

BORNEO RESEARCH COUNCIL
ANNUAL NEWSLETTER REPORTING THE ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR 2016

September 2016

DEAR FELLOWS AND MEMBERS:

It is the season to renew your Fellowship or Membership status. Again the months have raced across the cosmic canvas as if on a marathon, while I try to turtle my way to extend the time till eternity.

We have enclosed your invoice and a flyer on our recent publications. It has been an extremely busy year!

Fellows/Members: Please Note – PDF copies of BRC publications:

All publications are now available in PDF format with the exception of *Psychiatric Research Among the Iban* and the *Iban Diaries of Monica Freeman* and the publications listed in the flyer of recently published works. This makes them available for searches.

Fellows/Members may request free of charge any five items in our publication list. If Fellows/Members want additional items, we will charge US \$10 for each additional set of five. Please send requests to brc@borneoresearchcouncil.org.

These PDF-formatted items are not available to non-Fellows/Members.

News

DEATHS

Laura W.R. Appell

My wife and partner in all things seen and unseen, Laura W.R. Appell, died unexpectedly in October, 2015. Her obituary appears in the current issue of the BRB.

Louise Klemperer Sather, Assistant Editor, Borneo Research Bulletin

Cliff Sather writes beautifully about his wife and their life together:

Sadly, I must inform the members of the BRC that my wife Louise passed away on August 23rd, the victim of a relentlessly aggressive form of ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease. Louise began to assist me with *Borneo Research Bulletin* in the fall of 1996. In belated recognition of the important work she was by then already doing, she was made Assistant Editor in 2003, a position she held until her death.

Louise and I first met in 1957, in an early-morning German class. At the time, we were both first-year students at Reed College in Portland, Oregon. We seemed not to have noticed each other at first, for by the time we did, Louise, full of life and strikingly beautiful, had already acquired several boy friends. But, one morning we did notice and after class, began to talk as we walked through the campus. And so we began a love affair that continued until our final year, when, sadly, we parted—Louise to become a potter and artist, I for graduate school at Harvard, fieldwork in Borneo, and eventually, an academic life as an anthropologist.

After graduation, Louise went on for formal training in ceramics in New York and became a full-time potter. In the late 1960s she joined a community of artists and craftspeople in Michigan and there married a fellow potter. After their divorce, she moved back to Portland in 1979, where she taught at the Oregon School of Arts and Crafts, made pottery part-time, and worked as a free-lance writer, writing art columns, reviews, and interviews for *American Ceramics* and local newspapers. She also co-authored a book on twentieth century Japanese prints published by the Portland Art Museum in 1983 and conducted on-the-air interviews with artists and musicians for *KBOO*, a local art and classical music radio station in Portland.

In the late 1980s, during an interview with a well-known ceramic sculptor, Louise was struck by the interplay of life experience and creativity, especially by the psychotherapeutic implications of this interplay. Going back to graduate school, she obtained a Master's degree in counseling psychology in 1990, to which she added art therapy training at the Person-Centered Expressive Therapy Institute in California. After certification, she opened her own counseling practice in the early 1990s, specializing in cognitive-behavioral and expressive art therapy.

At this point, in 1996, with her son now in college, Louise and I unexpectedly met. After years in Southeast Asia and Australia, I had just returned to Portland to teach at Reed. Although our meeting was joyous, there were complications. Among them, I was committed to taking up a visiting professorship at the University of Helsinki in early 1998. Louise, however, instantly fell in love with Finland just as I had, and in 2001 we were married, having at last, it seemed to us both, the marriage that we had always been meant to have. By now I was at UNIMAS in Sarawak where Louise joined me. Louise was an immense source of support and our next two and a half years together were hugely productive. Not only was

Louise an accomplished writer, but she possessed an even rarer gift, that of a superb editor. Scores of contributors to the *BRB* benefitted enormously. Just before we left Sarawak, an opportunity arose in August 2003 to pursue a project I had long dreamed of, recording a Saribas Iban healing ritual called the *Sugi Sakit*. Once performed frequently, the ritual was now on the verge of disappearing. The *Sugi Sakit* precisely fit Louise's interests. At its heart was a narrative epic, composed in poetic language and sung for the patient by a priest bard. For participants in the ritual, the expressive beauty of the language of the narrative and of the symbolic setting in which it was sung were seen as directly contributing to the ritual's effectiveness as a work of healing. Together with our Iban co-worker, Jantan Uambat, we recorded in the field over two weeks in August a complete version of the *Sugi Sakit* together with extensive commentary from the last living priest bard able to perform it. The following, we returned to Sarawak to record additional commentary and a second performance of the ritual.

