For many, it was only a matter of time. Lin Ostrom’s name had been rattling around the halls of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences for some years, and anyone who spent any time working with her at all knew her capacity for great, Nobel-quality work. Nevertheless, the astonishment and chaos that characterized the Workshop on the morning of October 12, 2009, was proof that no one—and no organization—could ever, really be prepared to win a Nobel Prize.

On most days in the early morning, Fiscal Officer Carol Buszkiewicz is the only person at the Workshop; the offices and hallways are dark and quiet. That morning, the phone rang early, around 7:00 a.m. Not entirely unusual, but it kept ringing, and ringing. Carol thought something might be wrong, so she came downstairs to answer it. An hour later, when the rest of the staff arrived, Carol was still there, answering one call after another after another. David Price, the receptionist, took over, later recruiting graduate student Jacob Bower-Bir to staff the other phone. Coming just as quickly were the emails, flooding into Lin’s inbox, and soon overflowing into everyone else’s.

Soon, IU’s Office of Communications stepped in, instructing that all interview requests would be channeled through their office. By the end of the day, Lin had received 800 emails directly, and the Office of Communications had fielded 750 interview requests. Lin conducted an 11:00 a.m. press conference, had lunch with IU’s president, and then parked herself in a studio for several hours of interviews with CNN, National Public Radio, Reuters, Al-Jazeera, Associated Press, Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Times of London, and numerous others.

Days 2 and 3 were a similar flurry of activity, with requests and invitations streaming in faster than they could be read by the cadre of staff that had been deployed to answer them. The steady stream of interviews continued for two weeks until Lin demanded a cease-fire to give herself time to actually write her acceptance speech—otherwise, she said, she would “embarrass us all.”

No matter how well you think you can imagine the chaos that ensues after an announcement like the Nobel is made, it exceeds expectation. As one astute participant observed, “you don’t get to do a dry run for the Nobel.” Alumnus Jamie Thomson coined the term “Viking-induced tsunami” to describe the inundation.

Now, just over one month after the prize announcement, the staff of the Workshop—and Lin herself—are still running at constant pace to keep up with the demands this new visibility has created. We continue to shuffle invitations for Lin to speak, write, comment, and interview from countless sources, occasionally sending both a “yes” and a “no” to the same invitation as we work out the kinks in our ever-developing system of coordination. We’re all growing up fast as we adjust to a Workshop that more than ever before has become a force of global scale.

See Announcements (p. 4) for information regarding Nobel Week 2009 in Stockholm.

Lin would like to send her most heartfelt thanks to those of you who sent your thoughts and congratulations during this exciting time. Because we have been so overwhelmed, she may not have had time to respond to you individually, but please know that she is so grateful for your support!
The Self-Governance Forum newsletter here proposed would target practitioners engaged in self-governance activities throughout the world. It would make available to this group, in nontechnical language, results of Workshop research activities and their implications for better practice. This announcement seeks to gauge interest among Workshop associates in publishing results of research and applied work relevant to self-governance that they (and possibly their students) have already or are currently producing.

At the June WOW4 meetings (the pre-Laureate), Elinor Ostrom stated her belief that the Workshop was “in good shape.” This proposed newsletter would build on that strength and capitalize on the Workshop’s tradition of wide-ranging, applied self-governance research by making findings more accessible to contemporary practitioners of self-governance. It is our assumption that such a newsletter might, over time, help enhance practitioners’ capacities and strengthen the ability of communities around the globe to govern themselves successfully and sustainably.

That assumption connects directly to a principle long embraced by the Workshop, i.e., that theory should be informed by and reflect results of practical action, and that practical self-governance initiatives will be most productive when guided by tested theory about what works and doesn’t work in addressing specific problems in self-governance. Given this orientation, Self-Governance Forum would likewise entertain contributions from practitioners on their own self-governance activities, whether on the domestic scene or abroad. Practitioners’ articles would help to make the newsletter a place to exchange information of practical relevance to self-governance and would simultaneously enhance its credibility. Depending on the quality and vigor of exchanges that could occur within the Forum, Workshop associate contributors might find useful feedback on the application, in other circumstances, of their findings.

Assuming associate interest justifies launching a newsletter along these lines, it would initially appear semi-annually, in a downloadable format of roughly 15–20 pages. We propose that each issue, to the extent possible, contain a case study, followed by a theoretical section that explores implications of the case, and a review of Workshop and other research findings on that self-governance issue. Each Forum issue might then be organized around a central theme, e.g., water supply, policing, air quality, urban renewal, consolation (and how to fight it...), and rural development, including major Workshop “development” themes such as irrigation, reforestation, or afforestation.

