Border crossings
Using geography, technology to map displaced peoples in Burma

NIU alumna Lyndy Worsham, a researcher with the Thailand Burma Border Consortium, travels by canoe to a field site. Page 4
SIX MONTHS AGO, on March 23, I accepted an invitation to join a five-person delegation led by a representative of the Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange to visit the offices of Senator Mark Kirk (R-Illinois) in the Federal Building in Chicago. We were eager to plead the case for the critical importance of international education and exchange. We all knew that international programs were being targeted in the halls of Congress. So we spoke in Senator Kirk’s offices and we sent follow-up letters. Then we waited.

The Center for Southeast Asian Studies at NIU administers five separate awards from the federal government. And each award has been affected in different ways by the political maneuverings in Washington. Between May 12 and July 20, we learned what those impacts would be.

On May 12, we were informed that the U.S. State Department’s Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (Fulbright FLTA) program was secure, meaning that our TAs from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines will continue to bolster our Southeast Asian language program in the upcoming year.

On June 2, we received official assurance that there would be no reduction in funding for the U.S. Department of Education’s Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships for the 2011–12 academic year. A few days later, however, the Department of Education asked us to submit a new budget for the Online Malay Dictionary project, a budget reflecting a 50 percent reduction. On the afternoon of the same day, the department directed us to submit a revised National Resource Center grant budget with a 46.53 percent budget cut. Finally, on July 20, we received the encouraging news that the State Department was fully funding a third year of the Southeast Asia Youth Leadership Program (SEAYLP).

So of the five external programs the center administers, three will operate at full budget: the FLTA, FLAS and SEAYLP projects. Two other budgets, the NRC and the Online Malay Dictionary, have been cut in half.

Obviously these two reduced budgets will have a significant impact on CSEAS activities, in particular the NRC activities. The NRC budget was cut from $252,286 to only $134,877. In recalibrating our budget, our main concern has been to honor job offers already made to personnel, in particular our language instructors. Consequently, categories such as travel, conferences, library acquisitions, and fees for national consortia had to be disproportionately cut. Nonetheless, it is important to note that Southeast Asian language teaching will continue to be supported by the FLTA program; all students awarded FLAS fellowships for this year will receive them; and our internationally known SEAYLP program will proceed as usual, which means assistantships for our graduate students.

The center has weathered many a storm in previous decades. Our chief strength is that almost all of our Southeast Asian faculty specialists are not funded by federal money. So the contributions and commitment of our core faculty members are not dependent on the moods of Washington. Furthermore, because the center received a significant funding increase compared to past budgets in this most recent cycle of NRC funding (announced August 2010), I am confident that CSEAS will emerge from this crisis stronger and fitter for the years ahead. Of course, we don’t know what the fiscal crusades now being waged in Washington will bring to the next two years of NRC funding, or even FLAS funding. But for the time being, we are still in a position to fulfill our mandate as a national resource center, taking advantage of all the technical resources we have developed over the years, SEAsite, as well as the weekly CSEAS e-bulletin and the Mandala. Of course, we are moving forward with our planned structural changes in the administration of the center’s workload.

It is important to note, however, that the center is not just waiting for this fiscal storm to abate. We are doing what we can where we can. In addition to a burst of renewed activity in Cambodia (see page 11), many of the center’s associates, students, and friends have been engaging Indonesia. This past summer, CSEAS adjunct Tomoyuki Shibata (public health) and James Wilson (geography) conducted research in South Sulawesi under the auspices of our partner university Universitas Hasanuddin (Unhas). Associate Michael Buehler (political science) spent the summer conducting research and serving as a consultant in Indonesia. At the time of this writing in late summer three of our students are studying in Java. Moreover, the rector of Unhas led a delegation consisting of Unhas officials and leaders of three other universities in Indonesia to NIU to meet with Provost Ray Alden, Associate Provost Deborah Pierce and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Dean Christopher McCord in order to explore the forms and means of greater cooperation. At the same time, I traveled
to four Indonesian cities to visit Unhas and
four other universities in eastern Indonesia
to reaffirm our commitment to focusing
on our institutions in that important
region of Indonesia. Thus, in June alone
NIU engaged eight different Indonesian
universities to strengthen existing
connections and establish new ones.

This strategy not only draws upon NIU’s
long-time commitment to Indonesian
studies but also upon the existing
strengths of NIU’s human resources in
this field. Moreover, Indonesia’s economy
is growing rapidly and the tactical
interests of the United States there are
also expanding. In the past three years,
the Indonesian government has wholly
funded training programs for its graduate
students at NIU. These programs have
brought eighteen scholars to our DeKalb
campus for three to four months of
research and collegial exchange. We
expect four more this fall. Again, through
funding provided solely by the Indonesian
government, three public forums were
held last year at NIU featuring five well-
known Indonesian speakers, including
the ambassador himself. We look forward
to similar opportunities in the months to
come.

The U.S. government continues to
support programs in Indonesia, indeed
to open new ones. One morning in late
July, an official working for the U.S.
government in Jakarta wrote me that
“Funding is not cut at all for Indonesia.”
Fullbright funding of all kinds continues
strong, as do many other programs
sponsored partly or wholly by the U.S.
government, especially in the field of
education. For this reason, I joined Dean
McCord and Associate Provost Pierce on
two trips in August, one to Washington
and another to New York. We met with
funding agencies, government officials
and special interest groups to discuss
NIU’s commitment to Indonesia and
Indonesian studies and to explore
avenues for support, development and
collaboration.

We move forward towards the 50th
anniversary of the center’s founding
in 1963 with confidence that, with
continued hard work and innovative
programming, CSEAS will continue
to grow to meet the challenges of this
century. Only by growing will we remain
a solid resource for critical scholarship
and global education for the United
States.

Kheang Un (political science) ended nearly five years of dedicated service as the center’s
assistant director over the summer. Kheang, who is conducting research in Cambodia on a
Fulbright fellowship during the 2011–12 academic year, was appointed assistant director in
2006, after receiving his Ph.D. in political science from NIU in 2004. During his tenure at
CSEAS, Kheang has been actively involved with many center initiatives and activities, including
the move in 2006 from Adams Hall to our current location at Pottenger House. In his first years
of appointment, he not only oversaw the center’s Southeast Asia survey course (ILAS 225), but
began development of a curriculum and justification for an M.A. program in Southeast Asian
Studies. Prior to returning to the Political Science Department as assistant professor in fall 2009,
he was a visiting research fellow at the University of Louisville’s Center for Asian Democracy.
After his return, he continued to oversee the center’s survey course, served on the Executive
Committee and chaired the Southeast Asian Studies Major committee. In summer 2010, he was
awarded a research fellowship at the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies in Leiden. While
in Cambodia, Kheang is conducting research on democratization and the quality of peace there in addition to lecturing at the
Institute of Foreign Languages’ International Studies Program at the Royal University of Phnom Penh. Kheang will return
to campus in 2012. We warmly thank him for his many contributions to CSEAS and wish him well in his Fulbright research
endeavors.

We also welcome Trude Jacobsen (history) as the new assistant director. Jacobsen came to the
History Department in fall 2009 from the University of London’s School of Oriental and African
Studies, where she was a teaching fellow in the history of Southeast Asia. This year, Jacobsen
will be dividing her time between CSEAS, the History Department and the Center for Women’s
Studies. She is teaching HIST 346 (Women in Asia) and WOMS 230/230H (Global Gender
and Sexuality) in the fall and HIST 442/542 (Buddhist Southeast Asia) in the spring. In her
CSEAS role, Trude will advise graduate students, serve on the center’s principal committees, and
assist in grant report writing and outreach activities.

— Jim Collins

Transitions
Using geography, technology to map human cost of displaced peoples in Burma

By Lyndy Worsham

Before going to graduate school at NIU, I visualized myself working in the humanitarian sector assisting refugees from Burma, although I wasn’t sure in what capacity that would be. I had worked in Thailand as a social researcher in the late 1990s immediately prior to the 1997 Asian financial crisis and already had an advanced knowledge of Thai. During that time, I visited Burma and the refugee camps along the Thailand-Burma border. Thus, I was aware of the human rights abuses and poverty in Burma, and the diaspora caused by such conditions, and I wanted to help.

