

Loann Crane Award Recipient

Stephanie Aubry

Stephanie's research is in Contemporary Latin American Literatures and Cultures. Specifically, Stephanie studies the circulation of rumor and legend in print and broadcast media in Post-Civil War El Salvador (1992-Present).

Pictured to the right are Stephanie and her son at the Volcan de San Salvador (the volcano crater itself).



1. In 2012, you received the Loann Crane Award. What did you do with the funds received?

I used the funds to travel to El Salvador, to conduct early dissertation research. I traveled to San Salvador, where I visited the Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen, the Museo Tecleno, the Universidad Centroamericana, the Centro Romero, and the Universidad Nacional de El Salvador. All are key locations relating to the Civil War and the Civil War insurgency.

2. What did this award help you accomplish in your studies and professional development?

The LoAnn Crane Award allowed me to travel to El Salvador – the physical location of my dissertation research – in order to observe the situation at the ground level, in person. I was able to speak with many friends and acquaintances regarding the situations of violence and economic/political instability. I was able to see first-hand how situations of military policing and crime are affecting the citizenry.

3. What do you remember the most about this experience?

I met Carlos Henriquez Consalvi (“Santiago”), who was the founder of the insurgency’s clandestine radio station, Radio Venceremos. I met Donna DeCesare, a renowned American journalist working in El Salvador with marginalized youth. I visited the Museo Tecleno, a former political prison that has been converted into an alternative art museum. I had access to documents from the insurgency (e.g. intelligence documents and photos, insurgents’ journals), at the MUPI. And, I noted how dollarization is affecting everyday people. The price of gas in El Salvador is currently about \$4.50/gallon. The cost of living is generally higher after dollarization. However, wages in El Salvador are lower than in the U.S. This economic instability is leading to increased migration and an over-dependence on remittances. Because of the LoAnn Crane Award, I was able to spend time with regular people who are struggling to make ends meet in the current economy. I also spent time with people who rely on remittances sent from the U.S. in order to survive. I have read about these situations, but the LoAnn Crane Award allowed me to see the situation first hand.

4. What are the benefits of receiving this award?

When writing, and presenting at professional conferences, I am able to speak confidently about the situation in El Salvador, because I have recently spent time there. While I was in El Salvador, I didn’t realize how important the conversations I was having were. As I continue to write the dissertation, I am constantly drawing on this first-hand information.