

# NEWS FROM USEF NEPAL

VOLUME 25 NO. 3  
**December 2008**

A Bulletin of activities and events from the Commission for Educational Exchange between the United States and Nepal

The Commission for  
Educational Exchange between the  
United States and Nepal

Post Box 380, Kathmandu, Nepal  
Tel: 444-4780, 444-4779, 441-4598(Advising)  
Fax: 977-1-4410881  
email: [fulbcomm@fulbrightnepal.org.np](mailto:fulbcomm@fulbrightnepal.org.np)  
[www.fulbrightnepal.org.np](http://www.fulbrightnepal.org.np)



## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...

**In the months since our last update, nearly all of 2008-2009's American Fulbright Senior and Student scholars arrived and are either well into their work or-in some cases-are actually finishing up.**

Namaste and bon voyage to: Dr. Vernie "Ted" Barnett, just completing his work at Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences, and his wife Melanie; Dr. Anthony "Chris" Brinegar, who has been teaching at Kathmandu University's Biotechnology Department, and his wife Bonnie; Dr. Yogendra Chadda, who will finish his teaching and the complete curriculum revision he undertook at the Institute of Engineering in late December, and his wife Dalbir.

Our batch of six Nepali Fulbright Master's students, selected in June 2007, departed for their universities in the U.S. during the monsoon months of July and August 2008. Ms. Sagun Basnet, Mr. Sudyumna Dahal, Dr. Sangeeta Mishra, Mr. Keshav Sah, Ms. Anita Shrestha, and Ms. Tripti Shrestha Bhattarai are now ending their first semesters as American graduate students, and in many cases are being joined by their spouses and children in December 2008 and January 2009. Ms. Dovan Rai, recipient of the Fulbright Science and Technology award for Ph.D study, also began her work this fall at the Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts.

This year USEF Nepal is hosting Dr. Christopher Hoadley, a regional Senior Scholar, for several months. Chris arrived in November, and will be also spending time in India pursuing his work on environmental education. Three U.S. Department of Education Doctoral Dissertation Research Award fellows have also arrived this fall: Mr. Andrew Nelson, Mr. Daniel Putnam and Mr. Aaron Ullrey (see inside for details about their fields of study).

Dasain and Tihar, celebrated at the beginning and end of October this year, were filled with the usual festivities. Visits to family and friends, accompanied by feasting, card playing, and religious observances,

make the holidays as busy, if not more, than usual working weeks. For American grantees in Nepal, Dasain and Tihar are times to pursue aspects of their work that doesn't depend on office visits and regularly scheduled meetings (whether in classes, government buildings, or with language tutors). For some of our senior professors, the holidays are the only time to take a break from classes and head to the hills or the plains to see more of Nepal (see the Brinegar's paragliding photos inside).

Fulbright Commission Board Chair Mark Larsen (Public Affairs Officer of the US Mission in Nepal), Yamal Rajbhandary, Selena Malla and I just returned from a five day regional conference in Delhi that brought together all of the main actors who run Fulbright programs in South and Central Asia. Fulbright directors were joined by Embassy Public Affairs staff who manage Fulbright in countries that do not have Commissions, such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan; the US Dept of State was represented by senior staff from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs in Washington; and our important cooperating agencies, the Institute for International Education and the Council for the International Exchange of Scholars, also sent senior staff and program officers who work in the region. The meetings gave us all a rare opportunity to meet face to face as a group to discuss various Fulbright programs, our challenges and successes, and what lies ahead.

With Thanksgiving just behind us and Hanukah and Christmas upon us, all the staff of USEF Nepal join me in wishing you a Happy Holiday Season, and most auspicious beginnings for 2009!



Peter K. Moran

# My experience as a Fulbright student in the George Warren Brown School of Social Work, at Washington University in St. Louis.

*Ms. Anita Shrestha began her Fulbright Master's work in August 2008.*

Receiving a Fulbright scholarship was my dream ever since I did my undergraduate. When I was called for interview, which I wanted so much, I was so scared. When I got a call the next day, my happiness knew no bounds. My friends and families were thrilled. They were proud of me, but my family's only concern was: will my husband be with me or not for those two years? The NGO where I worked congratulated me with a big treat and assurances to welcome me back. They asked me to try to create a space where I can work on my ideas after returning to Nepal. What more could I have asked for? But leaving Nepal for two years was like leaving your comfort zone and being ready for a ride to an unknown place. You know only in the map where you are going to, but you don't know what you will encounter on the way. At the dawn of two major economic and political changes, the U.S. election for presidency and the economic crisis, I am observing it closely as a student—as part of the course requirement—as well as a keen observer. “Welcome to America”, is what one of my American friends said when I went to observe the Obama rally at the St. Louis Arch. But at the same time the other friend said



Anita Shrestha, left, with other Fulbright friends, educating fellow Washington University students about Nepal.

to me,”But it is republicans who gave you the scholarship.”