NIU’s strong focus on Southeast Asian studies and languages drew me to DeKalb, where I was active in the Southeast Asia Club while studying Burmese and political science with a focus on Southeast Asian political systems. My experiences at NIU strengthened my resolve to return to Southeast Asia to apply my newly gained political and language skills toward humanitarian action.

In 2007, I was hired to research displacement trends of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in eastern Burma for the Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC), a humanitarian relief agency based in Bangkok that provides food, shelter, and capacity-building support to the more than 140,000 refugees housed in nine camps along the Thai-Burma border. My job requires me to make thematic maps using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technologies and to provide on-site technical support and coaching in map making and data management for ethnic community-based organizations in remote locations along the border.

GIS technology and its benefits

GIS is an integrated system of hardware, software, and data for capturing, managing, analyzing, and displaying all forms of geographically referenced information. GIS technology is powerful because it allows for the visualization and
communication of different kinds of information simultaneously to reveal relationships, patterns, and trends in the data in the forms of maps and charts.

GIS benefits the consortium in four main ways:

- Maps allow us to show the world human rights violations that have been happening in Burma for decades. In this way, we use maps as a “call to action.”
- Maps allow us to better explain to donors and policy makers why people are fleeing to Thailand.
- GIS help us better analyze the current situation and target aid to the most vulnerable populations and allows us to see areas of program overlap to avoid duplication. This facilitates better coordination with other aid agencies.
- The consortium aims to develop local capacities so that they can one day carry out their own research and have their own GIS programs using the skills they have learned. In this way, GIS is an effective capacity-building tool because it gives refugees computer and map literacy, data management, and technical skills that they can use throughout their lives.

Applying GIS in the field

In my job, I train the staff members of five community-based organizations who collect geographic data in areas of eastern Burma that represent their particular ethnic groups, such as the Karen, Karenni, Mon, and Shan. Each group’s field staff workers, who are familiar with the areas of interest in eastern Burma, record geographic locations of features of interest, such as displaced villages, military battalions, and development projects associated with human rights abuses. They do this by using a handheld Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver or by hand drawing the features in relation to rivers, roads, and cities on township level sketch maps. (A GPS receiver is a device that allows the user to record the coordinates, e.g., latitude and longitude) of any point on the surface of the Earth. Coordinates are really the foundation of GIS because they tie the real world to its electronic image in the computer).

To ensure that the data life cycle is managed properly, I travel regularly along the Thai-Burma border to provide formal trainings and coaching to administrative and field staff on data-collection techniques, how to use a GPS unit, how on to integrate the GPS data in the computer, and how to make basic maps. Because each group speaks a different ethnic language, like Karen, Karenni, Mon, or Shan, I usually have an interpreter to translate for me during my trainings. Most of the staff speaks some Burmese, but it’s not their first language and my Burmese is not strong enough to conduct trainings on complex topics. However, I am able to provide trainings in Thai for the Shan group because Thai is so close to the Shan language.

GIS is continually evolving so I, too, am always upgrading my own skills through online training and conferences. For example, in 2010, I completed a year-
long certificate in GIS online through Penn State University. Continuing education allows me to pass my updated knowledge on to community-based organizations. Unless one of my trainees gets resettled to a third country, like the United States or Australia, or leaves the organization for some other reason, I usually train the same people regularly and repeatedly, so that over the past four years, I have developed ongoing relationships with the staff of all of the organizations I work with. Thus, when I need to give a training or provide software maintenance, I just call them or send them an email to let them know I am coming and to round up the data-management team. Sometimes they contact me if they are having a technical problem or would like to request training.

The conditions in each office vary. Some are little more than a hut with intermittent Internet access, whereas others are concrete structures with a good Internet connection. All of the people with whom I work have access to the Internet and most have cell phones. TBBC has four-wheel-drive vehicles for its staff to take into the field, so I usually drive to the field site. If a car is not available, I take a public bus.

**Challenges and rewards**

Because there is active armed conflict in eastern Burma, field workers who collect data are operating in a very challenging context, often at great risk to their own safety. Field workers are exposed to violence, disease, and food shortages. All the cultural and language barriers aside, training people who have not had the opportunity for formal education can be challenging but equally rewarding. The underlying logic of data-management systems and structures that many of us from Western countries take for granted is a foreign concept to most of my trainees. When I begin training someone new, sometimes they already have good basic computer skills because they have worked in another organization. Others have never seen or used a computer mouse. Thus, you can imagine how rewarding it is to see someone advance from never having used a mouse to actually being able to create a map!

I like to joke with my trainees that one day they will have to take me to the jungle and show me how to live, as I would need them to teach me how to survive by eating the right foods, collecting water, and building a shelter. Similarly, they need me to teach them about how to collect data and make maps to help explain to the world what’s happening in Burma. We all gain different types of skills and knowledge through our experiences in life, and it is important, I believe, to value each other’s experiences equally. I try to make sure that my trainees comprehend this, and that they realize they have something to teach me as well.

**What is a refugee?**

A refugee is a person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

—United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees

**What is an internally displaced person?**

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.

—United Nations, Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement
Adapted from NIU Today

In life José P. Rizal was an author, an artist, and a force behind the Philippines independence movement in the nineteenth century; in death he has become a national hero and one of the country’s most revered figures.

In celebration of the sesquicentennial of Rizal’s birth this year, Consul General Leo M. Herrera-Lim of the Consulate General of the Philippines Chicago came to DeKalb in May to donate copies of the original manuscripts of two of Rizal’s famous novels to NIU. The novels, Noli Me Tangere (Touch Me Not) and El Filibusterismo (The Reign of Greed), published by the National Historical Institute of the Philippines, now reside in the Donn V. Hart Southeast Asia Collection in Founders Memorial Library.

NIU President John G. Peters accepted the donation of the manuscript copies in the May 6 dedication ceremony in Altgeld Hall. NIU was chosen for the honor for various reasons, including being the home of CSEAS, the location of the U.S. State Department-sponsored Philippine Youth Leadership Program (see page 13), and the Donn V. Hart Southeast Asian collection of original manuscripts, field notes, photo albums, original art work, rare books, large and expensive folios and palm-leaf manuscripts, said center associate Lina Ong, director of NIU’s International Training Office.

“The generous donation from the Philippine Consulate General of copies of the original manuscripts of the famous novels Noli Me Tangere and El Filibusterismo will further boost the rich resources available to NIU’s Southeast Asian, and in particular, Philippine, programs,” Ong said.

The dedication of the manuscripts to NIU was one of numerous Chicago-area events commemorating Rizal’s 150th birthday in an effort to increase public awareness of Rizal’s literature. The consulate has scheduled a year of activities about Rizal’s life and work, including art exhibitions, workshops, cultural presentations, film showings, storytelling sessions, lectures, and book discussions about Rizal’s life, work and famous novels.

In March 1887, Noli Me Tangere, Rizal’s satirical novel exposing the arrogance and despotism of the Spanish clergy, was published in Berlin, and on Sept. 18, 1891, El Filibusterismo, a more revolutionary and tragic sequel to Noli Me Tange, was printed in Ghent. Because of his fearless exposures of the injustices committed by the civil and clerical officials, Rizal provoked the animosity of those in power.

When the Philippine Revolution began Aug. 26, 1896, he became a target of the Spanish governing officials. He was arrested and charged with rebellion, sedition and illegal organization. He was convicted of all three after a mock trial during which he was not allowed to confront any witnesses. Rizal was imprisoned in Fort Santiago in Manila on Nov. 3, 1896, and executed there nine weeks later on Dec. 30, 1896.

NIU President John G. Peters, left, accepts the manuscript copies of José P. Rizal’s most famous books from Philippine Consul General Leo M. Herrera-Lim.
Center Council News and Notes

Michael Buehler (political science)
- spent the summer in Southeast Asia doing book research and writing.
- worked as a consultant for Indonesia’s Corruption Eradication Commission, a project on party and campaign financing, and wrote on the legal framework for local campaign financing regulations. Also gave a workshop for NGOs in Indonesia on the topic organized by USAID.

Kikue Hamayotsu (political science)
- spent the summer as a fellow at the Asian Research Institute at the National University of Singapore. Her research there focused on the future of political Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia and state-Islam relations in democratic Indonesia.

