

Abstract

For 33 years (1979–2012), the Smithsonian Institution publication *AnthroNotes* brought anthropology and archaeology to classrooms in the United States and beyond. *AnthroNotes* featured lead articles by research specialists and cartoons by the archaeologist and artist Robert L. Humphrey. *AnthroNotes* originated from the George Washington University / Smithsonian Institution Anthropology for Teachers Program, funded by the National Science Foundation. Although *AnthroNotes* ceased publication, all 84 issues and 263 individual articles are digitized. The cartoons and articles remain relevant and useful, free from copyright restriction, located in the Smithsonian's digital repository (*AnthroNotes* 2018). Here we share practical suggestions and links to the original articles and cartoons to help students examine them for what they reflect about anthropology and archaeology, past and present. In today's rapidly changing intellectual landscape, the cartoons offer an innovative and entertaining way for students to explore enduring questions in anthropology and archaeology as well as current topics, conversations, and concerns. We further demonstrate how these articles and cartoons trace major historical shifts in the field over past decades. Finally, because art reflects its historical context, these materials invite students to assess the impact of critical theory, self-reflexive views of culture, and gender studies on archaeology and anthropology today.

Introduction

Students and teachers well understand the storytelling power of video, and of combining images with text in graphic novels, superhero comic books, and self-published e-zines, as well as in videos on Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, and in games and PowerPoint presentations. For 33 years (1979–2012), the Smithsonian Institution's publication *AnthroNotes* brought anthropology and archaeology to the nation's classrooms, featuring cartoons by the archaeologist and artist Robert L. Humphrey. Unlike video, *AnthroNotes* cartoons present single images conveying an idea in a highly condensed manner, offering humor and insight into human behavior that students can examine, analyze, and discuss.



Figure 1. Cartoonist at work.

This paper's initial cartoon (fig. 1) presents a self-portrait of a hapless young artist, smoking cigarettes, beer cans scattered about, trying to figure out how to represent the origins of the fluted projectile point, one of archaeology's great still-unsolved mysteries and a question Humphrey had explored in his PhD research in Alaska. The cartoon illustrates an interview with the artist (Kaupp 1985), but as with many *AnthroNotes* cartoons, the drawing prompts students to ponder some basic questions of archaeology: What is the nature of human creativity, and what is creativity's role in the evolution of material culture through time?

AnthroNotes originated from the George Washington University / Smithsonian Institution Anthropology for Teachers Program, funded by the National Science Foundation. Despite the cartoons' creation decades ago, they remain an effective teaching tool for college and high school classes. In today's rapidly changing intellectual landscape, these cartoons offer an innovative, stimulating, and entertaining way for students to explore enduring questions in archaeology and anthropology. *AnthroNotes*

and its cartoons also trace major historical shifts over past decades. Because art reflects its historical context, these materials invite students to assess the impact of critical theory, self-reflexive views of culture, and gender studies on current topics, conversations, and concerns in archaeology and anthropology today.

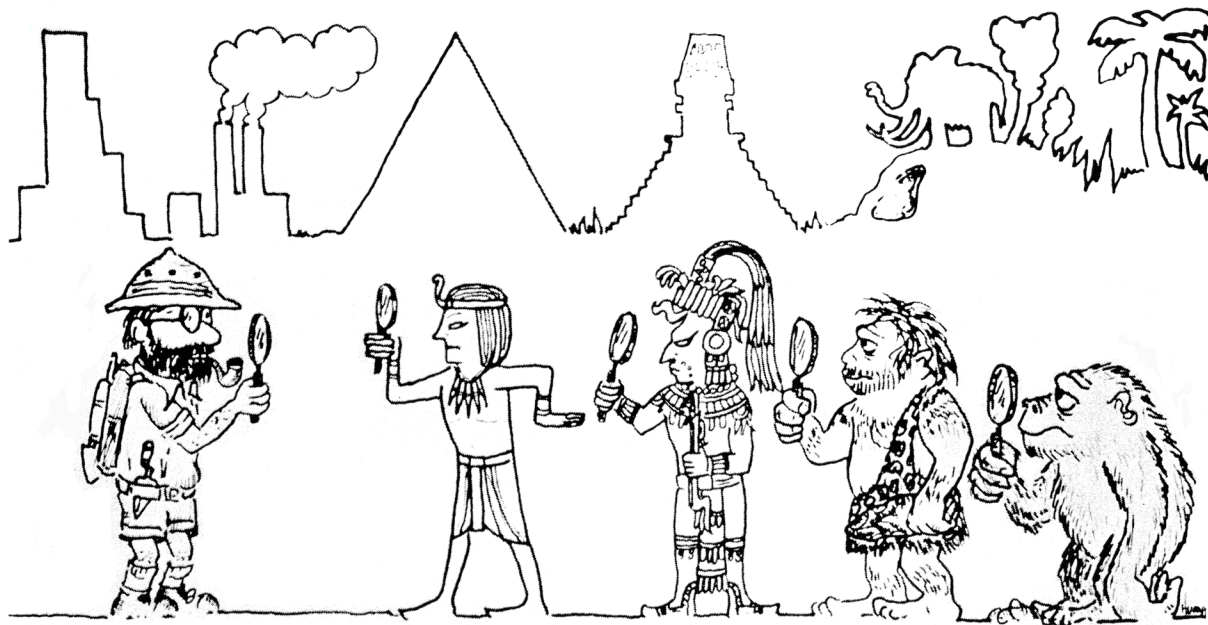
All 84 issues of *AnthroNotes* and 263 individual articles, each with a newly written abstract, are digitized; all articles and cartoons, free from copyright restriction, can be found in the Smithsonian's digital repository (*AnthroNotes* 2018). This database is searchable by author, title, year, and 44 subject topics including geographic regions (e.g., Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, the Caribbean); subfields (e.g., archaeology, biological anthropology, cultural anthropology, geography); contemporary issues (e.g., globalization, race and ethnicity, refugees, conflict and warfare, human rights), and education (e.g., teaching activities, teacher resources, education).

History of AnthroNotes

AnthroNotes grew out of the George Washington University / Smithsonian Institution Anthropology for Teachers Program, an effort to merge the resources of a museum and a university to bring anthropology to the nation's 7–12 classrooms (Selig and Lanouette 1983). Program staff believed that teachers would find multiple ways to incorporate anthropology into their teaching. One program developer, JoAnne Lanouette, conducted a yearlong needs assessment with teachers and school administrators in the Washington, DC, area, discovering some high school anthropology electives but many science and social studies teachers eager to incorporate anthropology and archaeology into varied courses.

Over four years (1978–82), teachers from DC and multiple Maryland and Virginia school districts studied anthropology through semester-long courses and a resource center specifically designed for teachers. Each month focused on a single topic, such as primates, human evolution, archaeology and ecology, Native American cultures, socialization, and fieldwork. Seminars with local and visiting anthropologists and archaeologists further illuminated the topics. *AnthroNotes* began as a newsletter to keep program graduates connected to one another.

Teachers earned four graduate credits free of charge each semester from GWU's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, with teachers completing lengthy reading and writing assignments, including creating teaching units for their classes. The program's three-part mission became the mission of *AnthroNotes*: (1) to disseminate recent original research in anthropology and archaeology to help readers stay current with the fields; (2) to encourage teachers of archaeology and anthropology to use new materials, approaches, and community resources; and (3) to create a national network of professionals interested in the wider dissemination of anthropology and archaeology, particularly in schools.



Anthropology for Teachers Program

GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY/SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Figure 2: GWU/SI Anthropology for Teachers Program brochure.

George Washington University administered the NSF-supported program, and its organizers brought in GWU department chair Robert L. Humphrey, first to illustrate the program brochure (fig. 2), then to illustrate *AnthroNotes* articles. Humphrey's contributions often drew praise from readers, including the University of Chicago anthropologist Sol Tax, founder and editor of the journal *Current Anthropology*, whose 1984 note to the editors described Robert Humphrey as "not just an artist—he is the best anthropological cartoonist I can recall" (Selig 2024).

