“But What Can I DO with an American Studies Degree?”

Lauren Rabinovitz suffered a heart attack on October 11. She is now resting at home and her doctors expect her to make a good recovery and to be back at work in November. John Raeburn is acting DEO in her absence.

When prospective majors drop by the American Studies office one of the questions virtually every one nervously asks is, “what will I be able to do with an American Studies degree?” “You’ll be able to size up a problem,” we say, “figure out how to address it, and produce a solution for it. And then you’ll be able to write a narrative of what you’ve done so that someone else can understand how you solved it.” An embarrassed pause nearly always follows as the prospective major tries to think of a polite way to say, “What I meant, you pointy-headed duffus, is what kind of job will American Studies prepare me for?” Actually, we knew this was the question and were confident that we had answered it, only not in the familiar way a guidance counselor would, with a specific occupational title or two: teacher or librarian or minister or data systems manager or communications specialist or museum worker. American Studies isn’t geared to prepare majors for one of these occupations, because it aspires to provide the training that will allow our graduates to take up all of them. And, in fact, as the list elsewhere in this issue reveals, each of those jobs I’ve listed—and others as various in their responsibilities—are actually held by our BAs. Others have or are taking advanced training, as attorneys, health professionals, and in other fields. A few are even pursuing advanced degrees in American Studies itself. The achievements of all of these men and women testify most strongly to their own determination and talent, but also, we think, owe something to the training they received at Iowa, which aspired to teach them how to solve problems and to write coherently about how they did so. We’re proud they gave us the opportunity to teach to them the skills that would be foundational for the many kinds of work they have taken up.

John Raeburn
American Studies Alum Returns as Alumni Scholar

John Raeburn

Eric Sandeen’s (Ph.D., 1977) return to Iowa City on September 18th and 19th to receive a Distinguished Alumni Award from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences honored his many contributions to American studies as chair of the Wyoming program and international ambassador for our interdiscipline, which were also recognized last year by the American Studies Association when it awarded him the Mary Turpie Award for outstanding service to American studies. For Eric, the weekend provided the enviable pleasure of trailing clouds of glory on a return to a place where he was a pup; for us in the department it provided a superb opportunity to reconnect with our own history and to hear him talk about what he learned here as a doctoral student and how he has put it so effectively to use in the 26 years since he finished his degree.

Eric’s weekend back in Iowa City included formal occasions—a Thursday luncheon with the Dean and the other distinguished honorees and a Friday evening testimonial banquet attended by some 125 of the College’s most dedicated alumnae—but its less ceremonial moments were perhaps more memorable, at least for those of us in the department. At a faculty and graduate student lunch on Friday in the Jefferson Building and later that afternoon in a “Floating Friday” talk, Eric reminisced about drinking coffee with other AS students in the Airliner after Stow Person’s Saturday morning (!) intellectual history class, the memorable locutions of the then-chair, Alexander Kern (“She may not be the smartest person in the world, but politically, you bet, there are no flies on her”), how he came to settle on his dissertation topic of editing Randolph Bourne’s letters (Sherman Paul discouraged him from writing a critical study of Bourne on the grounds that he died at 32 and that wasn’t a long enough lifetime on which to base a book, pace Keats and Mozart), how he and Martin Pumphrey hatched in Eric’s Volkswagen Beetle a plan to find funding for the glorious symposium American Studies sponsored in 1977 that brought ten leading scholars to Iowa City over three long weekends, and how much he missed the shady tennis courts of his student years that gave way to “progress” when the Becker Communications Building was built on their site. That nostalgia sometimes caused him to don rose-colored glasses was evident in another regretful reminiscence, that he also missed the Old Armory, which abutted those tennis courts and housed the film program and also various forms of vermin, some of which had an unpleasant habit of wanting to climb up film viewers’ legs during screenings in its dank basement screening room. Distinguished alums have license to tint their memories, and if Eric thought the Old Armory wasn’t so scabrous, well, maybe it wasn’t, and the tennis courts were certainly an amenity whose disappearance has made the campus less graceful, even for those who only strolled by them. But Eric did more than share his memories, delightful as they were; he also laid out a set of premises about the practice of American studies in his informative and inspiring “Floating Friday” talk. Three of these he gave greatest stress to: act locally, think globally, and find ways to bring American studies work into the public sphere. He illustrated these propositions with a wealth of examples from initiatives undertaken by the program he’s chaired at Wyoming since 1982, and from his globetrotting on behalf of American studies from Korea to Kazakhstan to Denmark, with many stops inbetween. His ideas about American studies stimulated and challenged both the old-timers and the neophytes in the audience packed into the American Studies meeting room.