John Hartmann (foreign languages and literatures)
- spent a week in June in Thailand’s Nan province doing fieldwork on village place names.
- co-authored “Epidemeology from Palm-Leaf Manuscripts of Laos,” presented July 13 at the Botany 2011: Healing the Planet conference in St. Louis, Mo.
- gave keynote address, “The Dead and the Dying: Zhuang and Lue Comparisons,” Aug. 5 at Southeast Asian Linguistics, hosted by the Royal Golden Jubilee Ph.D. Program, Thailand Research Fund, and the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia at Mahidol University, Bangkok.
- presented “Tai-Dam and Lao Song Resources on SEAsite” Aug. 30 at a seminar at Mahidol.

Trude Jacobsen (history)
- was awarded a summer Research and Artistry Grant from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences for a project entitled “Intersections of Desire, Duty, and Debt,” looking at the failure of programs aimed at counteracting sex trafficking in Southeast Asia.
- was granted fall 2011 Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program funding for research assistance on a project evaluating the efficacy of Thai NGOs over the past decade.

Kheang Leang (foreign languages and literatures)
- taught Khmer at the summer 2011 Southeast Asian Studies Summer Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Wei Luo (geography)
- co-authored “Sinification of Zhuang Place Names in Guangxi, China” with Fahui Wang (Louisiana State University), Guanxiong Wang (Capital Normal University, Beijing), and center associate John Hartmann (foreign languages and literature), to be published in forthcoming issue of Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers.

Barbara Posadas (history)
- will receive a 2011 Distinguished Alumni, Faculty, and Staff award in October from NIU’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Catherine Raymond (art history, Center for Burma Studies)
- Presented paper on Mount Meru symbology in Burmese cosmological manuscripts in Thimphu, Bhutan, in July for Mountains in the Religions of South and Southeast Asia: Place, Culture, and Power conference hosted by Royal University of Bhutan Institute of Language and Culture Studies. Also there was CSEAS adjunct Alan Potkin, who presented “The Houaphan Menhirs National Archaeological Park, Laos: A Work in Progress.”

Kheang Un (political science)
- is on a Fulbright fellowship in Cambodia, where he is researching the country’s progress toward democratization and lecturing at the Royal University of Phnom Penh.

Kate Wiegele (anthropology)

Hail fellowship well met
Center associate and NIU Distinguished Research Professor Kenton Clymer (history), right, will be in Washington, D.C., for the 2011–12 academic year on a residential fellowship at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Clymer, seen here with his wife Marlee in 2010 on a trip to Pagan in Burma, will be researching the history of U.S.-Burma relations for a forthcoming book.

(Photo courtesy of Kenton Clymer)
Kudos

Two center associates, former CSEAS director Susan Russell (anthropology) and John Hartmann (foreign languages and literatures), were honored April 21 with prestigious NIU professorial designations, one of the honors a brand-new accolade from the NIU President’s Office. Both received their awards in a ceremony held in Altgeld Auditorium.

Russell: Engaging the world in the Philippines

SUSAN RUSSELL was named a Presidential Engagement Professor (along with Anthropology Department chair and colleague Kendall Thu), a new designation based on NIU President John Peters’ call for faculty “engagement with the community through research, economic development, service and instruction. Establishment of these professorships places NIU in the company of the growing number of institutions which now recognize and reward this increasingly critical function.”

“Because it was the first time that NIU gave out such an award, I was just waiting to see who would be designated,” said Russell, who received the singular honor last spring of being inducted into a Filipino tribe during one of the PYLP follow-up sessions in the Philippines. “I was very surprised that my colleague, Kendall Thu, and I both received the award in the same year since we had each nominated each other and are from the same department. Most of my colleagues in anthropology and Southeast Asian studies engage students with different publics, and we do it consciously because experiential learning and cross-cultural awareness are critically important.”

“I cannot begin to describe the impact of these programs Sue has run through NIU,” said center associate Kate Wiegele, Russell’s colleague in Anthropology. “There is a large and growing network of alumni, educators, and other professionals in the Philippines and the U.S. who are now committed to peace, cultural and environmental sustainability, inter-ethnic and inter-religious understanding, and community engagement.”

Hartmann: Building a legacy of language learning

JOHN HARTMANN was named a 2011 NIU Board of Trustees Professor, one of three faculty members to receive the Trustees Award. Established in 2007, the award recognizes faculty members with a consistent record of excellence in teaching, scholarship or artistry, service and outreach, and academic leadership, have earned a national/international reputation for professional achievements, and are deemed likely to make continued contributions in higher education.

“This is a tremendous honor and truly well-deserved,” said Foreign Languages and Literatures Department chair Katharine Barbe.

Like several center associates and Southeast Asian studies colleagues, Hartmann, a specialist in Thai language and culture who also teaches Lao on demand, began his career in the early days of the Peace Corps, serving in central Thailand. After later serving as an interpreter for the U.S. State Department, he returned to the U.S. to the University of Michigan where he received his master’s and Ph.D. before coming to NIU.

Starting his academic career in earnest, Hartmann conducted linguistic field work in 1975 in Iowa with newly arrived Lao refugees after the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, which led him to compile a dictionary of Tai Dam, a minority language originating in northern Vietnam, and to work with a computer science graduate student, now NIU computer science professor and center associate Jim Henry, to convert his field data into printable Tai script. Hartmann, along with Jim Henry and center associate Patricia Henry (foreign languages and literatures), were the driving force behind creating the center’s online learning resource, SEAsite, in 1997, which continues to draw thousands of users worldwide (see page 14).

Hartmann continues to see uses for technology in his field. A widely recognized and published expert in Tai linguistics, Hartmann’s latest research involves place names in Thailand and southern China. Most recently, he has worked with center associate Wei Luo (geography) to apply Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology to mapping place names in Thailand and southern China.
Meeting of the minds at Thai conference

Center associates John Hartmann (foreign languages and literatures), Andrea Molnar (anthropology), and Danny Unger (political science) joined researchers, students, and activists at the 11th International Conference on Thai Studies July 26–28 at Mahidol University in Bangkok. In addition to chairing a panel on Thai linguistics, Hartmann presented “The Disappearing Past: Hidden Histories and Disappearing Environments” with NIU alumna Ratanaporn Sethakul (Ph.D. history, 1989) of Payap University. Molnar presented “Civil Society Participation of Muslim Women in the Deep South: Is it Political Engagement?” and Unger presented “Mass Media, the Internet and Political Deliberations in Southeast Asia.” Also presenting at the conference were CSEAS adjunct Alan Potkin (“Digital Applications for Archiving, Conserving, and Replicating Temple Murals in Lao and in Isan”), NIU political science Ph.D. candidate Daniel Pojar Jr. (“Intra-ASEAN Conflict Between Thailand and Cambodia”), and NIU alum Paul Chambers (Ph.D. political science, 2003), now with Payap University, who presented “Democratization and the Military: Thailand in Comparative Perspective.” The conference was presented by Mahidol’s Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia.

Museum Notes: Thai artifacts now accessible through database

As the new home of the NIU Anthropology Museum in the soon-to-be reopened Cole Hall nears completion this fall, a major project to enter the museum’s inventory of Thai artifacts into an easily accessible database is also almost complete, says museum interim director Sara Pfannkuche. “This means that artifacts will now be easier to research, identify, and find,” she says. “Prior to this, approximately only twenty percent of our museum’s collection was in the database.” The database will make it much easier for faculty and students to use the collection. Museum staff and students have been working on inventorying and re-housing the museum’s entire collection of 12,000 archeological specimens, artifacts, and objects, half of which are from Southeast Asia including Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines, ever since fall 2010 when the collection was moved from the basement of Cole Hall to temporary storage in the Stevens Building while Cole was renovated and a new museum space created. Pfannkuche and her team are starting to move the collection into Cole Hall in preparation for the building’s re-opening.

Center associates Danny Unger (political science) and Andrea Molnar (anthropology) share a moment with NIU alumna Napisa Waitoolkiat (Ph.D. political science, 2005) at the 11th International Conference on Thai Studies in July in Bangkok. (Photo courtesy of Andrea Molnar)

Carefully stored Thai jewelry, representing the Hmong, Meo, and Mushar Daeng groups, is part of the NIU Anthropology Museum’s Thai artifacts collection.
Cambodia Studies group plans 2012 conference

By Judy Ledgerwood

With the number of Cambodia specialists increasing, more students studying abroad in the country, and an international conference planned for 2012, Cambodia studies are on the rise at NIU. To support that, CSEAS established a Cambodia studies committee in 2009, which has since evolved into a working group; its members are Kenton Clymer and Trude Jacobsen (history), Kheang Leang (foreign languages and literatures), Kheang Un (political science) and myself.