In 1982, the NSF closed its Pre-College Teacher Development in Social Sciences Program, ending the GWU/SI teacher training program that included funding for *AnthroNotes*. Fortunately, the Smithsonian's Education Outreach Fund supported it through 1984 when *AnthroNotes* became a National Museum of Natural History publication. In the Spring of 1996, *AnthroNotes* announced it was available "on America Online" and in the Spring of 1998, with the 20th Anniversary Issue, *AnthroNotes* grew to 20 pages. In 2002 the Society for American Archaeology gave *AnthroNotes* its Award for Excellence in Public Education for "presenting archaeological and anthropological research to the public in an engaging and accessible style, and for encouraging the study of these disciplines in classrooms across the nation" (SAA 2024). With the 30th anniversary issue in the spring of 2009, approximately 50,000 readers were downloading *AnthroNotes* from the National Museum of Natural History's anthropology website, in addition to the 10,000 readers in 50 states and almost 50

countries worldwide receiving a mailed copy (Selig 2024). Increasingly *AnthroNotes* was accessed as a digitized online resource.



Figure 3: Frontispiece cartoon, *Anthropology Explored*, 2nd ed.

Each issue of *AnthroNotes* featured teaching activities, new resources, and a lead essay summarizing the latest research on a single topic of broad interest to teachers, written by a leading scholar in the field. Smithsonian Institution Press published a selection of these essays in 1998 and an updated and expanded edition six years later (Selig and London 1998; Selig, London, and Kaupp 2004). High schools and colleges adopted *Anthropology Explored* for introductory anthropology and archaeology courses; it became a 1998 Natural Science Book Club selection and was reviewed in the *Times Literary Supplement*, *American Anthropologist*, *Journal of Southeastern Archaeology*, *Ethnohistory*, and *American Antiquity* (Gellner 1998; Sabloff 1999; Prezzano 1999; Christensen 1999; Lerner 2000). The anthology's frontispiece (fig. 3) included a familiar image with one noteworthy change: behind the archaeologist now stood the Smithsonian Castle. The book included over fifty cartoons and with the second edition, an *Instructors Guide* became available (Peterson and Selig 2004).

In an interview with *AnthroNotes* editor P. Ann Kaupp, Humphrey described how he came to cartooning and the nontraditional route he traveled to become an archaeologist (Kaupp 1985). Initially a fine arts major at the University of Colorado, Humphrey transferred to American University after a serendipitous meeting with the AU anthropology professor Don Hartle. Humphrey went on to earn a PhD in archaeology at the University of New Mexico. Teaching varied courses at GWU (archaeology, culture and the environment, art and culture, Arctic cultures, and museum anthropology),

Humphrey led summer field programs in Mexico (Mesoamerican archaeology and history) and helped establish GWU's museum, archaeology, and Latin American studies programs (*Washington Post* 2002).

In “The Art of Anthropology: A Note from the Artist,” he explained, “As an anthropologist, I particularly enjoy drawing for *AnthroNotes* because I am able to work as an artist and anthropologist simultaneously” (Humphrey 1998:xiv). Beneath the cartoons’ humor, many make a serious point:

One of the most important attributes that differentiates our species from the rest of the animal kingdom is our ability to laugh, and even more important, to laugh at ourselves...The ability to make and understand cartoons represents some of the most complex symbolic thought, expression, and self-reflection of which we humans are capable. (Humphrey 1998:xiii)

At the *AnthroNotes* 25th anniversary symposium at the 2004 AAA annual meeting, discussant Jeremy Sabloff, past president of the Society for American Archaeology, noted the cartoons’ importance to the publication:

AnthroNotes has shown that humor in all forms, but especially cartoons, is a highly effective part of successful communication. I am sorry that Bob Humphrey did not live to witness the 25th anniversary of this important publication, the success of which he was so much a part.”

Sabloff went on to describe the publication’s mission, which he said

was accomplished not by publishing bland syntheses of “safe” anthropological topics but by offering carefully chosen and well-edited pieces of cutting-edge thinking by major scholars in the field, who themselves are involved in this research, with articles ranging from race and ethnicity to tattooing and piercing to linguistic survivals to Andean women to forensics to the archaeology of African-American lifeways to museum repatriation—to name a few!...The editors of *AnthroNotes* can be proud they were pioneers in the translation of four-field anthropological knowledge in pre-college classrooms, but even prouder now they are far from alone in such efforts as more and more scholars, institutions, and professional associations have come not only to believe in their vision but its implementation as well. (Sabloff 2004)

Analyzing Cartoon Artwork

By deciphering cartoons, students can sharpen their ability to identify clues, understand the value of irony and humor, and recognize iconic images as well as amusing, unexpected juxtapositions. It is also instructive to infer the cartoonists’ beliefs and

values as well as their views of the foibles of human beings and their societies. Students can do this kind of analysis with Charles M. Schulz's *Peanuts*, Garry Trudeau's *Doonesbury*, or Gary Larson's *The Far Side*, but they can sharpen similar skills through analyzing *AnthroNotes* cartoons. Further, if a cartoonist works over many decades, their artwork likely reflects key changes in their society. For example, in a recent article, Matt Villano (2022) analyzes the impact of Schulz's 1968 inclusion of Franklin, the first black character in *Peanuts*, a development Villano attributes to the impact of the civil rights movement and the assassination of Martin Luther King.

To create their imaginary world, cartoonists use conventions that students can enjoy identifying: exaggerating images, situations, and people; playing on the literal interpretation or double meaning of words; mixing up incongruous subjects; taking the familiar out of context, or combining images from ancient and modern times, thereby creating highly anachronistic situations. Cartoons enabled Humphrey to make wry and sometimes unexpected observations about human nature, human weaknesses, and social foibles, as well as offering insights into his chosen profession of archaeology. As he explained, "Cartoons combine visual elements in such a way as to startle—to capture our attention and focus it momentarily on a new idea, or on a familiar idea seen from a new perspective" (Humphrey 1998:xiii).

Cartoons create a visual landscape often inhabited by recurring figures. Wily mammoths, peaceful chimps, elegant Clovis points, clever female innovators, clumsy hunters, intrusive ethnologists, and often a confused archaeologist or cartoonist inhabit Humphrey's imaginary world. Humans and animals are often seen as interchangeable, reflecting the anthropological perspective that the human species is an animal species akin to all others in the natural world.

When students and their instructors work together to analyze *AnthroNotes* cartoons or examine other cartoons that they find to share with classmates, they are using critical thinking, interpreting evidence, communicating observations, and sharing their creativity, empathy, cultural understanding, and strategies for collaboration. Thus can *AnthroNotes* strengthen students' abilities to negotiate their increasingly complex world, and to articulate how much that world has changed over the past decades.



Figure 4: "Female and male differences in tool use."

Humphrey's playful "Female and Male Differences in Tool Use" (fig. 4) combines a prehistoric setting and modern figures, enabling students to quickly see the intermixing of ancient and modern times. The cartoon also highlights the changing views of gender over the last fifty years, given the focus on the female's hair and nails and the male's interest in playing golf. The cartoon appears to accept such stereotypes and the now-challenged assumptions of an ancient division of labor based on gender, resulting in different values being placed on women's and men's work. But students must also understand the context for this cartoon, which was created to illustrate a book review of a landmark publication detailing the impact of feminist scholarship as "women became central to the research and theoretical agendas of both younger and more established scholars" (Sandra Morgan, quoted in Selig 1990). The book, *Gender and Anthropology: Critical Reviews for Research and Teaching*, edited by Sandra Morgan, was published by the American Anthropological Association in 1989. Students might ponder the

following question: Is the cartoon spoofing or using gender stereotypes to produce humor? Morgan's book and its review remain useful sources that include practical teaching strategies and activities.

AnthroNotes cartoons sometimes create humor by using one or two words that sound alike but have different meanings, or by mixing up the literal meaning of a word with other, more complex meanings. A "Teachers' Corner" describing two class projects at Radford College (students creating an ABC book for local children in a small rural West Virginia community and studying the local economy of flea markets) is illustrated by the "Fleamarket" cartoon (fig. 5). The cartoon turns fleas into humans, pushes the meaning of "flea market" to its extreme, and twists its meaning by using the article's context to heighten the contrast and frivolity of the image with the seriousness of the article: "Beyond the Classroom Walls: University Students Create a Children's Book" (Wagner and LaLone 1994).



Figure 5. Fleamarket.