For us and well as him, the pleasure of Eric’s visit was enlarged by his entourage: his wife Sue, who teaches young Wyomians and has her own memories of life in Iowa City; and his mother, Eileen, who also has Iowa City memories, because she lived here in the late Thirties when Eric’s father was earning his Ph.D. in English. And three of Eric’s graduate school friends were here too: Frank Lloyd (Ph.D., 1975) and Barb Lloyd came from Phoenix, their first trip back since they left first for Washington...
and then a Fulbright stint in Iran, and Andrea Heiss (Ph.D., 1983), who’s now living in Des Moines after extensive experience teaching in Korea. Eric’s weekend back in Iowa City provided a splendid example of how past and present may happily and usefully mingle, and reaffirmed that American Studies at Iowa has always been both an intellectual and a social enterprise.

Meet Nick Yablon, New American Studies Faculty

When I first visited Iowa City in my first year of graduate school, I came as a crewmember of the University of Chicago sailing team. Iowa beat Chicago by a huge margin, and I was never invited to represent the sailing team again.

Well, here I am in Iowa City ten years later, my sailing skills still unappreciated. I have enjoyed my first month here. I’m teaching two courses: the American Values introductory course and a 100-level course on urban representations called American Cityscapes. In between those two courses, I am trying to edit the final manuscript for an article on insurance, real estate, and popular fiction in Progressive Era New York, which has been accepted for publication in American Quarterly. I’m also hoping to submit my book manuscript on the fascination with ruins in nineteenth century American culture by the end of the semester.

Congratulations

Abe Geil received the MA en passant. Kevin Quirk successfully defended his dissertation. Eleanor McConnell and Patrick Oray received Spring semester Kern Travel Awards.

MEET OUR NEW GRAD STUDENTS!

American Studies is pleased to welcome nine new graduate students for the 2003-04 academic year.

Fanny-Antonie Guenthel is this year’s exchange student from Dortmund University in Germany. Her hometown is Netzschkau, Germany. Fanny has a degree from Chemnitz University of Technology, Germany (major field of study: Anglistics/American Studies; second major: German). Her intellectual interests include present-day transatlantic political developments, and the interaction of regional, ethnic and gender identities in the U.S. She has had varied work experiences, such as a research assistant to the English Language and Linguistics chair; assistant and course director at an arts and craft store; au pair in Alexandria, VA; an internship at Dollami Publishing House; and an editor and presenter at Radio UNiCC. When she’s not studying, she enjoys reading, writing, painting, taking photographs, and traveling.

Eric Johnson hails from Fayetteville, Arkansas. He graduated from Alabama with a BA in American Studies, and a minor in anthropology. His intellectual interests include expressive culture, popular culture as an intersection of folk culture and economic imperatives, unpopular popular music, Southern music & literature, & folklife, urban/location studies, comic books. He first went to college in 1983. After a few years of restaurant/bar work he started doing sound work, which he did professionally through his undergrad studies (he went back in 1999). Eric has owned and operated his own
sound system concert and has also worked for larger production companies in music and other fields (conferences, sports events, etc.). Over the past 5 years he has mainly worked as house sound engineer in music venues & has mixed a wide range of artists including: Maceo Parker, Gillian Welch, The New Bomb Turks, Quiet Riot, Don McLean, & Mike Watt. When he has free time, he tries to play his bass, plow through his backlog of live recordings, get his home studio up to speed, alphabetize his albums and play tennis with his wife, Lisa.