The group’s first major undertaking is organizing an international Cambodia studies conference, which has been set for Sept. 14–16, 2012 at NIU. The conference, to be held in collaboration with the Center for Khmer Studies (Cambodia), the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the University of California-Berkeley, Ohio University, University of Massachusetts-Lowell, and the Cambodian Association of Illinois, will include a focus on the arts as well as the social sciences. We hope to include a musical performance and a visit to the Cambodian American Heritage Museum and Killing Fields Memorial in Chicago, as well as the usual academic sessions. We are raising money in hopes of subsidizing the costs of student attendance. Watch for a call for papers and a conference website going live in September and save those dates!

This year, most of the working group is busy with travels. Kenton Clymer will be in Washington D.C., for the next ten months working on a book project at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Kheang Un will be teaching at the Royal University of Phnom Penh and conducting research with funding from a Fulbright fellowship. Khmer instructor Kheang Leang has just returned from a summer of teaching Khmer through the University of Hawaii’s Advanced Study of Khmer program. (Photo courtesy of Shay Galto)

Captivated in Cambodia

Three NIU students spent their summers in Cambodia advancing their knowledge of the Khmer language. Summer FLAS recipients Shay Galto (M.A. candidate, sociology), left, and Lauren Bell (M.A. candidate anthropology), seen here during a visit to Angkor Wat, studied at the Khmer School of Language in Phnom Penh. Jordan York (M.A. candidate, anthropology) was also in Phnom Penh and studied Khmer through the University of Hawaii’s Advanced Study of Khmer program. (Photo courtesy of Shay Galto)
Youth leadership programs receive new awards

The U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs has awarded new grants for two NIU programs aimed at developing leadership skills and forging connections among young people in Southeast Asia. The agency has approved $282,774 in funding for the third year of the Southeast Asia Youth Leadership Program (SEAYLP), overseen by center director James T. Collins, and a $275,000 award for the ninth year of the Philippines Youth Leadership Program (PYLP), which is led by center associates Susan Russell (anthropology) and Lina Ong (International Training Office). Both the center and ITO are actively looking for host families to assist in that part of both programs (see What’s Coming Up, page 23).

SEAYLP

This fall, SEAYLP participants from Brunei, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore, and Vietnam will begin their three-week program Oct. 26 at NIU. NIU alumna Maria “Rai” Hancock (M.A. history, 2011), who was involved as a graduate student with the program for two years, will manage SEAYLP this year, directing a team of graduate students who will guide participants through sessions on cooperative leadership strategies, Southeast Asia as a region, and American culture. Participants will explore these ideas through activities centered on the program’s twin themes of water ecology and Abraham Lincoln’s leadership. As in the past, program participants will spend their last week in the U.S. in Washington, D.C. In spring, the center will welcome participants from Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand April 10.

Since SEAYLP’s fall 2009 inception, 106 students and 22 adult leaders have participated. Since returning home, SEAYLP alumni have launched such community projects as a childhood cancer awareness project in Vietnam, an environmental action club and a village library in Cambodia, a tutoring program for underprivileged children in the Philippines, a river-cleanup festival in Laos, an education project in Burma, and an “Amazing Race”-style event in Brunei to help young people learn more about their history and culture.

PYLP

Students and adult leaders from the troubled Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao in the southern Philippines will arrive at NIU April 16 to participate in the ninth session of PYLP, for nearly six weeks of intensive training in civic participation, leadership, volunteerism, and conflict resolution. After five weeks at NIU, the group will spend a week in Washington, D.C., before returning home to implement their own action plans for community service and later participate in a “follow-on” session to chart their progress, Russell said.

Such a follow-on session occurred in late August, when Russell, accompanied by Tim Paquette, assistant director of NIU’s Counseling and Student Development Center, traveled to the Philippines to meet up with the 26 participants in the eighth PYLP group, who attended the five-week institute at NIU in April and May.

“For the first time in its eight-year history, the program was held in Cebu City in the central Philippines instead of Mindanao in order to help expose Cebuano students (both Muslim and Christian) to the themes of the program: youth leadership, community service, peace-building, and respect for ethno-religious diversity,” Russell said. “The participants have been implementing the community projects they designed at NIU and convened in Cebu City to review and receive feedback on the success of the projects and advice about next steps.”

Representatives from the U.S. Embassy in the Philippines, the International Visitors Program-Philippines Alumni Foundation, and the American Field Service-Philippines joined the participants and Russell and the NIU team at the Cebu Grand Hotel. A major highlight of the follow-on session, Russell said, was site visits to various community projects involving youth and service-learning opportunities in the Cebu City area.
Southeast Asia Digital Library project faces cuts

By Hao Phan

The latest round of federal budget cuts did not spare NIU’s Southeast Asia Digital Library (SEADL) project. In spring, project co-director Drew VandeCreek, head of NIU Libraries’ digitization unit, and I received word that the last two years of a 2009–13 U.S. Department of Education TICFIA (Technological Innovation and Cooperation for Foreign Information Access) grant for the project had been eliminated, resulting in a loss of more than $320,000 in funding.

The project goal from the beginning has been to create an easily accessible online collection of Southeast Asia resources that could be used in the teaching of Southeast Asian languages and research on the region. Materials currently available on SEADL include video interviews of political victims in East Timor and Cambodia; historical photographs on the Philippines and Cambodia; early printed books on Thailand, manuscripts from Vietnam, Thailand and Burma; a documentary video on the traditional Burmese marionettes; television programs from Indonesia; and databases.

Within the limit of time and resources remaining in the current fiscal year, SEADL staff members are working with project partners in Southeast Asia and in the U.S. to add as much material as possible in the next few months. Forthcoming additions include video interviews of artists and archival art materials from Vietnam; Buddhist mural paintings from Thailand and Laos; archival materials on the culture and literature of Indonesia; and Islamic manuscripts from Indonesia. We have also created SEAnet, an online repository to collect digital materials from the public. We invite individual scholars and institutions possessing digital materials on Southeast Asia to consider sharing their collections with researchers and students around the world through our secure SEAnet upload utility. For more information, see the SEADL website.

SEADL is an international collaboration led by NIU Libraries with the assistance of the Association of Asian Studies’ Committee on Research Materials on Southeast Asia (CORMOSEA). Partners for the 2009–13 project include Hawaii, Yale, and Cornell universities, along with eight Southeast Asian institutions—the Center for the Study of Islam and Society at the Islamic State University of Indonesia, the Lontar Foundation, and Paramadina University, all in Indonesia; the Faculty of Fine Arts of Laos; the National University of Malaysia; Chiang Mai University in Thailand; and the Vietnamese Nom Preservation Foundation and the Natasha Salon, both in Vietnam. CSEAS Director James T. Collins and center associates Catherine Raymond (art history, Center for Burma Studies), Judy Ledgerwood (anthropology) and Susan Russell (anthropology), and CSEAS adjunct Alan Potkin have served as consultants on different aspects of the project.

Hao Phan is curator of NIU Libraries’ Southeast Asia collection curator and a center associate.

New books and favorite texts from Northern Illinois University Press

In collaboration with the NIU Center for Southeast Asian Studies

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Now with downloadable audio files
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Burmese (Myanmar): An Introduction to the Literary Style
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A History of the Female Underclass in Dutch Asia
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Refresh ing the fonts on SEASite

By Jim Henry

A three-year project to update the center’s SEASite (www.seasite.niu.edu), perhaps the most widely used free web resource for the languages and cultures of Southeast Asia in the world, continues to make progress.

SEASite was created in 1997, back in the early days of the web. Over the years, it has been expanded and modified by NIU faculty, assisted by approximately 50 student helpers, many of whom were Southeast Asians. Not surprisingly, the site today is showing its age.

The current updating project, funded by an approximately $300,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education’s International Research and Studies Program, began in 2009 and is scheduled to end in August 2012. The two main areas we have been addressing are audio files and the fonts for rendering Southeast Asian languages that do not use the Latin alphabet: Burmese, Khmer, Lao, Thai, and Vietnamese.