To support the newsletter, we propose to establish a Self-Governance Forum website to archive back issues so that users can download past Forum issues. If experience demonstrates the utility, we could also post short theoretical pieces and illustrations of common challenges in self-governance on the website as well as relevant citations and a glossary of technical terms appearing in the pages of the Forum. Some practitioners, particularly in developing areas, might not be familiar with some vocabulary commonly used in Workshop research reports, e.g., public goods, common-pool resources, provision, production, and devolution. The Forum website would be linked to the Workshop website, an arrangement that offers the advantage of not imposing additional burdens on Workshop staff while nonetheless publishing Workshop materials, e.g., the Digital Library of the Commons.

Those proposing this initiative are Jamie Thomson, editor, and Ron Oakerson and Filippo Sabetti, board members. They volunteer to provide editing and editorial board services to ensure that deadlines are met and published copy meets newsletter standards. To put a somewhat finer point on it, we propose to provide an element of entrepreneurship in producing an electronic newsletter along these lines. But to succeed, it is our shared opinion that Self-Governance Forum must overcome one of the usual problems in provision of public goods, i.e., controlling free riding. This raises the following questions:

1. Do associates consider that such a journal would be a useful public good for practitioners with whom they might be familiar as well as, possibly, for their own students?

2. How many associates would be willing to contribute articles describing outcomes and lessons of their own applied research relevant to self-governance, or in which their students may have been involved? (N.B.: contributors should anticipate that they will need to submit their pieces in language generally accessible to practitioners; we do not conceive of the Forum as an academic publication.)

3. How many associates would be willing to serve as guest editors?

In deciding how you will respond to these three questions, please bear in mind that we three do not have the capacity to serve as reporters to create articles for the Forum. We are willing to do light editing of contributed articles, apply gentle pressure to ensure that guest editors and contributors meet deadlines, handle production and distribution, and prepare the occasional piece or edit from time to time an edition based on our own applied research activities, but we are not proposing to do more than that, quite simply because we cannot. In other words, to be worth launching, Self-Governance Forum must be a group effort supported by Workshop associates. As proposed, it need not be a huge effort: a maximum of 40 pages per year of applied research results tailored to practitioners’ interests. In the absence of sufficient interest, however, the idea will die a-borning.

Interested associates are invited to nominate themselves, either for board membership and/or as guest editors, for selected issues. Please direct any comments, inquiries, and nominations to Jamie Thomson at dansarki@together.net.
Long-Term

CHRISTOPHER BARTLETT (academic year) has completed a PhD at the ARC Center of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies at James Cook University in Australia. Having worked as a US Peace Corps volunteer in the Republic of Vanuatu for more than four years prior to commencing formal studies, his current research is strongly geared toward outputs that are of direct benefit and relevance to communities in small island developing states. Chris is most interested in the recent emergence and rapid evolution of novel resource governance institutions in the Pacific islands, including multivillage networks of marine protected areas and customary taboos.

BRYAN BRUNS (Aug 2009–May 2010) has worked as a consulting sociologist on improving participation in irrigation and water resources management, mostly in Southeast Asia. At the Workshop, he will do research on “Finding Better Ways to Share Water,” and more generally on ways of improving institutional design. He will write papers on methods of designing for institutional diversity and ethics in improving institutional artisanship, as well as revising several earlier conference papers to submit for publication.

JINGJING (CRYSTAL) CAI (Aug 2009–Aug 2010). Cai’s research interest is on sustainable governance of common-pool resources. Her current work focuses on the kinds of institutions that support collective action at the community level, especially Forest Resources Management in China. She is also working on how the concepts about common property arrangements or self-governance, developed primarily from work on common-pool resources other than forests, might be applied to the study of forest management in China.

CARINA CAVALCANTI (academic year) is a PhD student at the Professorship of Environmental Policy and Economics at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich. In her research, she investigates the determinants of cooperation among common-pool resource users. In one of her studies, she finds that social networks play an important role to understand cooperation to a community resource management programme. Carina is especially interested in applied work and has experience in implementing participatory processes in traditional fishing communities. Carina is in her last year of her PhD studies and is very excited to share her field experiences with other researchers and to know more about their research.