Mixing words or introducing a familiar image but putting it into a surprising context can be seen in figure 6, illustrating an article on linguistic abilities in primates (Gordon 1986). The cartoon shows the TV show *Wheel of Fortune*, with Vanna White turning blocks of letters spelling out the name of the linguist Noam Chomsky. Three contestants sit at a table: Pan (chimp), Gorilla, and Pongo (orangutan) play the game!

The cartoon emphasizes the commonalities between humans and their primate relatives but, at the same time, reminds students that humans have a capacity for cognitive language and culture that our closest relatives cannot approximate—hence the allusion to Noam Chomsky’s research into language’s deep structure embedded within the developing human brain. Vanna White can try to help the contestants, but in the end Pan, Gorilla, and Pongo seem totally perplexed.

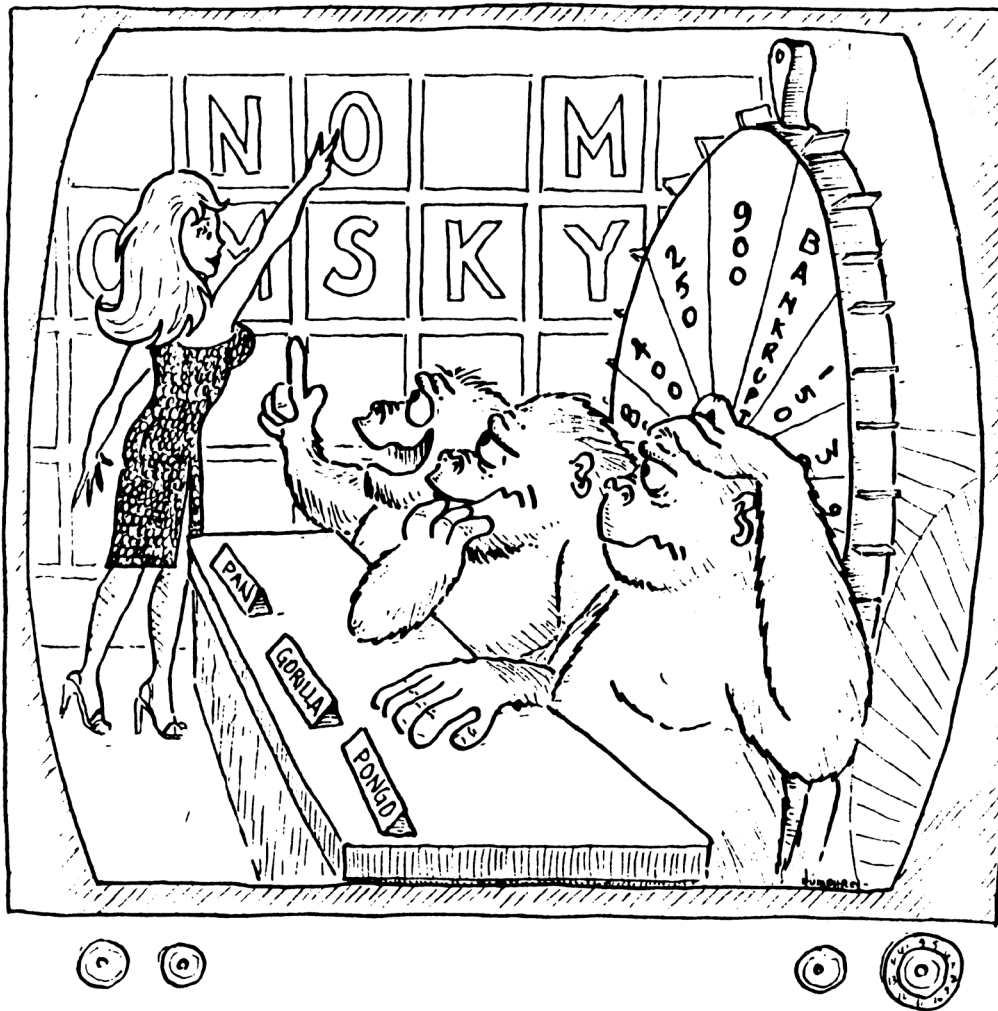


Figure 6. Wheel of Fortune.

Reassessing AnthroNotes Cartoons

Humphrey’s cartoons lend themselves easily to class discussion of some of our past half century’s cultural mores, including the visual representation of men and women and diverse ethnic groups. Some of these past representations today are considered not only stereotypical but also misleading and potentially hurtful given our increased

awareness of ethnic and national identities, gender realities, and gender fluidity. Some might argue that such cartoons should no longer be shown to students or anyone else. We clearly disagree with this position and further believe that changing representation is an important topic to discuss with students, particularly since cartoons, like all artwork, reflect their time and culture.



Figure 7. AAA annual meeting registration.

Figure 7 offers at least two avenues for students to discuss. Humphrey draws his fellow anthropologists standing in line to register for the annual American Anthropological Association meeting. But wait, the cartoon appears to be asking, who is the anthropologist, and who is the object of study? It all seems interchangeable. Is the artist telling us that we should not consider ourselves in a privileged position, that those we study are just as equipped as—or even more than—any anthropologist to study another culture?

This cartoon, which illustrated an *AnthroNotes* announcement of a 1985 AAA Workshop for Teachers (Kaupp 1985) also draws attention to one of the risks and perils of cartooning: stereotyping. The drawing of the older Native American anthropologist is identified with all-too-well-known objects of cultural stereotypes: feather bonnet, bow and arrow, clothing. Students can compare their own reactions to this cartoon with a letter the editors received concerning two other Humphrey cartoons—the only

critical letter ever received about *AnthroNotes* cartoons. An associate professor of anthropology and sociology at Northern Virginia Community College wrote to the editors on November 7, 1983, complaining about two cartoons, on pages 1 and 8 of the fall 1983 issue of *AnthroNotes*, illustrating two separate articles (Kaupp 1983 and Lanouette 1983). The professor stated that these two cartoons “rest on a sexist premise” and “mock half of the human population.” Students may want to discuss their views of the two cartoons and each cartoon’s relationship to the article in which it appears, as well as their assessment of Humphrey’s response to the professor’s criticism quoted here:

My reaction [to your letter] was a mixture of surprise and curiosity. Surprise because in my 20 years as a professional cartoonist, 15 years of university teaching and research and 10 years as a departmental chairperson, I have never been accused of being “sexist.” ...Curiosity, because the drawing in which a physical [biological] anthropologist views a healthy young woman as an assemblage of bones and cartilage rather than a sex-object is clearly *anti*-sexist...In several of our past issues, I find the male animal at a distinct disadvantage...I am deeply committed as an anthropologist *and* a cartoonist in treating both halves of the population equally. As we are both aware...sexual dimorphism and sex roles exist in all primate societies, and, as absurd as they often appear to be, to deny them would be an even greater absurdity. In my view, when we lose the ability to laugh at ourselves, we have lost the better part of being human. (Selig 2024)

In a note to the editors, Humphrey insisted that “the very nature of humorous illustration must involve satire, parody and caricature, so it’s almost impossible to stay off of everybody’s toes and still be funny.” (All quoted material can be found in original documents in the National Anthropological Archives; see Selig 2024.) In hindsight, students can see that Humphrey’s depiction of the female in these cartoons use what many today would consider sexualized clothing and imagery, and his description of sex roles in primate societies implies that these represent the natural order. Regarding the latter assertion, students may want to research whether recent literature offers examples to the contrary for any primate societies.

This 1983 episode did encourage *AnthroNotes* editors to become more sensitive to society’s changing expectations of representation in anthropology. What had once been considered humorous was increasingly seen as offensive. For example, in 1993 *AnthroNotes* managing editor Ann Kaupp wrote to Humphrey asking for several cartoon revisions, explaining that “we all need to respond to the new sensitivities to gender and race/national origin that the museum has been focusing on” (Selig 2024).

AnthroNotes cartoons remain relevant today partly because they do raise issues that are of continuing concern to high school and college students. Instructors could even introduce this early *AnthroNotes* episode from 1983 and Kaupp’s 1993 note to

Humphrey, alongside the thoughtful introduction by Susan E. Kirtley in her 2021 book *Typical Girls: The Rhetoric of Womanhood in Comic Strips*. Kirtley points out the use of comic strips to better understand the historical context of their day, comparing them to comic strips today, asking, “What can be gleaned from reading newspaper comic strips created by women from the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s? As these strips reveal a small accretion of daily truths, they can help develop a fuller understanding of the media’s conception of a particularly turbulent moment in American history—the Women’s Rights movement” (Kirtley 2021:20). Later in the introduction, she writes: “Comic strips both reflect and constitute popular opinion, and these early domestic strips often presented extremely stereotyped narratives of gendered behavior” (27). Kirtley clearly finds the study of early comic strips instructive and important to analyze and discuss today.