For audio, we needed to change all the audio files from the proprietary and sometimes problematic Real Audio format to the now more commonly used mp3 format. This involved converting and moving literally thousands of audio files on the SEASite server. We hope the results will provide a better and more reliable user experience.

For the font issue, we have been converting all the Burmese, Khmer, Lao, Thai, and Vietnamese materials from the custom fonts which we created (or borrowed, in the case of Vietnamese) when we created the site to international Unicode standards. While these fonts have worked, and still work fine for SEASite display, their usage is limited outside of the website. For example, a user cannot copy a Thai word from SEASite and do a Google search for it because Google does not know about our fonts. Similarly, other data on the web is not encoded with our fonts.

At this point, we have completed all the audio conversions, and have finished converting Burmese, Lao, Thai and nearly all of Khmer from custom fonts to Unicode. The latter has been a more complex job than it might appear. Our project programmer (an American bioinformaticist with Web script and pattern-matching coding skills who lives in Thailand) has had to devise a custom program for each language.

Khmer proved quite a challenge to formulate the rules necessary to convert a SEASite Khmer word to the equivalent Unicode version. The protocol works like this. A custom-written computer program reads all the Khmer Web pages, parses the html codes and tags, identifies the old SEASite Khmer characters (complicated by the fact that we needed to use two Khmer fonts due to the large number of characters in their alphabet), determines the equivalent Unicode, and writes out a new version of each Web page. There are still a few problems with the results. The team working on this, which includes myself, the programmer in Thailand, and center associate Kheang Leang, a native Khmer speaker/reader who teaches Khmer on campus, is continuing to work on resolving these issues (via e-mail in the programmer’s case). If this all sounds complex, believe me, I have only hinted at the whole story.

Once the Khmer conversion is done, we will move on to Vietnamese, the last language on our list. After conducting additional tests, and assuming all goes well, we will post some announcements on the center website and then shortly make the new Web server on which we have been building this new version of SEASite the official one.

At that point we will all take a vacation!

Put ting on the ‘hits’

How much traffic do Southeast Asian languages get on SEASite? A three-day snapshot of Lao, Tagalog, and Thai traffic offers some insight.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Average page hits/requests per day</th>
<th>Average number of unique visitors per day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>3,085</td>
<td>531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagalog</td>
<td>27,000</td>
<td>7,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>3,226</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jim Henry compiled the statistics, requested by language professor John Hartmann, from a three-day period in October 2010. “The numbers include the number of page hits (requests) and the number of ‘unique visitors’ per day over [the three days], which include a weekend,” Henry said. “The page-request numbers don’t count requests for images or sounds or other odds and ends, just page document requests.”

The visitor number reflects the number of different computers that requested web pages, he said. “Some of these ‘visitors’ are computer software robots from Google, Microsoft, etc., trying to index our pages. But they should not greatly increase the ‘unique visitor’ count, I think,” Henry said. “They might significantly increase the page-request count, however.”

Jim Henry in his native habitat in the Computer Science Department.
On Display

Sharing their stories

Witnessing the Cambodian Killing Fields
Opened September 15
Cambodian American Heritage Museum, Chicago

By Liz Poppens Denius

Sometimes a picture can’t tell 1,000 words. Sometimes only words will do.

A five-year project to collect the life histories of Cambodian elders who survived the Khmer Rouge era and now live in the Chicago area has come to fruition in an exhibit at the Cambodian American Heritage Museum and Killing Fields Memorial (CAHM) in Chicago, the result of an ongoing collaboration between CAHM and the NIU Anthropology Department.

The life history project began in summer 2006 when center associate Judy Ledgerwood (anthropology) and two of her NIU students, Katie Hale (M.A. anthropology, 2007) and Chetra Gnet (B.S. industrial technology, 2008) interviewed forty-eight elders in Chicago. Interviews with some were filmed by NIU art student Vicky Boland. The interviews were then translated from Khmer to English by three Cambodian graduate students at NIU during the 2008–09 academic year, Pisith Phlong (M.A. anthropology, 2009), Socheat Nhean (M.A. anthropology, 2010), and Soveacha Ros (Ed.D. adult and adult education, 2010).

In spring 2010, eight students taking Ledgerwood’s Life History course—undergraduates Lauren Bell (anthropology), Shay Galto (sociology), Emily Kruse (Southeast Asian studies), and Chanta Sam (nursing); anthropology graduate students Frank Chappell, Julie Edmunds, Laura Ewert, and Jordan York; and history graduate student Matt Jagel—indexed and analyzed the interviews. Their results yielded the exhibit’s four themes: Evacuation and Collectivization, Breaking Down the Social Order, Living in Constant Fear, and the Killing Fields.

In May, Ledgerwood, who also serves on the CAHM board, gave a behind-the-scenes preview of the exhibit in her presentation “Witnessing the Cambodian Killing Fields: Using Life Histories to Create a Museum Exhibit on Khmer Rouge Atrocities” at a conference in Montreal. The colloquium, entitled: Cambodia from Then until Now: Memory and Plural Identities in the Aftermath of Genocide, was sponsored by the Cambodia Working Group, part of the “Life Stories of Montrealers Displaced by War, Genocide and Other Human Rights Violations” project, a joint research effort between Concordia University and several Montreal communities. The conference included keynote addresses by film maker Rithy Panh and genocide researcher Alex Hinton and a screening of the award-winning 2010 documentary Enemies of the People. The wide-ranging presentations included work by scholars of Cambodia and Khmer, all of whom have worked on the topic of telling the life stories of Khmer Rouge-era survivors, whether those stories were recorded in ethnography, fiction, film, dance performances or teaching materials, Ledgerwood said.

The Chicago exhibit, Witnessing the Cambodian Killing Fields, opened Sept. 15 at the museum, 2831 W. Lawrence Ave., Chicago. For details, call 773-878-7090. The project was funded by grants from the Henry R. Luce and Joyce foundations.

Editor’s note: Living Memory of the Khmer, a series of videotaped interviews with Cambodians who experienced the 1950s to the 1990s in Cambodia, is now part of the Southeast Asia Digital Library at NIU. The project was coordinated by NIU alum Pisith Phlong, now a contract lecturer at the Royal University of Phnom Penh. See it online at the SEADL website.
Alumni News

Paul Chambers (Ph.D. political science, 2003) is director of research of the South East Asian Institute of Global Studies at Payap University in Chiang Mai after returning from a three-year stint in Germany at the University of Heidelberg. He is co-author with Aurel Croissant of the newly published Democracy under Stress: Civil-Military Relations in South and Southeast Asia (White Lotus Press, 2010) and (with Thein Swe) ‘Cashing In’ Across the Golden Triangle (Mekong Press, 2011). Chambers, a former Peace Corps volunteer who spent five years in northeast Thailand and Laos before coming to NIU to study, was at Chiang Mai University, where he lectured on political science in Thai for a year prior to his appointment at Payap. Chambers joins fellow NIU alums Ratanaporn Sethakul (Ph.D. history, 1989), Jenjit Gasigitamrong (Ed.D. reading, 2003) and Napisa Waitoolkiat (Ph.D. political science, 2005) at Payap’s South East Asian Institute of Global Studies program. He was recently featured in the BBC documentary, Justice Under Fire.

Sean Dolan (M.A. anthropology, 2010), who coordinated the center’s spring Southeast Asia Youth Leadership Program (SEAYLP) after working with three previous SEAYLP groups and on the center’s online Malay dictionary project, is pursuing his Ph.D. at Emory University.

Matt Eden (B.A. political science, 2008) is working in Jakarta as a consultant for the Millennium Challenge Corporation. The corporation, an independent U.S. foreign aid agency created by the U.S. Congress in January 2004, is working on four major areas of development within Indonesia: “green” prosperity, education, governance, and health. “MCC is changing the conversation on how best to deliver smart U.S. foreign assistance by focusing on good policies, country ownership, and results,” Eden said.

Jim Klein (M.A. and Ph.D. history, 1984) has retired from The Asia Foundation after twenty-four years of service, most recently as the country representative for Thailand. A Peace Corps volunteer in northeastern Thailand from 1973 to 1976, Klein began his career with the foundation in 1986. He served as an assistant representative for Thailand and the country representative for Malaysia and Cambodia before being assigned to Thailand in 1996. Klein’s fourteen years as Thailand representative makes him the foundation’s longest-running country representative at a single post, according to Richard Fuller, vice president of operations. “Throughout his career, Jim demonstrated creativity and deep knowledge of the Asian societies in which he served,” Fuller said.