My experience of the first three months of the Fulbright scholarship is as exciting as the preparation for the journey as a J1 student. I attended my preacademic course in Mississippi. The new experience, place and the assignments kept me awake late nights. At times, the different kind of food

kept me as well as some other Asian friends hungry. Three weeks of rigorous but fun-filled preacademic orientation was the first cultural and educational induction into America. I could not have gained this experience even if I paid money to be with 38 Fulbrighters from 27 different countries and exchange different education styles, backgrounds, food and culture. So, early in the phase of adjustment to new culture and educational settings, I already had a strong support system.

The orientation and the support group really helped me land safely in my real educational institution in St. Louis.

At times, I felt the visible differences and a feeling of not being welcomed by the domestic American students. A simple question out of curiosity may sound oppressive to someone else, and simple friendly gestures between two friends of the same sex may mean something else. On the contrary too, I have also met and made good friends who are accommodative. We share our cultural backgrounds and experiences and I am happy to know that they don't see me only as the ambassador of Nepalese culture, rather also respect me for who I am. So, I learned one has to be culturally sensitive so as to get others' respect and sameness. I do not hesitate to ask questions. It is better to look stupid asking questions than to feel shy and not know the truth.

And I also involve myself in different community services and attend as



“A Taste of Diversity”—Anita and fellow Fulbrighters at Washington University in St. Louis prepare a meal together.

**Contd.. on page 7**

# A Nepali Botanist at Harvard

*Dr. Kunjani Joshi, a Lecturer in Botany at Tribhuvan University, visited the U.S. for Fulbright post-doctoral research in late 2007-8. The following excerpt is from her final report to the Fulbright Commission in Nepal.*

I visited the United States as a Fulbright Post-Doctoral Scholar from Nepal to conduct research related to the Phylogeny and Biogeography of *Swertia* (Gentianaceae). I worked at Harvard University, Cambridge, USA from Oct 2007- July 2008 under the supervision of Dr. Jianhua Li. My project focused on the phylogeny of *Swertia* species using DNA sequencing. In addition, the opportunity provided by Fulbright allowed me a wonderful opportunity to learn about US culture through living in Boston, one of the unique and historic places in the country.

My research work was a particularly fulfilling aspect of my visit. Recently, molecular studies, especially DNA sequencing techniques, have proved very useful to solve controversial issues related to the systematic arrangement of species. Due to great morphological variation and other characteristic features of *Swertia*, controversy exists in its systematic arrangement. The study is also interesting because *Swertia* occupies

an important place as one of the preferred plant species in medicinal trade in Nepal.

My U.S. host, supervisor Dr. Jianhua Li, is one of the renowned Botanists who initiated studies on the phylogenetics of *Swertia* (Gentianaceae) from the mountainous region of Nepal. I investigated molecular differentiation of *Swertia* collected from various wild habitats and markets in Nepal.

One of the highlights of my experience was presenting preliminary results of my research in a poster presentation at the Evolution 2008 Conference held in Minneapolis, Minnesota in June 2008. In addition, I was able to present findings at Harvard University and the Botany 2008 Conference at the University of British Columbia. I also had the unique chance to present and discuss my work with the Bachelor and Master students at the University of British Columbia.

As a result of the work, I published two papers in the journal "Ethnobotanical Leaflets". I am also working on preparing a scientific paper based on my research work with my supervisor, Dr. Jianhua Li. The DNA data from my work on the species has been sent to Gene Bank, and will be publicly available.



Joshi and friends help clean the Arnold Arboretum in Boston, May 2008.

During the Fulbright period, I also enjoyed participating in various excursions and cultural activities. I was very impressed with the tour of the Concord Heritage Conservation Site in Boston, organized by the Director of the Boston Fulbright Committee; our discussion with the Chief Justice and other judges of Boston on the US legal procedure; and the tour of interesting places in Boston given by Jennifer, of the Boston Fulbright Committee, and other Fulbrighters.