In recent years, sensitivities have been further heightened by Black Lives Matter and the #MeToo movement, as well as sexual harassment accusations, indictments, trials, and guilty verdicts for Harvey Weinstein and other prominent celebrities and politicians. Examining *AnthroNotes* cartoons that some might consider sexist and even hurtful enables students to understand more about their culture’s past and the importance of current debates surrounding gender studies, gender fluidity, and the representation of women and men. Whether one is considering comic strips, cartoons, advertising, early film, or print magazines, the same decisions arise: Do we study earlier cultural images even when they include hurtful images, or do we hide these from students altogether? We believe studying such images is useful, educational, and important for students to understand our society’s changing standards of representation and the complexities of the modern world.

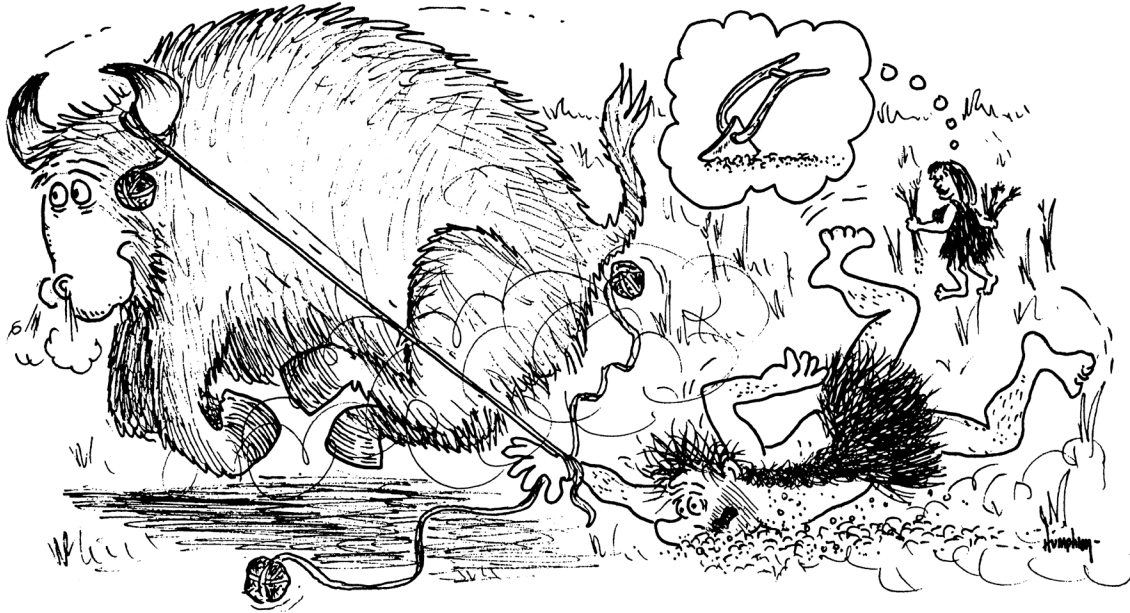
Cartoons Help Teach Archaeology

In exploring archaeological discoveries over time, students can see that certain questions have remained central: Where and when did the earliest hominins and the first modern humans emerge? Where, when, and how did the domestication of plants and animals take place, in the Old World and in the Americas? When and how did humans first arrive and settle the Americas? Where did the Clovis point technology first emerge? In the discussion below, we focus on these enduring questions, and the *AnthroNotes* cartoons that help illuminate them.

When and Where Did Domestication Occur in the Americas?

The cartoon in figure 8 highlights the origins of domestication and was created for the article “A Quiet Revolution: Origins of Agriculture in Eastern North America.” The article details the dramatic story of the Smithsonian archaeologist Bruce D. Smith’s groundbreaking research documenting the eastern United States as an independent center of agricultural origins, alongside the Middle East, China, and Mesoamerica. The essay focuses on Smith’s use of the scanning electron microscope to document early

North American plant domestication, demonstrating how SEM technology could identify wild versus domesticated gourds, pivotal to solving the puzzle of North American domestication (Selig 1993).



THE TRANSITION FROM HUNTING AND GATHERING TO DOMESTICATION

Figure 8. “The transition from hunting and gathering to domestication.”

In this cartoon, a woman watches her bumbling husband fall to the ground, his chin dragged through the earth by the bison he has been hunting with bolas. She has an idea as she gathers plants and watches her husband: the plow—the invention that made the widespread use of domesticated plants possible! Whether a class is discussing the impact of new technologies on history, the domestication of plants and animals, or the impact of recent gender studies on our understanding of the past, this cartoon provides a point of departure for wider discussion.

As with all cartoons, in analyzing this one example, it is important to focus on three different time periods: the time illustrated in the cartoon (prehistory), the time when the cartoon was created (1990s), and the time when one is examining the image (2020s).



THE ARCHAEOLOGISTS FOUND EVIDENCE OF
SKIN HOUSES, WOODEN TOOLS, FOOTPRINTS
AND COPROLITES AT THE SITE....

Figure 9. Coprolites: “Oops, did I step in it?”

When Did Humans First Settle the New World?

In addition to new technologies, archaeology presents a variety of evidence that can inform us about the past—including natural human waste. When Tom Dillehay wrote an article about Monte Verde, his pathbreaking site in southern Chile, he explained that the site had begun to change archaeological thinking about just when the earliest human migrants came to the Americas. Although no human bones had been found at the site, other evidence pointed to human occupation. Dillehay wrote about “the imprint of a foot preserved in clay around one of the large hearths. The other indirect source of information consists of possible coprolites (fossil excrement) that appear to be of human origin” (Dillehay 1990:3). Humphrey’s cartoon for Dillehay’s article (fig. 9) poked fun at the discovery of this early evidence of human feces.

When and Where Did Clovis Technology Come From?

The puzzle of where and when Clovis technology first emerged in the New World has been another enduring question in archaeology, fueling the lifelong passion of the late Smithsonian curator of Paleo-Indian archaeology Dennis Stanford. Throughout his career, Stanford pursued answers to several fundamental questions: When did early humans first come to the New World? Did they use bone as well as stone implements? By what route did they travel? And where and when did Clovis points originate? In the illustration for this early *AnthroNotes* article about Stanford's research, Humphrey drew him in his museum office, locating possible Paleo-Indian sites by throwing Clovis darts (fig. 10). The woolly mammoth overlooks the enterprise, knowing full well that perhaps this is not the best way to find his early remains (Selig 1983).