Former CSEAS outreach graduate assistant Punchada Sirivunabood (Ph.D. political science, 2009) is now a full-time faculty member in the Social Sciences and Humanities Department at Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand.

Still learning

E. Peter Colina (B.A. economics, with Southeast Asian Studies minor, 2010) explored the Tangkuban Perahu caldera near Bandung, Indonesia, while he was in the country for three months this past summer as the sole U.S. recipient of a 2011 Indonesian Arts and Culture Scholarship from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The scholarship program draws recipients from around the world and aims to broaden global understanding of Indonesia. “The Indonesian Arts and Culture Scholarship has been one of the best experiences of my life,” Colina said.

Linking up in Thailand

Three NIU alumni and a former faculty member met with outgoing Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, center, in Thailand in July. On hand from left were Thosaporn Sirisamphan (M.A. public administration, 1984, and Ph.D. political science, 1987), secretary general of the Office of the Public Sector Development Commission; The Asia Foundation’s John Brandon (M.A. political science, 1985); former NIU political science professor Robert Albritton (now at the University of Mississippi); and outgoing government spokesman Pantan Watanayagorn (Ph.D. political science, 1993), associate professor at Chulalongkorn University.
Southeast Asian studies on the American plains: A personal view

By Michael Hawkins

It's often been pointed out what an odd place the American Midwest is for Southeast Asian studies. The frigid temperatures, the monotone colors, the uninspiring topography, and its agonizing distance from either ocean present a strange setting indeed for the study of such a lush and colorful region as Southeast Asia. But then again, perhaps the disparate nature of their locations is what ultimately enables their intimate academic relationship. Perhaps the Midwest and Southeast Asia each find something in the other that ennobles and broadens their visions and aspirations. Perhaps each enlivens or tempers the other as the case may be. Or maybe it's just one of those things. Whatever the reason, Southeast Asia has found a home in the heart of America and doesn't show signs of leaving any time soon.

In typical mandala fashion, the concentric spheres of influence emanating from university centers of Southeast Asian studies are slowly encompassing the greater Midwest, often in unexpected places. As a recent visiting professor at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Mich., I was pleasantly surprised by the overwhelming and enthusiastic interest in Southeast Asia. Grand Valley considers itself at the forefront of teaching and writing global history (mostly due to the bold work of associate history professor Craig Benjamin), and felt Southeast Asia could provide a rare and essential component to their program. Colleagues and administrators spoke glowingly of Southeast Asia's potential contributions to environmental history, social history, cultural history, labor history, military history, imperial history, and the ever critical frontiers of global history. Students were similarly interested, exploring study abroad opportunities and international organizations such as NGOs and faith-based programs dealing with Southeast Asia.

Domestically, the heavy presence of Hmong, Vietnamese, and Filipino migrants in Michigan piqued the interest of the larger population and government officials, which naturally look to universities to address their curiosities. While the University of Michigan excels in addressing these concerns, public and educational interest in the region is rapidly expanding beyond the capabilities of any single institution within a given state. Those with knowledge of and experience in Southeast Asia have the constant potential to make meaningful and urgent contributions to institutions throughout the heartland searching for ways to exceed the bounds of traditional, and now unsettled, conceptions of the world.

Since taking a tenure-track position at Creighton University in Omaha, Neb., last fall, I have found similarly enthusiastic support for the integration and expansion of Southeast Asian studies. The history department has encouraged and approved courses such as “Southeast Asia: Crossroads of the World” (pioneered at NIU and taught this past spring at Creighton), “American Imperialism in the Philippines” (to be taught at Creighton this fall) and the region’s deep integration into Asian World surveys and upper-division courses on gender in Asia. My arrival and CSEAS Director Jim Collins’ visit last year to Creighton and its Asian World Center have sparked a sustained effort to incorporate Southeast Asia into emerging programs and curriculums spanning many university programs.

Southeast Asian studies have also found a deep and enduring home among Creighton’s vast collection of Southeast Asian heritage learners. With Asians comprising nearly eight percent of the student body, and an unusually large proportion of these being Southeast Asian, courses and discussions of the region have solicited an enormous response. Interested students have quickly translated their enthusiasm into desires for graduate study and international engagement. NIU’s Center for Southeast Asian Studies will have its first FLAS student from Creighton University (Philip Cerelpak, history) this fall. He is but the first of many interested parties eager to engage the world’s first and last frontier by studying Southeast Asia in the heart of America.

As I stared out over the barren and frigid Nebraska countryside at the writing of this piece last winter, I was again astounded by the warm welcome and bright future Southeast Asian studies finds in the American plains. In its gradual march west from the snow-covered hills of upstate New York, to the icy fields of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois, and now on to the blustery plains of Nebraska and north Texas, the heartlands of America and Asia are walking hand in hand into the 21st century.

CSEAS adjunct Michael Hawkins (Ph.D. history, 2009) is an assistant history professor at Creighton University in Omaha, where he lives with his wife and two children. He can be reached at MichaelHawkins@creighton.edu.
More NIU students opt for summer language learning in Southeast Asia

Between summer 2011 and spring 2012, twenty-one NIU students—eighteen graduate students and three undergraduates—will have honed their Southeast Asian language skills as recipients of the center’s summer and 2011–12 academic year Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships. Over the summer, thirteen NIU students—the most CSEAS has ever sent to Southeast Asia in a summer for immersion-language training—received FLAS awards to study language in Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. The eleven graduate students and two undergraduates included Michael Zack (Burma), Shay Galto and Lauren Bell (Cambodia), Matthew Bakke (Indonesia), Colleen Gray, Ryan Keller, Brett McCabe, Collette Morgan, Aaron Paige, Mary Thomas, and JoAnn LoSavio (Malaysia), and Shahin Aftabizadeh and Jorge Barroso (Thailand). Another student, Robert Kollas, received a summer FLAS award to study Tagalog at the Southeast Asian Studies Summer Institute (SEASSI) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

In addition, former center assistant and 2011–12 SEAYLP manager Maria “Rai” Hancock makes new young friends on a walk through Malang, where she spent the summer intensively studying Indonesian.

Maria “Rai” Hancock (M.A. history, 2011) successfully applied for the U.S. State Department’s competitive Critical Language Scholarship program, and spent the summer in an intensive immersion program through the Universitas Negeri Malang in Malang, Indonesia. For a glimpse of her experience, see her blog, Immersed in Indonesia.

Nine of the summer FLAS graduate students and the two undergraduates are also 2011–12 FLAS fellows (see list on page 19). CSEAS has been awarding FLAS fellowships, which are funded by a Title VI grant from the U.S. Department of Education, for thirty-seven years. This is the second year the center has offered academic-year scholarships to both graduate and undergraduate students. Deadlines to apply for summer 2012 and 2012–13 academic year FLAS fellowships will be announced in the CSEAS weekly e-bulletin and on the center website.