Having now reached the age of retirement, Louise and I decided to return to the University of Helsinki rather than retire. The next two years and beyond were, in many ways, the happiest years of our lives. At the end of the 2005 academic year, I retired and Louise and I returned to Portland. Here we bought a house and Louise made the lower level into an art studio.

In 2013, just as I finished a complete first draft of a *Sugi Sakit* book, Louise's doctors found signs of possible breast cancer. These were confirmed early the next year and in 2014 Louise underwent surgery followed by chemotherapy. In December we were delighted when her doctors pronounced her completely cancer free. However, she now began to experience new symptoms, notably speech difficulties and weakness in her right arm and leg. For a time her neurologist was encouraging, but in May 2015, after a multitude of tests, he delivered the devastating diagnosis of ALS. We knew at once that we had only a limited time left together. Tragically, she suffered from a particularly aggressive form of the disease, and the time we had proved to be far shorter than we had imagined. Although she soon lost her ability to speak, her mind remained unaffected. She never lost her courage or sense of humor, nor, mercifully, the use of her writing hand. Down to the last minutes of her life, she continued to communicate by writing. Following her earlier diagnosis with breast cancer, Louise began to write a journal, as a remembrance for her son Tom and me. Drawing on earlier writings, and reflecting her own rich inner life, she described all that she had loved in life, her struggles with illness, and, in the end, to aid us through our own impending grief, her gradual coming to terms with dying.

Completing her journal in June, Louise died peacefully at home two months later, surrounded, just as she had wished, by her immediate family and a small circle of friends.

- *Cliff Sather*

Additional obituaries for **Barbara Harrisson** and **Eugene Fuller** can be found in the current issue of the *BRB*.

NEW BRC FUND

In recognition of Laura W. R. Appell's commitment to the preservation of Borneo oral traditions and her contributions to Borneo ethnography, a fund was established in her honor with the initial contribution made by Cliff and Louise Sather. Laura was a Fellow of the Borneo Research Council and one of the founding members. This Fund will support the activities and publications of the Borneo Research Council. Contributions to the Laura W.R. Appell Fund of the Borneo Research Council may be sent to: Borneo Research Council, Box A, Phillips, ME 04966.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

The Firebird Foundation is offering residential Fellowships for the study of collections of Borneo material culture including, basketry, textiles, tools, etc. For further information please contact: Firebird@FirebirdFoundation.org.

STATUS OF THE BORNEO RESEARCH BULLETIN

Volume 46 (2015) of the *Borneo Research Bulletin* has just been published. The Borneo Research Bulletin prospers under the fine editorship of Cliff Sather, for which we are most thankful. It has contained many significant and important papers. We are getting more and more requests for copies of its articles.

HONORS FOR BERNARD SELLATO

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to you concerning Bernard Sellato's imminent retirement from the CNRS. Sander Adelaar, Léo Mariani, Bernard Moizo and myself are planning to put together a festschrift for the occasion. On behalf of the editors I would like to invite you to participate in our initiative and hope that you will be able to contribute a paper.

We would appreciate it if you could forward this call for contributions to other potential contributors among your colleagues, but please do not publicise this, as it is essential that our initiative will not come to Bernard's attention.

Yours sincerely,

Pierre Le Roux <p.le.roux@unistra.fr>

NEW FELLOWS AND MEMBERS

The BRC would like to recruit more Fellows and Members particularly in those disciplines that are not well represented among our membership. Let me encourage you to nominate individuals to become Fellows and Members. Also, please encourage your colleagues to join.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

We have had no new publications this year. But the following two are creating considerable attention with comments on them. So I thought we should bring them to your attention.