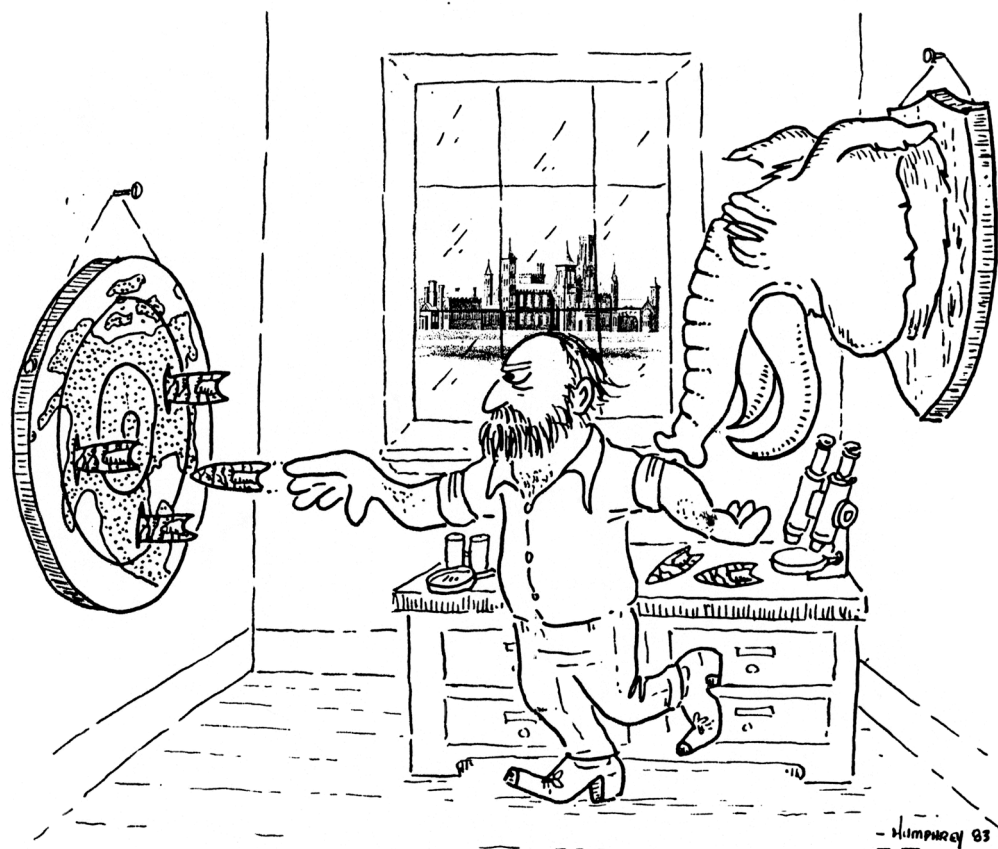


Figure 10. Dennis Stanford throwing darts.

What Are Some Major Milestones and Motifs in Human Evolution?

The *AnthroNotes* editor, paleoanthropologist, and archaeologist Alison S. Brooks wrote many articles on human origins for *AnthroNotes*, updating instructors and students on the latest research in this rapidly changing field. For the *AnthroNotes* 25th anniversary

symposium, Brooks looked back over decades of her articles and their cartoons about human origins, analyzing five recurring motifs:

1. Humans versus other animals
2. Creativity as one driver of cultural change
3. Women versus men: reexamining gender roles
4. Extinction, not damnation to explain evolution
5. Modern humans' family tree

These five motifs emphasize humans' close relationship to their primate cousins; creativity as key to the development of material culture; women and men; and human evolution as reflected in both species' extinction and the developing modern human family tree. Brooks pointed out that these five motifs also reflected enduring research questions such as: What can help explain human physical and cultural development through time? Where, when, and how did anatomically and culturally modern humans emerge (Selig and Brooks 2005)?

To consider human origins in the light of these motifs, students can study the Humphrey cartoons that Brooks chose to illustrate each motif.

Humans versus Other Animals. The cartoon in figure 11 illustrated the article "Politics and Problems of Gorilla and Chimpanzee Conservation," by Alison S. Brooks and J. N. Leith Smith, and asks: Who is the real beast: the peaceful, nest-dwelling, home-loving gorilla watching TV or the humans below, cutting down the world's forests (Brooks and Smith 1991)?

Creativity as One Driver of Cultural Change. In figure 12, a young man bicycles toward one of the world's great centers of artistic creation, Lascaux Cave, only to discover that it was even earlier humans who had invented the wheels on which our ancestor bicycles away from the cave. Are we getting smarter today, or are we just fooling ourselves, the cartoon seems to ask.



Figure 11. Who is the beast?

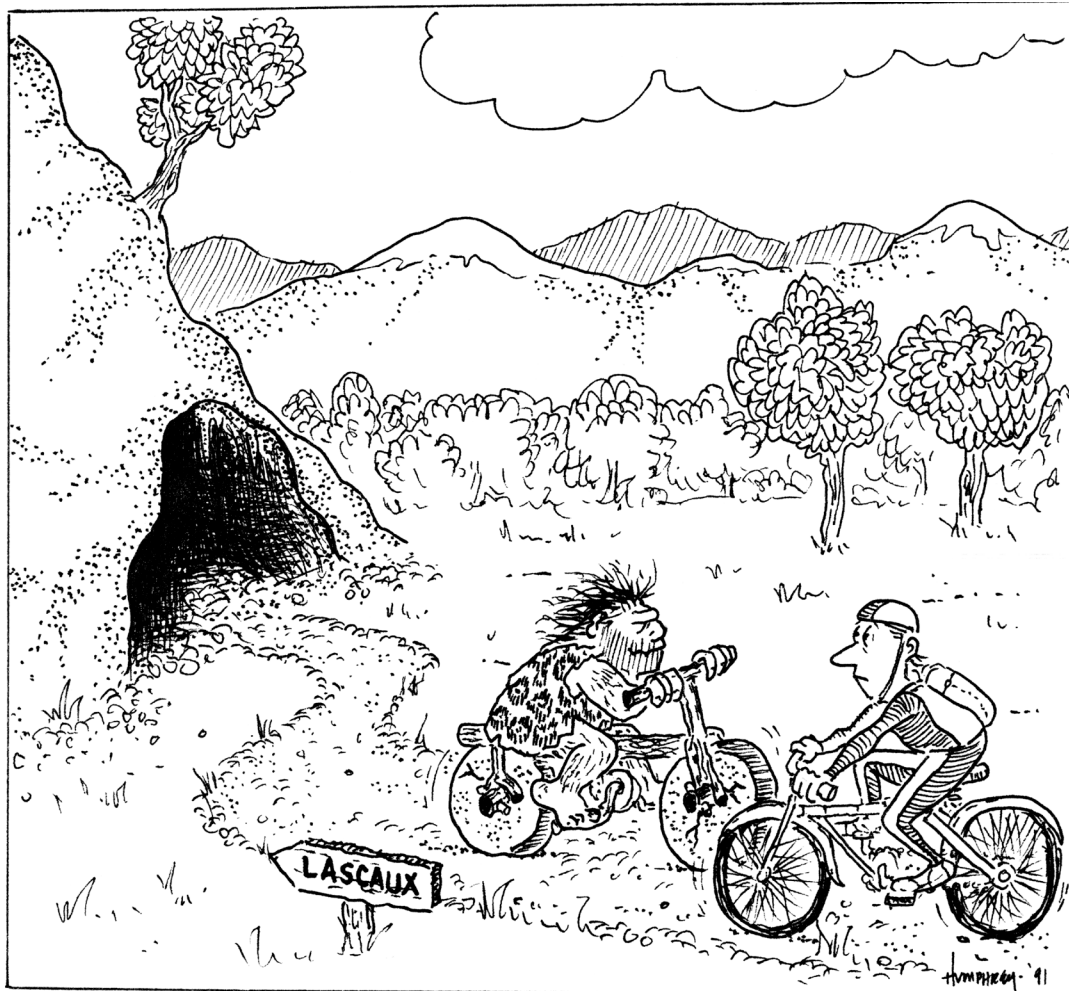


Figure 12. Key inventions.

Women versus Men: Reexamining Gender Roles. *AnthroNotes* published several articles detailing the impact of feminist scholarship on anthropology and archaeology, including Patricia Higgins's "New Gender Perspectives in Anthropology" (1989), based on her coauthored article in the *Annual Review of Anthropology* (Mukhopadhyay and Higgins 1988). To illustrate the *AnthroNotes* article, Humphrey drew a cartoon (fig. 13) where a home base takes center stage, the male appearing witless and self-centered, sitting all day making a single tool, while the woman comes home with a baby in a marvelously creative baby carrier, having gathered dinner, and ready to use her dressmakers' tools well into the night. Despite the argument that this cartoon shows the female in a more positive light than the male, it is also a cartoon that students might consider sexist, as it reflects the erroneous stereotype that a woman's most important role is to bear children and take care of hearth and home, while her male partner brings home the bacon. In addition to this debate over whether the cartoon is sexist beyond repair, it may prompt classroom discussion of cultural norms, past and present, and the changing views of men's and women's roles in recent decades.



Figure 13. "Look, Honey . . . I Made a Fist-Ax!"