Pojar named 2011–12 Neher Fellow

Daniel J. Pojar Jr., a third-year doctoral candidate in political science with a concentration in Southeast Asian studies, is the 2011–12 recipient of the center’s Clark and Arlene Neher Graduate Fellowship for the Study of Southeast Asia. A former U.S. Air Force officer, military analyst, and counter-terrorism specialist, he studied the violent insurgency in southern Thailand for his master’s degree from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif., in 2005. Since coming to NIU, he has taught four semesters of undergraduate international relations classes, was the founding president of the NIU Thai Association in 2009, and has received two Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships to study Thai. His research focuses on regional political security in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries. Upon completion of his Ph.D., he plans to pursue a university teaching and research career. Advanced-level graduate students planning field or archival research in Southeast Asia are invited to apply for the Neher fellowship in the spring; see the center website for details.
Graduate students
Shahin Aftabizadeh (M.A. candidate, anthropology), Burmese
◆ Research emphasis is transnationalism, globalization, and new symbols of cultural identity among migrant communities on the Thai-Burma border.
Lauren Bell (M.A. candidate, anthropology), Khmer
◆ Research interests are post-war society and gender issues.
Philip Cerepak (M.A candidate, history), Tagalog
◆ Research interests are the use of literary criticism and global history as a method of understanding subaltern histories.
Shay Galto (M.A. candidate, sociology), Khmer
◆ Research emphases are the impact of the 1975–79 genocide on Cambodian culture and in-country educational programs being developed to teach Cambodians about that period.
Colleen Gray (M.A, anthropology), Malay
◆ Research interest is in gender studies in Southeast Asia.
Laura Iandola (Ph.D. candidate, history), Indonesian
◆ Research emphasis is on Indonesia’s intentions to become a nuclear power during the Cold War as a deterrent to western intervention in Southeast Asia.
Aaron Johnson (Ph.D. candidate, political science), Thai
◆ Research interests include comparative political issues in Thailand and Cambodia.
Ryan Keller (M.A. candidate, anthropology), Malay
◆ Research focus is on Malaysian language and identity.
Joseph Kinzer (M.A. candidate, music), Malay
◆ Research interest is the impact of globalization and western influences on music, religion, and culture in Malaysia and Borneo.
Robert Kollas (M.A., political science), Tagalog
◆ Research interests are U.S. national security policy in Southeast Asia, specifically inter-governmental relationships with the Philippines.
Siew Lian Lim (M.F.A. candidate, art), Indonesian
◆ Research focus is on using images from wayang kulit shadow puppetry of Indonesia and Malaysia in contemporary artworks using repurposed materials.
Nicole Loring (Ph.D. candidate, political science), Burmese
◆ Research emphasis is on authoritarian regimes in Southeast Asia.
Brett McCabe (Ph.D. candidate, history), Malay
◆ Research interest is Islamic finance in Malaysia.
Michael Zack (Ph.D. candidate, political science), Burmese
◆ Research emphasis is on traditional Burmese leadership and Than Shwe.
Undergraduate students
Matthew Bakke (B.A. undergraduate, political science), Indonesian
Ryan Broce (B.A. undergraduate, history), Malay
JoAnn LoSavio (B.A. undergraduate, anthropology/history), Malay

Time to teach
CSEAS welcomes the 2011–12 Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants (FLTAs) to NIU. They are, from left, Michael Melo (Tagalog), Syarifah Farah Nabilah Syed Idrus (Malay), Chanda Phongnapharuk (Thai), and Nurul Azis (Indonesian). They will be teaching with foreign language faculty members Rhodalyne Crail, James T. Collins, John Hartmann and Patricia Henry respectively this year.
Student News

Graduates, club news, and name recognition

Sixteen undergraduate students graduated from NIU in December and May with minors in Southeast Asian studies while three others graduated with contract majors in the field. Fall graduates were Thomas Dady (history), Rob Hawco (political science), Kelly Reese (communications), Michael Reese (philosophy/English), Ashley Tessmer (sociology), and Jessica Weisz (psychology). Graduating in spring were Charles Bendig (anthropology), Emily Dow (anthropology), Eleanor Fritz (anthropology), Colleen Gray (women’s studies), Robert Kollas (political science), Angela Kring (theatre), Colette Morgan (political science-international politics), Leif Paulson (anthropology), Terry Peugh (communications), and Robin Waters (political science-international politics). The three students graduating with contract majors in Southeast Asian studies were Alyssa DeLuca, Emily Kruse and Joslyn Nielsen (who graduated with a double major in English).

A number of graduate students completed their advanced degrees with a concentration in Southeast Asian studies in December 2010 and May and August 2011. Fall graduates included Nico Harjanto (Ph.D., political science). Graduating with master’s degrees in May were Maria “Rai” Hancock and Sarah Wiley (both history). Receiving master’s degrees in August were Frank Chappell, Rebecca Chellappa, Brett McCabe and Mu-Lung Hsu (all anthropology).

Congratulations also to these center-affiliated undergraduate and graduate students:

- Elisabeth Wright (anthropology), who was one of two students winning the Anthropology Department’s Dubowski Fellowship Award, which gives students first-hand experience in cultural anthropological field methods. Wright traveled to Thailand over the summer to participate in the Thailand study-abroad program led by center associate and anthropology professor Andrea Molnar.

- Poonatree Jiaviriyaboonya, Ryan Keller and Mu-Lung Hsu (all M.A. candidates, anthropology), who received Foundation Awards, a travel grant for anthropology graduate students to conduct field research.

- Brett McCabe (M.A., anthropology), who was named one of two Outstanding Graduate Students by the Anthropology Department, is continuing on at NIU, pursuing a Ph.D. in history.

- Charles Bendig and Emily Dow (both B.A., anthropology), who received Undergrad Scholar awards from the Anthropology Department for graduating with a 3.3 GPA or higher. Bendig was also named one of two Outstanding Undergraduate Students by the faculty.

- Undergraduate JoAnn LoSavio (anthropology/history) and graduate students Brett McCabe and Mu-Lung Hsu, whose presentations at the Southeast Asia Club’s annual student conference on April 23 won conference awards for best papers.

Jorge Barroso (M.A. candidate, political science) and Robert Kollas (B.A. political science, 2011) stepped out of the Southeast Asia zone to represent countries on the other side of the world at the Midwest Model United Nations Conference in St. Louis in February. “I represented Denmark and Jorge represented Bolivia, both of us on General Assembly, 4th Committee, which is the committee for special political and decolonization topics,” said Kollas, who is now pursuing an M.A. in political science at NIU. “We specifically dealt with a review of peacekeeping operations in all of its aspects at the conference. I was able to work with delegations from European countries including Belgium, Norway, the UK and others to successfully pass a resolution while Jorge and his
partner for Bolivia worked with the Latin American and African blocks on separate resolutions. In total the committee wrote and passed four resolutions, both in committee and in the General Assembly.”

Emily Dow (B.A. anthropology, Southeast Asian studies minor, 2011) is continuing at NIU for her master’s in anthropology after spending part of the summer on the Malaysia-Brunei study abroad program led by assistant history professor and center associate Eric Jones (history).

Colleen Gray (B.A. women’s studies, Southeast Asian studies minor, 2011) is continuing at NIU for her master’s in anthropology. Gray, who spent the summer in Malaysia studying intensive Malay at the Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP), is secretary of the newly formed Malay International Language Organization (MILO) at NIU.

Colette Morgan (B.A. political science-international politics, women’s studies and Southeast Asian studies minors, 2011) has been accepted to the University of Chicago Global Studies program, which she will begin after spending the summer in Malaysia studying intensive Malay at UMP.

Leif Paulson, shortly after receiving his bachelor’s degree in anthropology in May, moved to Thailand where he plans to teach English after traveling in the country. “I plan on teaching English for one or more years before coming back to NIU for master’s work,” says Paulson, who is writing a travel/culture blog about his experiences while he’s there. “I cannot say it is high-quality scholarly work, rather just some of my random thoughts/experiences translated to writing at the end of each day. But if you are interested in gleaming some of my experiences feel free to take a look,” he said. “Thanks to everyone for the knowledge imparted to me by NIU. I am glad to be done with my bachelor’s work, and hope one day to return for the next degree.”

Jocelyn Sim, former NIU Malay Foreign Language Teaching Assistant, is returning to campus in the fall as a graduate student in the NIU English Department, and as a graduate assistant for the center’s online Malay dictionary project.

Robin Waters (B.A. political science-international politics, Southeast Asian Studies minor) is attending Loyola University Chicago School of Law this fall.

Eye on the region

CSEAS graduate assistant Laura Iandola (Ph.D. candidate, history) is teaching ILAS 225, Crossroads, the center’s survey course on Southeast Asia this fall. Iandola, who has taught at the college level for more than twenty years, said she will be taking a thematic approach, highlighting religious cultures, genocide and human rights, environmental challenges, trade and globalization, and the intersection of Southeast Asian histories with the global politics of decolonization and the Cold War.

“I hope students gain a strong sense of the region’s vitality, diversity, and significance, along with its embodiment of critical global challenges like human rights, the environment, and globalization,” Iandola said. “I also will be encouraging them to travel to Southeast Asia, and to this end constructing individual travel plans and itineraries is one of the course requirements. Ideally, [this course] will prompt students to further explore the outstanding curricula in Southeast Asian studies at NIU, attracting them to both language study and specialized coursework, as well as to choosing a minor field in Southeast Asian studies.”