LUZ ALIETTE HERNANDEZ (Fall 2009) is currently a Political Science Ph.D. student at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). She has nine years of professional experience in the collective management of forest resources, through the planning, management, coordination, and implementation of projects in the areas of sustainable rural development, community organization, and civic participation. Her PhD research is focused on the evaluation of the impact of the Mexican governmental program for the development of the community forestry in the quality of life of beneficiaries.

DEREK KAUNECKIS (Fall 2009) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Nevada, Reno. His research examines governance arrangements as they relate to environmental policy, property rights, and state-level science and technology policy. During his stay at the Workshop, he will be working on a book manuscript exploring the diversity in property rights institutions.

ANDREAS LEIBBRANDT (academic year) is a Postdoc at the Economics Department of the University of Chicago and has received a PhD from the University of Zurich under supervision of Professor Ernst Fehr. Although he has never caught a fish, he is fascinated by the study of fishermen. So far, he has studied the extent to which the economic preference approach is useful to understanding individual fishing resource exploitation, and whether economic preferences are shaped by different work environments fishermen face. During his stay at the Workshop, he plans to take the opportunity broaden his horizon, and exchange ideas with researchers from different disciplines to hopefully conduct new interdisciplinary field experiments/studies.

LEI LIU (Aug 2009–Aug 2010) is a PhD candidate at College of Environmental Sciences and Engineering, Peking University, Beijing, China. His research interests include environmental policy and management. In the past several years, he has participated in a number of projects sponsored by some local governments of China, including policy design for industrial environmental management, strategic environmental assessment, and regional environmental plan, etc. Currently, he is concentrating on the carbon dioxide emission control policy of China and its impact on the international trade.

(Continued on page 4)
Jiang Nie (Jan 2009–Dec 2009) is an Associate Professor at the school of resources and environmental management, Guizhou College of Finance and Economics, China. Over the years, she has focused on human capital and rural-urban migration. Now she pays more attention to the areas of economic development and environmental policies. At the Workshop, she will work on ecological compensation and rural development using a case study of western China.

Lauri Sääksvuori (Fall 2009) is a PhD candidate in economics at the Max Planck Institute of Economics, Germany. His primary research focus is the bidirectional relation between institutions and human behavior. In particular, the ongoing research projects examine (1) the discovery process of impersonal exchange and its institutional enforcement, (2) intra-group governance in intergroup competition, and (3) the cognitive origins of human cooperation. All current studies are strongly behaviorally oriented and apply experimental methods. While at the Workshop, he aims to advance the ongoing research and deepen his knowledge on analytical policy analysis and field experiments. He believes that the methodological expertise on experimental methods combined with the Workshop’s competence on institutional analysis will open up new inspiring avenues of cooperation.

Pontus Strimling (academic year). Strimling’s current work is on developing mathematical methods to further the understanding of how cultural phenomena change over time. At the Workshop, he plans to focus on how informal institutions change over time, specifically how corrupt institutions can be turned into noncorrupt institutions.

Jiangtao (Jason) Tan (Aug 2009–Aug 2010), Ph.D candidate, School of Business, Hohai University, Nanjing, China. His current research focuses on building energy efficiency in China. While here, he will be working on a paper entitled “The Institutional Analysis and Policy Choice to Building Energy Efficiency Industry in China.”

Yahua (Bert) Wang (Aug 2009–Aug 2010), Associate Professor, School of Public Policy and Management, and Deputy Director, Center for China Studies, Tsinghua University, China. Bert’s research area is Natural Resources Management and Environmental Policy. He has published two books and more than fifty articles in China. His research especially focuses on water management and water policy, and his dissertation was a study of institutional changes of China’s water property rights. At the Workshop, Bert will conduct a visiting study entitled “Institutional Analysis of Irrigation Systems in North China”, which aims to apply the IAD framework to the analysis of China’s participatory irrigation management.

**Short-Term**

Robert Bish (and Nancy Malecek), Professor Emeritus, School of Public Administration, University of Victoria, BC, Canada (Sept 3 & 25–26)

Hugh Deng, Research & Analysis Directorate, Strategic Policy Branch, Agriculture Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada (Sept 7–8)

Aura Matei, Researcher, Fundatia CADI-Eleutheria, Bucharest, Romania (Oct 3–31)

Filippo Sabetti, Department of Political Science, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada (Nov 1)

Brian Steed, Department of Political Science, Utah State University, Logan [October 21–26 & Dec 10–18]

George Varugheese, The Asia Foundation, Nepal Representative (Dec 20–22)

Mary Beth Wertime, Montessori Teacher, Arlington County Public Schools, Falls Church, VA (Aug 15)

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Elinor Ostrom’s Nobel Prize Lecture will be held on **Tuesday, December 8**, from 3:00–3:40 p.m. (Stockholm time), at the Aula Magna, Stockholm University. All lectures will be given in English, and a live video broadcast will be available on the Nobel Foundation website (http://nobelprize.org/index.html). Videos of prize lectures will also be available a few days later.