The Fulbright experience has been invaluable for learning new methods and techniques related to molecular systematics that I will be able to transfer to the scientific community and the students of Nepal. In addition, I very much appreciate the chance to interact with distinguished scientists and post-doc research scholars from different countries.



Dr. Kunjani Joshi extracting DNA in the lab at Harvard University Herbarium.

# Introducing the American Fulbrighters, 2008-2009

*Our newest American Fulbright grantees began to arrive in Nepal in August, 2008, with the last arriving in early November. Shortly after that, a reception was hosted by Fulbright Commission Board Chair and Public Affairs Officer of the U.S. Embassy in Nepal, Mr. Mark Larsen. The American Ambassador, Nancy Powell, offered welcome remarks to our grantees and to Nepali Fulbright alumni guests. Following are photos from the event (photos courtesy of Ms. Melissa Nelson) held on the roof of the Educational Advising Center of the Fulbright Commission in Gyaneshwor, and a brief introduction to our American Fulbright Grantees in Nepal for 2008-2009.*

## FULBRIGHT SENIOR SCHOLARS

**Dr. Vernie T. Barnett (Ted)** is an Associate Professor of medical sciences at Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, WI. He is staying at the Fulbright apartment in Tangal, Kathmandu for the next five months. Here in Nepal, Ted is affiliated with the School of Medical Sciences at Kathmandu University, where he will also be researching wood smoke-related lung disease.



Fulbright Student grantees Ms. Sarah Shepherd and Mr. Alden Towler with Fulbright Commission Board member Mr. John Adams.

**Dr. Anthony C. Brinegar (Chris)** is in Nepal with his wife Bonnie for the next five months. He is currently



Ms. Bonnie Brinegar and Ms. Dalbir Chadda.

teaching courses in the biological sciences/biotechnology in the recently established Biotechnology Department at Kathmandu University. He is an Adjunct Faculty at the University of Maine-Farmington.

**Dr. Yogendra S. Chadda**, is a retired Professor of mechanical engineer at the University of Detroit, Mercy. He and his wife Dalbir are staying in the Dhobighat area of Patan for the next five months. In Nepal he is affiliated with the Institute of Engineering (Pulchowk, Patan) of Tribhuvan University, where he is helping faculty revise the mechanical engineering curriculum.



Reception on the Fulbright Commission Rooftop.

**Dr. Christopher M. Hoadley**, who is an Associate Professor of education at Pennsylvania State University, arrived in November 2008 to study the role of technology in fostering local village-level

education and empowerment related to sustainability in rural India and Nepal.



Dr. Sameer Dixit, Asst. Professor of Biotechnology, KU, foreground; Dr. Janardan Lamichhane, Head of Biotechnology Dept at KU; and Fulbright Senior Scholar Dr. Anthony Chris Brinegar.

### Coming in January...

**Dr. Sidne G. Ward** is a specialist in management information systems and e-learning at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Dr. Ward will be coming to Nepal in January 2009 to assist School of Management at Kathmandu University in impacts of information systems and e-learning. She lives in Overland Park, Kansas.



Mr. Janak Rai and Fulbright-Hays grantee Mr. Andrew Nelson.

**Dr. William S. Carter**, who is a Professor at the University of Findlay will be coming to Nepal in January 2009 for seven months with his wife Lael. Dr. Carter has had a long and productive career in higher education and industry associations as a teacher and trainer in occupational health and industrial hygiene. In Nepal he will

be affiliated with Kathmandu University.

**Dr. Thomas B. Robertson**, who is an Assistant Professor of history at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, will be arriving in Nepal in January 2009 for six months to do research on 'a political, social, and environmental

history of U.S.-Nepal rural development projects.'

**Dr. Ravi Bhandari** is a specialist in development economics at St. Mary's College of California. He will be arriving in Nepal in January 2009 for six months with his wife Purvi, to conduct research on 'the role of inequality in Nepal's new development.'



Fulbright Student grantee Ms. Lisa Labita-Woodson.



Dr. Tek Bahadur Gurung with Fulbright Senior Scholar Dr. Yogendra Chadda.



Mr. Janak Rai and Tribhuvan University Rector Dr. Soorya Lal Amatya.

## FULBRIGHT STUDENT RESEARCHERS

**Mr. Franz P. Knupfer**, a creative writer from Johns Hopkins University will be conducting research on "Community and Cohesiveness in Kathmandu's Deaf Population: a Creative Study."