Majoring in Chinese Studies as an undergraduate at Beloit College, Iandola studied international politics and the Cold War for her first master’s in political science at the University of Toronto. She came to NIU intending to write an intellectual biography of former CIA director William Colby. “He was notorious for his Vietnam operations, but someone whom I’d met, talked with, and come to admire,” she said. “Then I took Eric Jones’s course on the history of Indonesia and began to move out of the US-Vietnam straitjacket that has hamstrung our studies of U.S. foreign relations in Southeast Asia.”

Iandola, who has been invited to give a presentation on Indonesia at a Yale University conference on genocide in November, credits her adviser, NIU historian and center associate Kenton Clymer, with sharpening her research interests. “At NIU I’ve been able to expand my focus from examining the dynamics of American policymaking in this pivotal region of the Cold War—the perspective of outside powers—into the perspectives of Southeast Asia itself, a perspective I hope to communicate to our Crossroads students,” she said.
Student News (cont’d)

Off to Cambodia on a Fulbright fellowship

By Matthew Jagel

My historical interests lie in United States and Southeast Asian diplomacy, specifically during the Cold War with respect to Indochina. This passion for history grew organically over a period of time. My parents came of age in the 1960s, a time when Southeast Asia as a region became part of the American discourse. My father, who studied history himself, lived in Japan for years as a youth and traveled extensively throughout Asia. In some ways, Asian and American history is part of my intellectual DNA.

Following an undergraduate degree in marketing from the University of Iowa, I enrolled at Northern Illinois University to reacquaint myself with history and see if it still held an interest for me. I knew immediately that I had found my life’s work. This was reinforced when I studied abroad in Malaysia under Eric Jones. My first taste of life in Asia, and I was hooked. I since have returned to the region to conduct research in the Philippines, and travel in Cambodia. That country, in particular, struck me, and subsequently I began to study the Khmer language.

My research will focus on, broadly speaking, U.S.-Cambodian relations from 1945–1975. More specifically I will be looking at the career of Son Ngoc Thanh, who served briefly as the first Prime Minister of Cambodia in 1945, led anti-French and later anti-monarchical resistance movements, worked with the CIA, and finally returned to government following the Lon Nol-led coup against Norodom Sihanouk. In analyzing this man, this period in time, and America’s role with respect to this newly autonomous nation, I hope to gain a better understanding of the geopolitical considerations that influenced American foreign policy. I will also have a glimpse into the characters that attempted to steer an independent Cambodian nation as global forces pressured from both sides of the political spectrum.

Matthew Jagel, a Ph.D. candidate in history, will be based in Phnom Penh for ten months during his 2011–12 Fulbright fellowship. He is accompanied by NIU alumna Jessica Marchetti (M.A. anthropology, 2010). The couple was married in July.

Noodles and more

NIU’s three clubs related to Southeast Asian studies are gearing up for another year of culture nights, a spring student conference, noodle fests, movie screenings, and other activities related to Southeast Asia. New to the roster this year will be the Malay International Language Organization (MILO), which was begun in spring with the aim of developing a greater understanding of Malay culture and Southeast Asia on campus. The center’s Southeast Asia Club is gearing up for another year of culture nights, its spring student conference, and other activities. Officers for 2011–12 are Michael Deinzer, president; Melanie Francia, vice president; Edward Reyes, treasurer; Jennifer Puetz, secretary; Matt Ropp, culture night coordinator; Robert Kollas, conference coordinator; and Derek Koegel, outreach.

The other Southeast Asia-related club on campus is the Burma Interest Group-NIU (BIG-NIU), which will be coordinating a new lecture series as its main activity this year. A group of Indonesian students on campus are also organizing to present Indonesian cultural events during the upcoming year.

Look for all of these activities on the center website, calendar, weekly e-bulletin, and Facebook page in the coming year.
**What's Coming Up**

**Conference calendar**

**Council on Thai Studies**
*Oct. 7–8, University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Students, faculty, and other scholars of Thailand and Tai peoples are invited to attend this conference held by COTS, an informal organization of scholars focused on Thai studies. For details, contact Kate Gillogly (gillogly@uwp.edu).

**Mainland Southeast Asia: Museums and Heritage Sites**
*Oct. 29, Holmes Student Center, NIU*

CSEAS and the Center for Burma Studies at NIU, and the Collaborative for Cultural Heritage and Museum Practices (CHAMP) at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, have teamed up to co-sponsor this fall symposium. A partial list of speakers includes center associates **Judy Ledgerwood** (anthropology) and art historian **Catherine Raymond**, director of the Center for Burma Studies; UIUC anthropologist and CHAMP Director **Helaine Silverman**; U Nyunt Han, Regional Center for Archeology and Fine Arts (SPAPA), Bangkok; **Rungsim Lertjanjarak**, Vongchavalitkul University, Thailand; and **Suprapa Somnuxpong**, Kamphaeng Phet, Thailand. More details are available on the center website or through the center office, 815-753-1771.

**Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs**
*Oct. 28–30, Macalester College, St. Paul, MN*

Annual conference at Macalester College pertaining to Asia and its sub-regions from all academic disciplines welcomes scholars and students. For details, see conference website.

**Southeast Europe-Southeast Asia**
*Feb. 10–12, University of Chicago*

From the Adriatic to the Sulu Sea: Islam and Identity in Southeast Europe and Southeast Asia is the third in a series of conferences co-convened by CSEAS and the University of Chicago comparing two edges of the Islamic world. The first conference was held in 2009 at NIU and the second in January 2011 at The National University of Malaysia. “This third conference understands ‘identities’ in the broadest possible manner, and the papers will examine phenomena from music and literacy to politics and spirituality and beyond,” said CSEAS Director **James T. Collins**. Details will be posted on the CSEAS website when available. For details, email cseas@niu.edu.

**Host families wanted for SEAYLP, PYLP**

Fall and spring semesters offer three chances for area households to open their homes to young people and their adult chaperones from all over Southeast Asia who are coming to NIU to participate in the Southeast Asia Youth Leadership Program (SEAYLP), directed by center director **James T. Collins**, and the Philippine Youth Leadership Program (PYLP), directed by center associates **Susan Russell** (anthropology) and **Lina Ong** (International Training Office). The fall SEAYLP session includes participants from Brunei, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore, and Vietnam and will begin **Oct. 26**. Home-stay dates are **Oct. 30–Nov. 10**. In spring, participants will be from Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand; home-stay dates for the spring session are **April 15–26**. The ninth session of PYLP (see page 12) will begin **April 16**; home-stay dates are **April 28–May 10**. Contact Leslie Shive at 815-753-9546 (lshive@niu.edu).

*John and Laura Fairfield of DeKalb hosted adult leaders Mirwan Dijan of Indonesia, left, and Panya Patthasupa of Thailand, right, during the spring 2011 SEAYLP session.*
Center for Southeast Asian Studies Council 2011–12

Mace Bentley
Geography

Michael Buehler
Political Science

Kenton Clymer
History

James T. Collins
CSEAS/Foreign Languages and Literatures

Rhodalyne Crail
Foreign Languages and Literatures

Liz Poppins Denius
CSEAS

Kikue Hamayotsu
Political Science

John Hartmann
Foreign Languages and Literatures

George (Jim) Henry
Computer Science

Patricia Henry
Foreign Languages and Literatures

Trude Jacobsen
CSEAS/History

Eric Jones
History

Julia Lamb
CSEAS

Kheang Leang
Foreign Languages and Literatures

Judy Ledgerwood
Anthropology

Wei Luo
Geography

Andrea Molnar
Anthropology

Chalermsee Olson
Founders Memorial Library

Grant Olson
Foreign Languages and Literatures

Lina Ong
International Training Office

Hao Phan
Founders Memorial Library

Deborah Pierce
Division of International Programs

Barbara Posadas
History

Alan Potkin
CSEAS/NIU Adjunct

Catherine Raymond
Center for Burma Studies/School of Art

Susan Russell
Anthropology

Kurt Thurmaier
Public Administration

Kheang Un
Political Science

Daniel Unger
Political Science

Jui-Ching Wang
School of Music

Katharine Wiegele
Anthropology

Curtis Wood
Public Administration

Robert Zerwekh
Computer Science

Center Office Manager: Nancy Schuneman

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Hero’s welcome: Historical photo

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