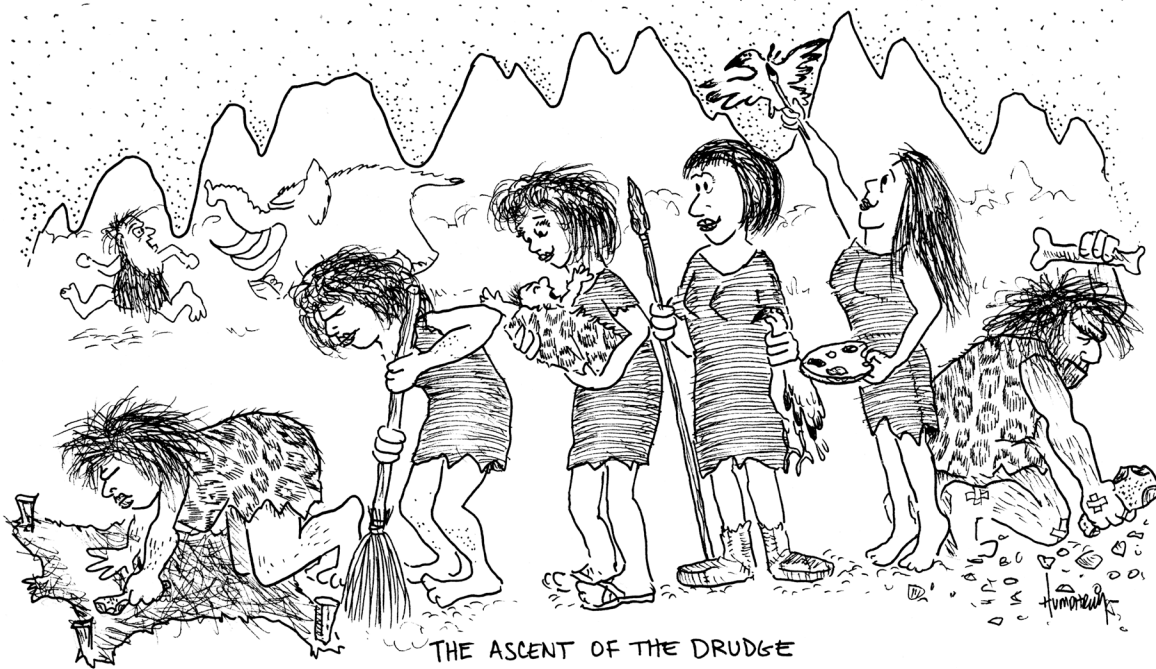


Figure 14. "The ascent of the drudge."

In Humphrey's cartoon "The Ascent of the Drudge" (fig. 14), drawn for Diane Gifford-Gonzalez's article "The Real Flintstones? What Are Artists' Depictions of Human Ancestors Telling Us?" a hunter is shown running from his prey while another hunter tries without much success to make a tool. Meanwhile, the woman shows off her many skills, including hunting, painting, hide preparation, and childcare. Humphrey's cartoon reflects the 1960s research among modern hunters and gatherers that led to new insights about how much female gatherers helped our early ancestors survive. Today this cartoon merits further scrutiny because for some observers it implies that women then as now primarily spend their time cooking, carrying around babies, and generally acting, as the article's author put it, as "the Drudge-on-the-Hide, the woman on her hands and knees scraping away at the skin of a large animal, on the margins of the home camp scene" (Gifford-Gonzalez 1995:1). Would students agree? Does this cartoon only see women as "drudge stereotypes," or perhaps instead as toolmakers, innovators, and inventors of culture?

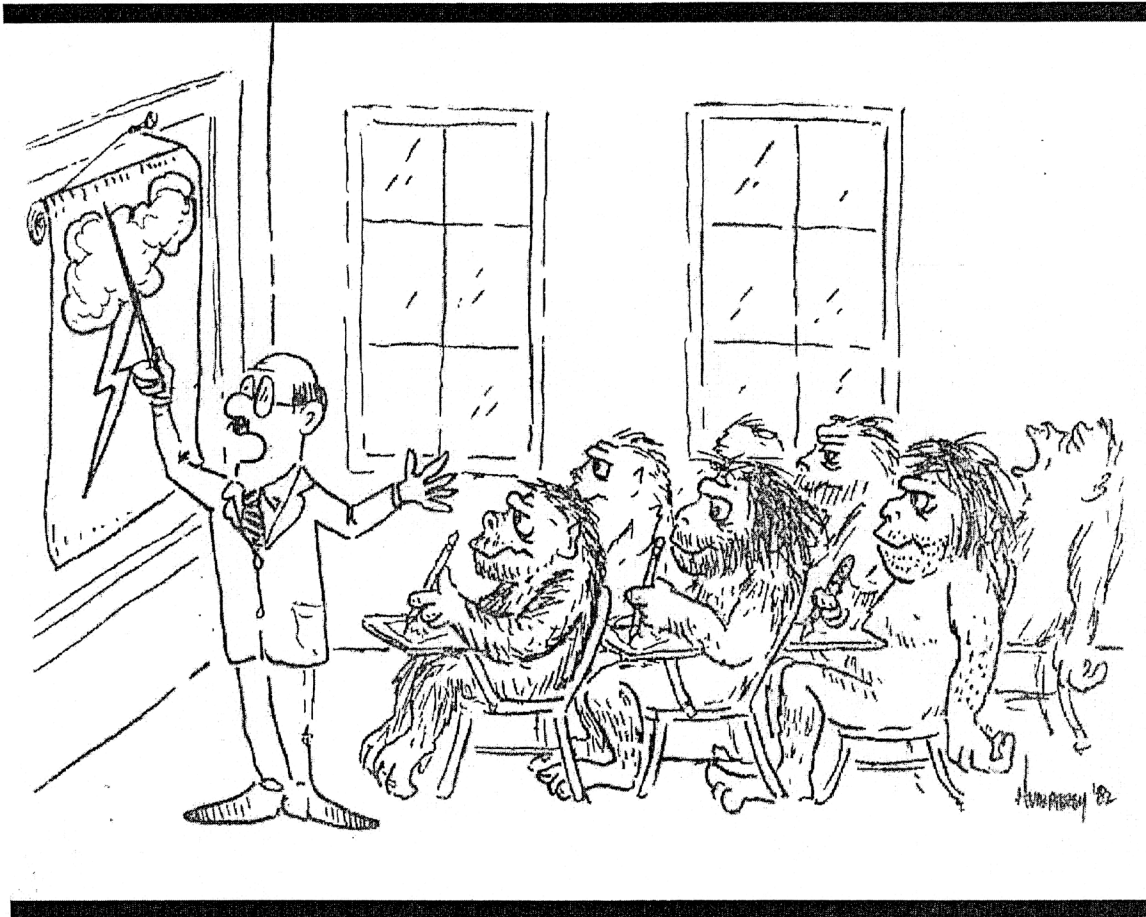


Figure 15. Teaching human evolution.

Extinction, Not Damnation to Explain Evolution. The "extinction, not damnation" motif asks what explains human evolution: natural causes (natural selection and

extinction) or special creation? To illustrate the 1982 *AnthroNotes* announcement of a teachers' workshop, "Creationism and the Classroom: Approaches to the Challenge," organized by Ruth O. Selig and Patricia J. Higgins for the American Anthropology Association's annual meeting, Humphrey created the cartoon shown in figure 15 (Selig 1982). In the drawing, the artist pokes fun at the notion of special creation: the teacher explains the appearance of the human species through the strike of a single lightning bolt—but the students belie his explanation: early hominins and a fully modern human sit side by side; evidence of human evolution through time is right before the teacher's eyes, yet he misses it completely. A second cartoon on the same theme illustrates the article by JoAnne Lanouette, "Creationism Is Not Science" (Lanouette 1983:1).

Several of Brooks's *AnthroNotes* articles and one chapter in the second edition of *Anthropology Explored* address the enduring question: When and how did modern humans emerge? In her chapter updating her 1992 article, Brooks reflected on the impact of new fossil and archaeological discoveries, new dates, and the genetics revolution (Brooks 2004). For the initial article, Humphrey drew the cartoon shown in figure 16: a woman scowls at her male partner, who is using his large brow ridges and chewing muscles, not to eat the tough food that such large muscles were designed to help before grain domestication made soft cereals and breads available, but rather to blow large chewing gum bubbles. He should have been using his talents to make tools, as the debris on the ground indicates he might have been doing; what a wastrel, her scowl seems to say!



CHEWING STRESS AND BROWRIDGES

Figure 16. "Chewing stress and brow ridges."