Shannon Kelly has a BA in English from Allegheny College, a small liberal arts college in Meadville, PA. Her intellectual interests include minority cultures, literature, and popular culture. Shannon has had many jobs relating to her social justice concerns, including a 2-year position with AmeriCorps in which she ran a free lunch and after-school program for children in several low-income housing developments. She has also run a computer-literacy program, worked in a PR department for Share Our Strength in DC, and recorded someone’s life story. For fun, she enjoys talking over coffee, watching Wes Anderson movies, and drawing.

Brad Parsons is originally from Mission Viejo, CA (planned community bliss!). He holds degrees in Philosophy (and volleyball) from UC Santa Barbara, and American Studies from Cal State Fullerton. Brad is interested in media and identity, post-bomb U.S. culture, and theory. In his past life he was a lifeguard (think Baywatch, but nowhere near as interesting). He enjoys bicycle touring. If he had the time, he’d load up the bike and head across the Atlantic.

Karen Smith calls Marion, Massachusetts home. She has a degree from Earlham College, and her intellectual interests include material culture -- particularly "domestic crafts" and their interaction with social change. Karen has worked for six years at Chrysalis -- a Minneapolis organization whose mission is to empower women to create change. While there, she recruited and organized volunteers to provide counseling, legal support and resource referral (among other things), and also created print materials for the agency. To relax and have fun, she spent a few weeks this summer driving around North Dakota, Saskatchewan and Manitoba...so, road trips with camping and hiking are always a favorite activity when there’s the time for them. As you might guess from her academic interests, she also spends lots of time making stuff... knitting, needlepoint, crocheting, sewing, candle making... all those great "domestic crafts."

Ivana Takacova is from Kosice, Slovakia, with MA degrees from Presov University, Slovakia, and Pennsylvania State University. She is interested in studying 20th century social and cultural history, and visual arts. When she has free time, she enjoys trekking.

Mark Warburton is from Sandgate, Vermont. He holds a BA from the University of Nebraska (English), and an MA from Dartmouth College (Liberal Studies). He is interested in Narrative Theory/Epistemology, particularly with respect to American war stories and/or depictions of "undersides." He spent the last eight years working in the English department at Wilbraham & Monson Academy in Wilbraham, MA. His hope is to continue working at the secondary level and/or at a community college. For fun he enjoys snowshoeing and running. He has a great cat, Owen. Favorite music includes R.E.M., The Dandy Warhols, and Radiohead.

Steven “Ironbear” Williams has a K-8 elementary education degree from Augsburg College in Minneapolis. His hometown is St. Paul, MN. He has many interests, including American Indian studies, education, psychology, anthropology, history, sociology, ethnic studies, and identity studies. Steven has worked as a spiritual and cultural consultant for a suburban Indian Education Program and a substitute teacher grades K-8. He drove a school bus to get through college. He has also done many hard labor jobs such as roofing (for 10 years) and landscaping. For fun he enjoys spending time with his wife and kids. Steven also loves to dance at pow-wows (traditional) and is a prolific beadworker and craftsman (mostly dance regalias), and occasionally reads a book or two.

Honors Student News

Jane Desmond, honors advisor

With this issue, we inaugurate a new feature: news from honors students majoring in American Studies. In the future we will be offering more events specifically for these young scholars, and will let you know about their accomplishments. This fall I am pleased to report that four students are participating in the USA Internship program through the career center. This innovative program pairs academically successful students with individual faculty as paid research assistants. Students see first hand what is involved in research, both the exciting and tedious parts of what it takes to investigate a new research problem. They assist professors with library
research, web searching, interviews, and data analysis, among other things. Best of all, they have a chance to work closely with a scholar/faculty mentor. This fall four American Studies majors are paired with four American Studies faculty. The interns are: Emily Traw, McKinze Cook, Jennifer Powers, and Matt Nelson. Congratulations!

STUDENT NEWS

Kelly McLaughlin received the Iowa Arts Fellowship from the School of Art and Art History. It's a two-year fellowship that covers tuition and expenses and gives her a monthly stipend to live on. So that means she should have lots of time to produce quality work!