- WOW5 will take place from June 18–21, 2014. Never too soon to start planning…

- Knowledge as a Commons: From Theory to Practice, by Charlotte Hess and Elinor Ostrom, was selected as a book of the month for October 2009 by the Resource Center for Cyberculture Studies at the University of San Francisco. The full-length book review can be found here:

Also, MIT Press is currently preparing the book for a second printing.

- On March 4–5, 2010, Indiana University’s new Tocqueville Program, led by affiliate Aurelian Craiutu, will host a conference to celebrate several recent publications on the works of Alexis de Tocqueville. For more information on the program, please visit [http://www.indiana.edu/~tcqville/](http://www.indiana.edu/~tcqville/)
Polycentric Circles is published biannually in May and November. We welcome information regarding research projects, recent publications, conference announcements, photographs, etc. The deadline for submitting items for the May issue is April 30, 2010. Please submit your items to Jacqui Bauer: jacmbaue@indiana.edu

For e-mail and/or snail mail address changes, please send to: workshop@indiana.edu

Peter Todd, Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, IUB, “Heuristic Decision Making and Institutional Design,” Sept. 14

Pontus Strimling, Workshop Visiting Scholar, “Behavioral Types and Evolution of Institutions,” Sept. 16

Anirudh Krishna, Sanford School of Public Policy, Duke University, Durham, NC, “One Illness Away: Tracing the Beginnings and Ends of Poverty among 35,000 Households of Five Countries,” Sept. 21

Roy Gardner, Department of Economics, IUB, and Dr. Dmytro Zhosan, Business and Economics, Ripon College, Wisconsin, “Problems of the Commons: Group Behavior, Cooperation and Punishment in a Two-Harbor Experiment,” Sept. 28

Andreas Leibbrandt, Workshop Visiting Scholar, “Cooperativeness and Impatience in the Tragedy of the Commons,” Sept. 30

Shawn Boyne, IU School of Law-Indianapolis, “Uncertainty and the Search for Truth at Trial: Defining Prosecutorial ‘Objectivity’ in German Rape Cases,” Oct. 5


Susan Stewart, USDA Forest Service, Northern Research Station, Evanston, IL, “Mapping the Wildland Urban Interface: Resources, People, Policy and Wildland Fire,” Oct. 21


Christopher Bartlett, Workshop Visiting Scholar, “The Emergence and Outcomes of Marine Protected Area Institutions in the Pacific Islands,” Oct. 28

Tom Evans, Department of Geography; Director, CIPEC, IUB, “Actor Heterogeneity and Spatial Interactions in Land Use Systems: Agent-Based Perspectives on Natural Resource Management,” Nov. 2

Michael Cox, Workshop, IUB, “Exploring the Dynamics of Social-Ecological Systems: The Case of the Taos Valley Acequias,” Nov. 4

Matthew Mancini, Department of American Studies, Saint Louis University, MO, “What’s Wrong With Tocqueville Studies, and What Can Be Done About It,” Nov. 6

Jerome Busemeyer, Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, IUB, “A Quantum Probability Model for Question Order Effects on Surveys,” Nov. 9


Scott Feld, Department of Sociology, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, “Group Choice When There Is No Agreement on Best Outcomes: Predicting Central Tendencies and Variation among Outcomes in Spatial Voting Games,” Nov. 13

Derek Kauneckis, Department of Political Science, University of Nevada, Reno, “Re-thinking the Mechanisms of Enforcement in Property Right Institutions,” Nov. 16

Lauri Sääksvuori, Workshop Visiting Scholar, “The Emergence of Impersonal Exchange and Its Institutional Enforcement,” Nov. 18

Robert Katz and Antony Page, IU School of Law-Indianapolis, “Notion Building: Giving Form to ‘Social Enterprise’,” Nov. 30

Yahua Wang, Workshop Visiting Scholar, “Using the IAD Framework to Analyze China’s Climate Change Policy,” Dec. 2