Modern Humans' Family Tree. The family tree motif appears often to illustrate Brooks's articles about human evolution, all of which are accessible in the repository. In her final *AnthroNotes* article, Brooks summed up the changes in human evolution studies since the beginning of the publication, describing the impact of new technologies, genetics, and DNA analysis. She concludes:

New fossils and sites are still at the heart of what we do. Like the new australopithecines from Malapa in South Africa; the new jaws published this year from Kenya; the new dates for cave paintings, musical flutes, projectile points, and decorated ostrich eggshells, there are always surprises lying in the ground concerning our ancestry. But the surprises hiding in the laboratory are equally exciting and hold the promise of new questions and directions in the study of the human past. (Brooks 2012)

By 2012, Robert Humphrey had died, and the editors chose some of their favorite human origins cartoons to illustrate Brooks's look back. One cartoon (fig. 17) shows a sad, rejected early ancestor going out the door while an earnest supplicant with his proud parent and pedigree in hand stands ready to apply for entry into our family tree of human ancestors. The original, much older article in which this cartoon first appeared, "What's New in Human Evolution," stands even today as a demonstration of how archaeological sciences continually update what we understand about human origins (Brooks 1987).



Figure 17. Our family tree.

Cartoons Reflect a Changing Discipline

Throughout its 33 years, *AnthroNotes* reflected changes in a field that originated within a 19th-century colonial context and continues to undergo dramatic changes today. By examining the cartoons, students can see anthropology's increasing concerns with relevance, with responding to indigenous communities, and with engaging with social and international issues. Certain broad trends become clear, including (1) involvement of practitioners with the communities they study; (2) engagement of community participants as colleagues and partners, in field schools and professional fieldwork; (3) involvement of instructors and their students in examining social and political issues such as refugees and migration, globalization and cultural conflict, ethics and human rights, including the right to be free of sexual harassment and domestic abuse; (4) the repatriation of skeletal and cultural collections; (5) the use of new technologies and high-speed computers to develop dating techniques, digital documentation, and data storage; and (6) the growing awareness that scholars' own cultural biases can affect their views of other people leading to a self-reflexive view of other cultures.

The cartoon in figure 18, and perhaps even more importantly the article by Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban that it illustrates, highlights some of these trends, demonstrating the ways that professional archaeologists and anthropologists have become willing participants in the challenges facing the communities with which they partner, as well as in the social and political issues affecting the modern world.

Fluehr-Lobban's "Cultural Relativism and Universal Human Rights" described the author's involvement with female circumcision in the Sudan, and the impact of local laws on women's lives, including the occurrence of domestic abuse. Fluehr-Lobban wrote about her experience offering expert testimony in an Immigration and Naturalization Service case involving application for asylum and withholding of deportation for a Nigerian family who had immigrated to the United States. The case revolved around the fear of circumcision for the daughters of the parents, the wife already having undergone the practice. As the author explained, "Anthropologists can aid the international dialogue enormously by developing approaches to universal human rights that are respectful of cultural considerations but are morally responsible" (Fluehr-Lobban 1998:17). The article raises an important question for students to consider: Should anthropologists become activists among members of the societies where they are working, or is that incompatible with scientific inquiry and the anthropological principle of cultural relativism? The cartoon highlighting domestic abuse raises a second question: Does the human species have a darker side that anthropologists should examine, illuminate, and ultimately help control?



Figure 18. Cultural relativism and universal human rights.

In the fall of 2006, the cultural anthropologist Roy Richard Grinker wrote “Remapping the World of Autism,” reporting on autism in Korea, South Africa, and India. Grinker describes autism as a disease and an illness seen across cultures but also explains that “although the symptoms of autism are the same everywhere, the meaning of those symptoms varies from culture to culture” (Grinker 2006:1).

An examination of *AnthroNotes* articles and their cartoons since the publication began in the late 1970s through its final issue in 2012 yields clues as to how and why fundamental shifts took place as archaeologists and anthropologists increasingly engaged in the world around them, building bridges to, and forging partnerships with, indigenous communities.

To examine these changes leading to a more global, issue-oriented publication, it is helpful to divide the articles into two 15-year periods: 1981–96 and 1997–2012. Selig’s *AnthroNotes* article “Anthropology Changing through Time” traced some of these changes, but only until 2006 (Selig 2006).

1981–1996

During this first 15-year period, *AnthroNotes* published more than 40 lead articles. More focused on archaeology than on cultural anthropology. The majority concerned cultures in North and South America, with an emphasis on new ways of studying the past, including new methodologies, particularly in archaeology. Articles focused on topics such as multidisciplinary approaches in ethnoarchaeology, taphonomy, research findings in human evolution with new fossil discoveries, the reemergence of infectious diseases due to growing resistance to antibiotics, chimpanzee studies in the field and primate language studies in laboratory settings, and new gender perspectives in archaeology. Some articles addressed social issues such as refugee children in schools, school-age pregnancy, and aging in various cultures.

Some of the most complex cartoons for students to analyze come from this early period. For example, for an article about disease in human evolution, Humphrey drew the cartoon “Antibiotic Resistance to Pathogens,” showing bugs sitting at a bar advertising “Penicillin on Draft” and other drinks for sale, including DNA and DEET. This cartoon (fig. 19) warns us that it is humans who are responsible for creating the increasingly dangerous antibiotic resistance to bacterial infection. The cartoon’s serious message becomes clear as one realizes the pathogens are gathered at a human bar where penicillin, not beer, is on draft—oh, what humans have wrought! (Armelagos, Barnes, and Lin 1996).

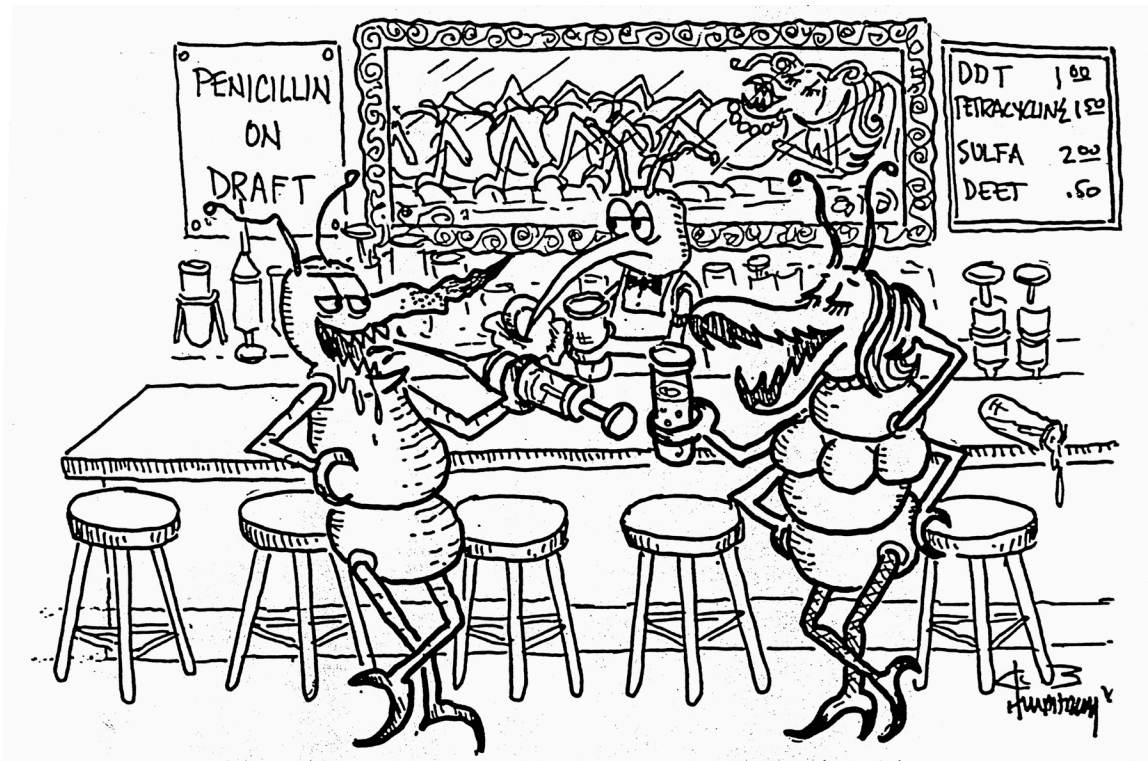


Figure 19. Antibiotic resistance in pathogens.