Sharon Romeo received the following three awards: A UISG Research Grant (http://www.uiowa.edu/~uisg/downloads/Research_grants_app.doc for students that would like more information); The American Historical Association Littleton-Griswold Grant for research in U.S. Legal History and the field of Law and Society; and a Missouri Historical Society Research Fellowship. She was in St. Louis for the month of September, conducting the research that is supported by MHS award. Sharon presented a talk to the Missouri Historical Society on September 30th titled "Sex and the City: Vagrancy Laws and Working-Class Women's Civil Rights in St. Louis 1864-1868."

Kristin Solli went to two conferences this summer. In May I was one of several U. of Iowa folks - among them Patrick Oray and Jane Desmond from our department - who went to the First World Congress of the International American Studies Association in Leiden, the Netherlands. I presented a paper comparing the receptions of jazz and country & western music in Norway. In August I attended the conference for the Nordic Association for American Studies in Trondheim, Norway where I presented a paper examining the changing articulations of Norwegian nationalism as they are reflected in the appropriation of various forms of American popular music genres. I also participated in a roundtable called "Re-thinking American Studies for the 21st Century" that was chaired by an alum of this department, Mark Luccarelli, who for the last several years has been teaching at the University of Oslo. Both conferences were great fun - intellectually and socially."

Jane Desmond "This summer was a very busy time, with lots of travel and multiple conferences. In May I attended the first International American Studies Association meetings in Leiden, The Netherlands, as did AS grad students Patrick Oray and Kristin Solli. I spoke on a panel on New International Initiatives in U.S. American Studies with Robin Weigman, Don Pease, and Jan Radway. It was a very lively session, and a great time to make public the new International Forum for U.S. Studies transnational research initiative on "Americanization and Anti-Americanism." I was elected to the executive council of IASA, and will serve in that capacity for the next two years. The politics of getting this organization off the ground have been challenging, and I am glad to report that the first conference was quite successful in terms of attendance and intellectual stimulation. The next conference, scheduled for 2005, will take place outside of the U.S. and Europe, broadening the range of presenters, I'm sure.

Following the conference, I led a group of 4 graduate students (Kristin Solli, Ulli Adelt, Amy Spellacy, and Patrick Oray) on a research tour to Germany, funded by IFUSS. We met with colleagues including Heinz Ickstadt at the Free University of Berlin, and did research on American popular culture in Berlin, Bremen, and Munich, ending with the German American Studies Association meetings there. We worked hard, and came up with some good working hypotheses to help shape the intellectual underpinnings of the Americanization project. We also spent a lot of time at Dunkin' Donuts in Berlin, the site of a massive email business--imagine several hundred computers and fifty types of donuts, all in the same room.

Finally, in August, I spoke at the conference of the International Anthrozoology Association, which met in Ohio. I love these conferences, which bring together scholars working in "animal studies," along with activists, veterinarians, psychologists, primatologists, and animal behaviorists. The work I presented there, "Grieving on Line" examines the gendered dimensions of virtual animal cemeteries and is part of my current book project, Displaying Death/Animating Life. In November, I'll present
another part of that book, focusing on pet obituaries, at a conference called " Representing Animals," at Brock University in Canada. It's been fascinating to delve into the history of this rhetorical form of life story--special thanks to Brian Hallstoos for helping with sources for that one.

On a final note, just out is my book review of Gesture, Gender, Nation: Dance and Social change in Uzbekistan by Mary Doi. Normally I wouldn't get too excited about the appearance of a book review, but this is the first time I've published anything in the Slavic Review. I just couldn't resist their invitation to review this book! I've also recently reviewed books on dance for the New West Indian Guide, a leading journal of Caribbean Studies published in the Netherlands. These excursions outside my main field keep me refreshed and bring me into contact with reading communities I wouldn't normally encounter. This is the same reason I like going to conferences with veterinarians and primatologists. Luckily I have colleagues who don't think this is crazy, and that's one of the best things about working in an interdisciplinary field like ours--intellectual elbow-room!"