**Mr. Arthur McKeown**, from Harvard University, will research an understudied figure in late Indian Buddhist history: "Buried alive: the Nomadic history of Sariputra and the questionable fate of Indian Buddhism."

**Ms. Sarah E. Shepherd**, from the University of Michigan, will conduct anthropological research entitled "Fashioning Identity: Cloth's Importance in Dhimal Concepts of Identity."

**Ms. Victoria B. Chou**, from Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health, arrived in Nepal in early August, and is doing Ph.D research on "Young Maternal Age and Maternal/Infant Health in Rural Nepal."

**Ms. Danielle A. Preiss**, from Colby College, will conduct her research on "The Christian

Influence on Drug Rehabilitation in Nepal."

**Mr. Jonathan H. Edwards**, from Swarthmore College, is examining aspects of contemporary Ayurvedic practice and theory, especially among Newari vaidyas.

**Ms. Elizabeth A. Lance**, a journalist/documentary filmmaker from Colorado Springs, CO will be pursuing Master's degree research by "Documenting Body Image in Young Nepali Women in a Multimedia Format."

**Mr. Daniel P. Coyle**, from Michigan State University, is examining the "UNESCO World Heritage sites in Nepal," for his Fulbright research.

**Ms. Lisa Labita-Woodson**, from the University of Arizona will be studying "Perceptions of Health and Sanitation in rural Nepal," in partial fulfillment of her Master's degree work.

**Mr. Alden Y. Towler**, from Pitzer College, is documenting "The Health Impacts of Transforming Dietary Habits in the Kathmandu Valley," during his Fulbright period.

**Mr. Elijah T. Lewien**, from University of Wisconsin, Madison will conduct research on "Crafting a Democratic Constitution and Government in Nepal."

### US Department of Education DDRA (doctoral dissertation research awards) grantees:

**Mr. Andrew S. Nelson**, a Ph.D. candidate in Anthropology at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, is conducting research entitled "Relocating Culture at the Edges of Kathmandu's Urban Expansion," for the next year and is joined by his wife, Melissa.

**Mr. Daniel B. Putnam** examines "Neoliberalizing Development: Transnational Institutions," as part of his Ph.D. work in Geography at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.

**Mr. Aaron M. Ullrey**, from the Department of Religious Studies at the University of California in Santa Barbara, will conduct research on "Tantric Transmissions: a History of Ritual in the Tantras," in both Nepal and, later, in India.

# Lexington, Concord, and American History

By Ashutosh Sharma

*Mr. Sharma is a Hubert H. Humphrey alumnus in International Business; he returned to Nepal in late summer, 2008.*

July 4th marks the Independence Day of the United States. It was very special to be in the US on 4th July, as much as it was special to be in Lexington, Concord in Massachusetts on 19th April as I was. On this date in 1775, the War of Independence was begun by Americans, which is known as a "Shot heard round the world" as mentioned by Ralph Waldo in his Concord Hymn. The battle in Lexington and Concord was later credited for the siege of Boston and it changed the path of history.

The American war for independence was unique in a way because people of British descent (the revolutionaries) in America fought for their independence against the British Army and colonists who supported the British. One of my host families in the United States, Mr. & Mrs. Chris, invited me and my wife to witness the full enactment of the battle that launched the War of American independence at Lexington, MA on 19th April 2008. As it was a rare opportunity, we gladly accepted it. We reached Lexington at 11:00 AM and were surprised to see that 400-500 volunteers were getting ready for the enactment. The volunteers included men, women and children. Their outfits/dresses were almost identical to those used in the period of 1775. The guns, vehicles, cannons and uniforms also represented the 1775 era.

The volunteers acting as British troop were getting ready at one side of a ground and the colonist Americans called "minute men" (because they were able to get ready in a minute for battle, in 1775) were preparing on a long



graveled road that also existed in 1775. The volunteers spoke as people in 1775 would have talked about the upcoming war. They were talking to visitors like us in similar way as if it was 1775. The buildings in that area are well preserved to reflect the history including a small tavern of 1775, which was converted into a museum.