Heppell, Michael

2014 *The Seductive Warp Thread: An Evolutionary History of Ibanic Weaving*. Borneo Research Council Material Culture Series No. 1.

2015 *Communing with the Dark Side: Borneo's Masks and Masquerades*. Borneo Research Council Material Culture Series No. 2.

Reviews of *The Seductive Warp Thread* and *Communing with the Dark Side* appeared in:

The Seductive Warp Thread: An Evolutionary History of Ibanic Weaving. Reviewed by Elisha Renne. Published in the *Journal of Anthropological Research* Vol 71(4): 601-602, 2015.

Recent Material Culture Studies on Borneo by Bernard Sellato. Book Review of *The Seductive Warp Thread and Communing with the Dark Side*. Published in *Moussons* 27, 2016. Pp. 163-172.

PUBLICATIONS IN PREPARATION

We are also hoping sometime in the coming year to bring to press the very important collected articles and papers of Dr. Clifford Sather.

Laura and I have been encouraged to prepare a monograph on the Rungus people of northern Sabah under the title of: "The Rungus Momogun of Borneo: Trance, Death and Sexual Equality in Cognatic Society". It has of course been delayed because of the death of Laura. Maybe next year.

STORING RESEARCH MATERIALS

This past year we have stored in the office here two collections.

Vinson Sutlive has sent us field notes, along with research and reference materials.

Ruth Barnes, the wife of Rick Fidler, will be sending us copies of Fortier's research in Sabah

among the Chinese along with all Rick Fidler's research materials.

In the past we have stored field work notes, slides, etc. from Bill Wilder and Pete Goethals.

We are in the position of being able to store any Borneo research materials that a scholar would like to be in one place with other Borneo materials.

HELP NEEDED TO REPLY TO INQUIRIES

The BRC office is constantly getting requests for information, almost all of which are beyond my competence. I would like to form a committee of scholars and others to be of help when this occurs so that I can forward on to them the request.

Please let us know if you would be willing to help on these inquiries by sending us your email address.

REVIEWS OF RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY LITERATURE IN VARIOUS DISCIPLINES

The BRC was founded on the principle that in Borneo the various scientific and scholarly disciplines are closely intertwined. The success of the queries of any discipline is interdependent on the findings of many other disciplines. Consequently, when the BRC was formed, it was on the basis of advancing research in the social, biological, and medical sciences in Borneo.

However, since that time, the various disciplines have grown immensely so that it is impossible for a scholar to keep up with developments in related disciplines that may have relevance to one's own research. Therefore it was decided to establish a new series of publications to review the status of research and scholarly publications in various fields.

If these reviews are lengthy they will be published as Occasional Papers; if shorter in length, they will appear in the BRB.

Reviews which have already appeared in the Borneo Research Bulletin:

Volume 36 (2005):

Menno Schilthuizen, "After the Sarawak Law: Evolutional Biology in Borneo Since 1855."
Nicolas Tarling, "Further Notes on the Historiography of British Borneo."

Volume 40 (2009):

Francis Q. Brearley, "Forest Ecology Research in Borneo, 2003-2008."

We want to express our thanks to these authors for their excellent work!

We hope that these publications will stimulate new research and communication between the various disciplines as well as produce additional comments in the BRB.

Please send any offers to prepare a review, or suggestions and nominations to the: brc@borneoresearchcouncil.org.

We need reviews of the linguistic situation in Borneo, research done by Japanese scholars and published in Japanese, historical research in Kalimantan, etc.

FELLOWSHIPS FOR THE COLLECTION OF ORAL LITERATURE AND TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

The BRC has been in contact with a foundation that is willing to award fellowships to support the collection of oral literature and traditional ecological knowledge. If this is of interest to anyone please contact the: brc@borneoresearchcouncil.org.

CONTRIBUTIONS

We wish to thank the following individuals for their contributions to the BRC:

Contributions to the BRC Endowment Fund

Dr. Michael Dove, Mr. John Krefeldt, Professor H. Arlo Nimmo, Mr. John D. Pearson, and Dr. & Mrs. George N. Appell.

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FINANCIAL REPORT

The operating statement is attached.

G. N. Appell, Ph.D.
September 2016