Jiang Nie, Workshop Visiting Scholar, “Mapping the Development of the Bloomington School,” Dec. 9
On October 10, Lin Ostrom participated in a local symposium called “Reclaiming the Commons,” intended to contribute to the effort to reestablish the commons as a useful concept for shaping public dialogue and tackling global problems like deforestation and climate change. Little did the participants know that their cause would receive such a visible boost just two days later. Other participants included David Bollier, author of Silent Theft: Private Plunder of our Common Wealth; Scott Russell Sanders, author of A Conservationist’s Manifesto; Peter Bane of the Indiana Forest Alliance; and numerous others. Lin called for greater recognition of the efficacy of governance and civil society units at multiple scales for addressing widespread problems, while Bollier called for participants to use the commons vocabulary to bring responsibility back to individuals. If we all think of ourselves as commoners, he said, that will induce people to rethink the role they play in the world.

CONGRATULATIONS

Former visiting scholar Ester Blanco, who accepted a post-doctoral fellowship in the Faculty of Economics & Statistics at the University of Innsbruck in Austria. Before beginning that position, she will spend several months at the Nordland Research Institute in Norway.

Former visiting scholar Gunn Elin Fedreheim and her husband Tommy, on the arrival of their son Magnus, born on September 7.

Alumnus Kristine Lykens, who was promoted to Associate Professor at the University of North Texas in the Department of Health Management and Policy.

Affiliate Lauren Morris MacLean, who received confirmation that her new book, Informal Institutions and Citizenship in Rural Africa: Risk and Reciprocity in Ghana and Cote d’Ivoire, will be published as part of Margaret Levi’s series on comparative politics with Cambridge University Press.

Alumnus Tun Myint, whose paper “Commodity Chains and Social Ecological Changes: A Theoretical Inquiry on Human-Environment Interactions” was one of the top ten downloads for papers in political theory on the Social Science Research Network.

Vincent Ostrom, who celebrated his 90th birthday on September 25 (see photos below).

Affiliate Amos Sawyer, who accepted a six-month public policy resident fellowship at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC.

Alumnus Michael Schoon, who received the 2009 Harold D. Lasswell Award from the American Political Science Association for the best doctoral dissertation in the field of public policy. His dissertation was titled “Building Robustness to Disturbance: Governance in Southern African Peace Parks.”

Alumnus George Varughese and his wife, on the birth of their second child, Arya, born on May 15.
Polycentric Circles


Environmental policy, focusing on the control of pollution and on over-exploitation, easily overlooks the extensive range of interconnections between economic activities and natural systems. In this timely book, a number of specialists examine how crucial aspects of complex environmental problems and policy can be dealt with in decentralized governmental systems. Bridging the gap between the conventional environmental federalism literature and advances in environmental and ecological economics that have been made over the last two decades, this innovative book explores alternative solutions to the problem of assigning powers over the environment.


The recent growth of voluntary programs has attracted the attention of policymakers, nongovernmental organizations, and scholars. Thousands of firms around the world participate in these programs, in which members agree to undertake socially beneficial actions that go beyond the requirements of government regulations, such as following labor codes in the apparel industry, adhering to international accounting standards, and adopting internal environmental management systems. This book analyzes the efficacy of a variety of voluntary programs using a club theory, political-economy framework. It examines how programs’ design influences their effectiveness as policy tools. It finds that voluntary programs have achieved uneven success because of their varying standards and enforcement procedures.

Book Translations


(Continued on page 8)
Tocqueville Endowment for the Study of Human Institutions

Although the financial value of the Tocqueville Fund may have dropped (temporarily!), his presence at the Workshop has never been stronger. A painting of Alexis de Tocqueville still hangs in the colloquium room, recently renamed the Tocqueville Room in his honor. (The front meeting room is, naturally, the Ostrom Room, and above its entrance hangs a poster celebrating Lin’s Nobel Prize.)

At a recent ceremony, the Tocqueville Collection was officially added to the Workshop Library, still on the third floor of 513 N. Park. This collection (shown at right) consists of a special display of 286 books and 36 DVDs published (and donated) by the Liberty Fund. Their books are high-quality reproductions of classic and original works in political philosophy, political economy, public choice, and constitutional economics.

This collection is a centerpiece for the newly established Tocqueville Program, led by Workshop affiliate Aurelian Craiutu. Thus far, Aurelian has obtained start-up funding from the Jack Miller Foundation and we are in the process of seeking additional funding. We plan to hold a small conference here in March 2010 (funding pending).

Yes, Tocqueville is alive and well here at the Workshop, and he even has a new website, at http://www.indiana.edu/~tcqville/. We hope you can visit him (virtually) or us (in person).

Happy Holidays!