, in August of last year. I met Barbara Muraca, who teaches at University of Oregon. She presented on the history and [did] a dynamic job. Then a student of hers from OSU [Oregon State University], Micknai Arefaine, from Ethiopia but also raised in the US, did a presentation. And there's Lisa Gezon, [who] had been working with Susan Paulson and brought it to the AAA in 2015. Susan was unable to attend [our session] but Lisa presented what she's been doing in the classroom and with her fieldwork. And I presented on what I was doing in our classroom to help foster this movement for change and inspiring students to be thinking about it not as a burden but hopeful, like a new pathway, an alternative way of living. They all have debt as students, but if you live more simply, [if] you didn't need all these consumer things ... And just be mindful. Taking time to slow down.

RYLKO-BAUER: So, it's a slow living movement.

ANDREATA: Right, absolutely. This group, Degrowth, uses the snail as part of their logo. There are elements of it that are a bit more radical than I would buy into, but I think this aggressiveness to combat or work with climate change before it gets us is something that we really need to pay attention to.

RYLKO-BAUER: Is there anything else that you want to say about where you see applied anthropology heading? How its future can be both assured and made even broader?

ANDREATA: Well, we've had a long history so far, more than seventy-five years of being an organization. But these global problems aren't going away and many are domestic as well as international. If we remain mindful to local needs, we should always be around. How our organization stays solvent—I think we've got a good history in how we've been able to do that.

I remain saddened/hopeful that there are always going to be issues for applied anthropologists to get involved in. And where we provide that cultural or humanistic perspective to hard science or to other ways of doing can be critically important.

RYLKO-BAUER: Is there anything that we need to be doing differently or doing more to advance applied anthropology and the practice of it?

ANDREATA: Yes, if there are more ways we can get involved in policy, so that people's voices and not just issue voices are heard.

RYLKO-BAUER: That's a good way of putting it, because issue voices are often times controlled, politicized, and weaponized by people with other agendas. People in power.

ANDREATA: Yes, and oftentimes who we're working with are the marginalized whose voices aren't heard and if you relegate them to that status rather than embrace them as an equal voice then I think we could do better there.

RYLKO-BAUER: I think on that note, we will end. I have really enjoyed having this conversation and listening to and learning a lot more about what you've done. And you've really accomplished a lot, Susan, so my congratulations and my very, very grateful thanks.

ANDREATA: My pleasure. Oh, I just remembered one more thing in closing. When I became president, I happened to meet Sue-Ellen Jacobs in the elevator. I had the gavel, and she told me that her father made it. And that's where I learned the story that her father said she might need this when she was president, to control the people around the boardroom. And ever since, part of our ritual in the Society during our business meeting is to pass the gavel on from the [current] to the incoming President. Sometimes, I've heard other people mention that it was Margaret Mead's gavel. For the record, it was Sue-Ellen Jacobs and her father.

RYLKO-BAUER: Well, thank you. I think it's important to get history right.

ANDREATA: It sure is. Thank you.

Further reading:

Andreatta, Susan. 2015. Through the Generations: Victory Gardens for Tomorrow's Tables. *Cultural, Agriculture, Food and Environment* 37(1): 38-46.

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