1997–2012

The second group of lead articles reflects a slow, steady, but definite shift in emphasis as they become more issue oriented and focus increasingly on global and environmental topics, with many reflecting collaborations with indigenous communities. Articles reported on contentious issues such as cultural relativism and universal human rights, linguistic survival among Native Americans, body art as visual language (tattoos and piercings), the repatriation of human remains, gender discrimination, domestic violence, and worldwide human displacement, along with lack of international concern and action. *AnthroNotes* cartoons reflected this shift of emphasis. For example, “Higher Primates,” originally drawn for Brooks and Smith’s 1991 article about primate conservation in Africa, was reused to illustrate Robert Sussman’s chapter “Are Humans Inherently Violent?” when the article was updated for the 2004 edition of *Anthropology Explored* (Sussman 2004). The cartoon is shown in figure 20: peaceful chimps eat bananas while the humans below are locked in armed conflict, inflicting all sorts of bodily harm using lethal weapons. Below them is the ironic caption “Higher Primates.” With biting sarcasm, the cartoonist asks: Who are the savages and who the civilized among us?



Figure 20. “Higher Primates.”

During *AnthroNotes*' 30th anniversary year, global concerns took center stage with such articles as "Towards a Greener Future: Archaeology and Contemporary Environmental Issues" (Rick 2009), "Changing Cultures and Climate Change in the Arctic" (Fitzhugh 2009), and "Understanding the Behavior of Shi'a and Sunni Muslims in Iraq Is Complicated" (Beeman 2009). *American Anthropologist* editor Tom Boellstorff contributed "Virtual Worlds and Futures of Anthropology," analyzing his two-year field study conducted as an avatar in the online game *Second Life* (Boellstorff 2009), and Intel's senior cultural anthropologist wrote "Unpacking Cars: Doing Anthropology at INTEL," describing car use in Singapore—a window into the future of mobile technology (Bell 2011). Two years later *AnthroNotes* featured "Recovering Voices: Documenting and Sustaining Endangered Languages and Knowledge" (Bell 2011), as well as "Personal Reflections on Race, Racism, and Anthropology" by Johnnetta Betsch Cole, former President of Spellman College and then the director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art (Cole 2011). Thus did *AnthroNotes* reflect the changes swirling around the disciplines of anthropology and archaeology from 2009 to 2012.

Conclusion

During its entire existence, *AnthroNotes* was the only US publication focused on archaeology and anthropology for K–12 teachers and students. It also was used by those teaching college undergraduates, managing state archaeology and historic preservation offices, and running archaeological field schools. As demonstrated throughout this article, *AnthroNotes* cartoons and many of the articles they illustrate remain relevant today as instructive teaching tools. By way of offering perspective on one specific roadblock—gender representation—we point to Susan E. Kirtley's *Typical Girls: The Rhetoric of Womanhood in Comic Strips* because we agree with the author that the study of early comic strips [and cartoons] is instructive and important to analyze and discuss today (Kirtley 2021).

In this paper, we have offered a review of *AnthroNotes* cartoons to illustrate how they can help students better understand the enduring questions, concerns, and contributions of archaeology and anthropology, past and present. These include broad cultural themes and enduring questions of inquiry, but also more contentious issues such as sexism, gender and ethnic representation, reflexivity, cultural relativity, and the use of unwelcome stereotypes. We believe that working with these cartoons enables students to sharpen their critical-thinking skills as they interpret evidence, communicate observations, and draw on their creativity, empathy, and cultural understanding while also collaborating with their fellow students.

We end this paper with a final *AnthroNotes* cartoon — "Hear no evil, speak no evil"—that reminds us once again that humans are not separate from the natural world but in many ways indistinguishable from it. In this cartoon (fig. 21) that illustrated the recurring "Did You Know?" feature (Kaupp 1982), three hominins—our early ancestors—

know they don't know, but the human on the far right (note the larger brain) has no idea what the world is all about. He can't even figure out where to put his fig leaf, a reference to the Garden of Eden and our loss of innocence upon expulsion from paradise. The cartoon wisely offers us a bit of humility by making us, once again, laugh at ourselves.

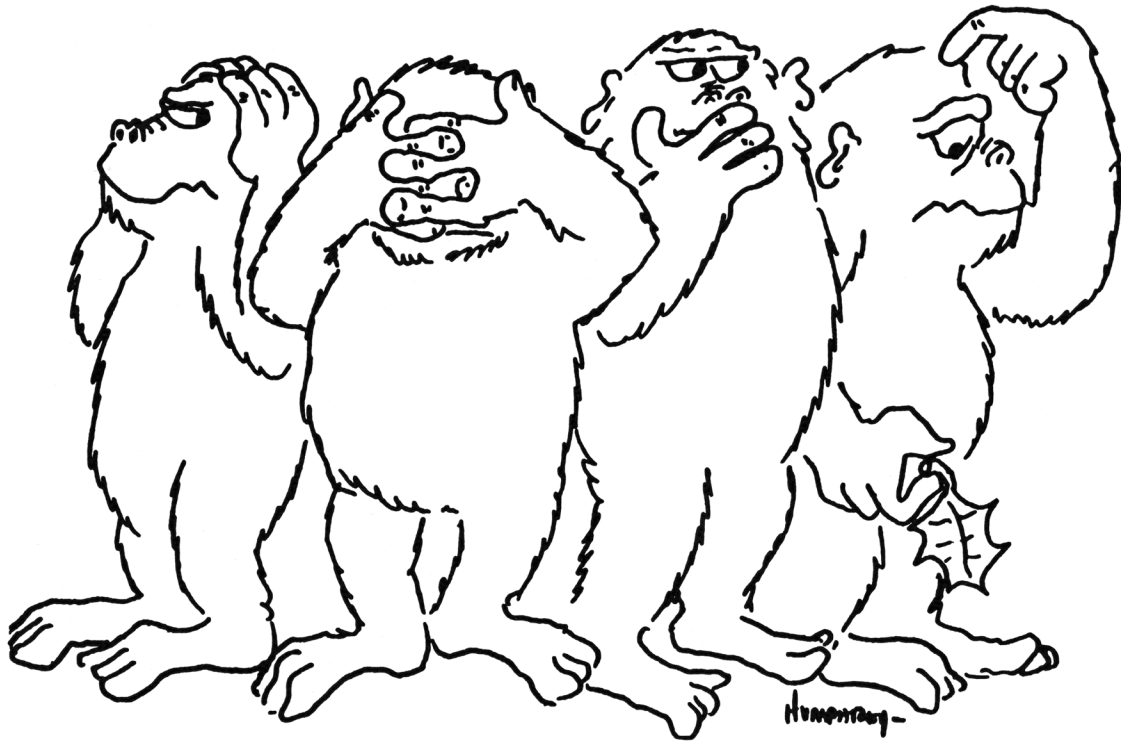


Figure 21. Hear no evil, speak no evil.

Acknowledgments

No publication produced continuously for 33 years could be the work of one or even two people. The original *AnthroNotes* editors—Alison S. Brooks, P. Ann Kaupp, JoAnne Lanouette, and Ruth O. Selig, along with later editors Marilyn London, Carolyn Gecan, and Colleen Popson—were indispensable, each in her own way. The original four created the George Washington University / Smithsonian Institution Anthropology for Teachers Program out of which *AnthroNotes* grew. Robert Humphrey created the program brochure, served as GWU department chair for most of the program's existence, and illustrated *AnthroNotes* until his death in 2002. He also illustrated the program brochure and several *AnthroNotes* articles growing out of a second teacher training program, which Ruth Selig directed in Laramie, Wyoming (1984–85), in cooperation with the University of Wyoming's Department of Anthropology, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities / Wyoming Council for the Humanities (Selig 1986). In 1986, Humphrey illustrated *Practicing Anthropology's* special issue on precollege education co-edited by Selig and Patricia J. Higgins (Selig and Higgins

1986). After Humphrey's untimely death, selected cartoons were reused for *AnthroNotes* through 2012, with the permission of the cartoons' copyright holder, Johanna Humphrey. Today, thanks to Colleen Popson's vision of an online archive serving as a continuing resource for students and teachers worldwide, all issues of *AnthroNotes*, along with their cartoon illustrations, can be searched through the Smithsonian's digital repository (*AnthroNotes* 2018; Popson and Selig 2019). Finally, we wish to thank those who read earlier versions of this article and made helpful suggestions: Joanna Scherer, Amy Staples, Celia Emmelhainz, and Colleen Popson, as well as *JAE* editor Kathryn Kamp and the outside peer reviewers.

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