At about 12:00 noon, before the enactment started, there was a salutation march to honour the

British troops who had lost the war in 1775. This gave the lesson that the loser's dignity should be respected. Then, the enactment began. Sound of bullets, falling men, cannons roaring, people shouting, women & children screaming, firing, etc., created a full-fledged battlefield scene as if it was a real war fought in 1775. The British troops were being defeated and were chased for almost 2 km. along the graveled road. It lasted for 2 hours, and during that whole time I felt like I was living two hundred years before. It was a rare and wonderful experience for us. After this, a short movie was shown for half an hour to put this war of independence into a broader and deeper perspective, including the role of Paul Revere and William Dawes in making history.

I really appreciate the volunteers who came to take part in this enactment from as far as Washington, D.C. Some of them whom I met were involved in this enactment for more than a decade at their own expenses. I was informed that this whole enactment was performed with out any government support except security. It was an excellent opportunity to learn American history through a live demonstration.



**Contd.. from page 2**

many programs as possible. Last time, I participated in an annual community service day where I helped, with some other students, in facilities work at a shelter for survivors of domestic violence. I keep myself involved in different group meetings and interactions that helps me stay in touch with people and, at the same time, gain useful information.

My school has wide array of programs for professional development. I have also enrolled in many courses which, I am sure, will hone my professional skills in the field of social work from motivational interviewing to grant seeking. These certificate courses are complementary to my area of study and interest. I too have gotten a mentor, who has been working in the

area of mental health for two decades now. I am trying to learn many of my field-related queries from during free times. The director of International Studies, Professor Gautam Yadama, being a Fulbright fellow himself, really encourages me to explore my full potential. Talking about approach, I felt that the professors and the staff of my school are very easy to approach and are supportive. They are always ready to help you. This encouraged me to be proactively involved in inviting a guest lecturer from Nepal on the issue of child labor and policy.

I was offered an advanced standing due to my degree in social work as an undergraduate. Luckily, my school is the first among social work schools to implement Evidence Based Practice skills.

This is a place that best helps me achieve my career goals. I want to conduct research on how to best integrate counseling/social work within the Nepali socio-cultural context and on the aftermath of national violence during my summer practicum. I want to apply these skills in Nepal and my foundation courses are really helping me.

I approached my school with enthusiasm; a zeal to learn, and a readiness to meet with differences in terms of individual other students and the education system. So, both the formal education and informal learning from interacting with people from diverse backgrounds and their lifestyles surely enrich me with widened analytical skills of looking at things from different perspectives.



The view of Pokhara from a paragliding harness—and Dr. Chris Brinegar's feet.



Bonnie Brinegar at take off from Sarangkot, Pokhara.

## Alumni News

**At the East-West Center in Honolulu:** Kathmandu Mayor Dinesh Kumar Thapaliya was among the metropolitan leaders and experts participating in an Aug. 11-13 seminar at the East-West Center on critical urbanization issues facing Asia's cities. Among the other attendees were the mayors of Quezon City, Philippines and Honolulu, Hawaii, along with other officials and specialists from Indonesia, Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, India, Los Angeles, New York and more. The seminar, "Urban Transformation in Asia:

Policy Implications of Decentralization," examined the current trends and implications of rapid urbanization of Asian cities from a systems-wide approach (political, economic and social), with special focus on issues of urban governance.

**Dr. Ram Dayal Rakesh** brought out his latest book, *Nepalese Culture in a Nutshell*, on September 8, 2008. Dr. Rakesh conducted his Fulbright post-doctoral research on the folklore of Nepal at Indiana University in 1993.

**Mr. Kishor Thapa**, Humphrey alumnus in Urban Planning at Rutgers University (2003), was awarded the Outstanding Civil Service Award 2008 by the Government of Nepal in early September. The award consists of the cash prize of NPR.100,000, and a citation. In late October, Mr. Thapa was promoted to the post of Secretary in the Water and Energy Commission Secretariat (WECS), the apex body for formulation of policies and strategies in water and energy sector in Nepal.

Once you explored a country, now  
explore the globe!

## JOIN STATE **A**LUMNI

As current Fulbright Scholars, you are invited to join STATE **A**LUMNI, a prestigious, web-based community for alumni of all U.S. Government exchange programs.

- Network with alumni from Fulbright and other exchange programs
- Find grant and job opportunities
- Access free periodicals, newspapers, and more
- Find the latest research in your field, plus career enhancing information
- Participate in live Q&A discussions with experts
- Share your experience with a global audience
- Read alumni success stories, perspectives, and ideas

**A**LUMNI.STATE.GOV  
Your Global Community

Click on “JOIN STATE **A**LUMNI” to register and select the “Fulbright Student Program” from the dropdown menu.