Kim Marra received a CLAS Summer Fellowship to support final stages of work on her book, Taming American Actresses, about relationships between impresarios and their leading ladies at the turn of the last century, and initial research on a new project dealing with horses and American stages. She devised and participated in a seminar entitled "Querying Scholarly Identities, Traversing History/Theory/Performance Studies" at the Association for Theatre in Higher Education Conference in New York City in August. Her article, "Lesbian Scholar/Gay Subject: Turn-of-the-Century Inversions," will appear in the September 2003 issue of Theatre Topics.

Irene Alexander (PhD '88) “I'm doing exactly what anyone who knew me well in Iowa City would guess that I'd be doing: I'm presenting papers at national conferences exploring the connections between practices of Highlander Folk School (especially its educational director Septima Clark) and feminist pedagogies. I'm teaching writing classes linked to "cultural diversity" and "civic engagement" core curriculum requirements. I'm teaching "Feminist Pedagogies" and soon other classes for Women's Studies. And in my day job at the University of Minnesota's Center for Teaching and Learning Services, I serve as the Preparing Future Faculty Program Director (http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/pff/index.html), coordinate our Multicultural Teaching and Learning Initiatives, and consult on a range of faculty teaching/learning concerns. In between times, my kids (nephews, niece, godchildren) seem to be getting married and moving to the Twin Cities; I helped my mother remodel her house so it accommodates her aging; I miss my father like crazy since his death the week before I came to the Center for Teaching 3 years ago; and I spend a lot of time in my partner's garden or hiking somewhere in Minnesota state parks with his dog leading the way. I'm looking forward to being in Iowa City in late October for my nephew's wedding and to being at the November MMLA conference in Chicago where I get to be on one of the many panels composed of Ulowa folks.”

Eliot Blake (PhD '02) is now a full-time member of the English Department faculty on Kirkwood's Cedar Rapids campus, where he's having a wonderful time. (He and partner Kelly are still living in Iowa City, of course.)

Marylaine Block (MA, '68) “It took a long time before my American studies degree began to have anything to do with my life, but ultimately it helped me start my writing career. I got an MA in library science in 1977 and became a librarian at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, IA. In 1995, I created a web site for them called Best Information on the Net, one of the first selective annotated indexes, which gave me a reputation as an internet guru.

While looking for new sites for it, I came across an announcement that a British online magazine was looking for an American correspondent. I got the job, a weekly column called My Word's Worth, in which I explained America to the Brits. When the magazine went under, I moved the column back to the Quad Cities and started explaining America to Americans.<http://www.qconline.com/myword/current.html>

An editor at Fox News Online saw the column and invited me to write a column for them. The column, called Observing U.S., ran from April of 1998 to November 2000. I'm now trying to market a collection of the best columns from both, with the working title of Land of Why Not.

In 1999, I quit my job and began working full time as a writer, speaker, internet trainer, and publisher of two e-zines, Neat New Stuff I Found This Week, and ExLibris. They were originally designed for librarians, but I now
have a substantial audience among geeks as well, thanks to an article about my site in Wired in February 2002.

I've published about 45 magazine articles and two books, *The Quintessential Searcher: the Wit and Wisdom of Barbara Quint*, and *Net Effects: How Librarians Can Manage the Unintended Consequences of the Internet*. I've also been traveling a lot, speaking at about ten conferences a year."

Anyone who wants to see what I'm doing can find all my work [except the discontinued Fox column] at http://marylaine.com/

I've raised one son, Brian Block, who's inherited my interest in writing and his father's interest in music. He's teaching history in Boston and is a featured reviewer of music, books and movies at epinions under the name Voxpoptart."

**Greg Conerly** (PhD '97) "has been promoted to Associate Prof. with tenure. It still hasn't quite sunk in yet, but I guess it will eventually (like getting the PhD). I want to thank Rich and all the other folks who were part of the American Studies "family" during my grad studies at Iowa for helping make this achievement possible. I couldn't have done it without everyone's support, encouragement, and occasional "tough love."

**Mary Crippen** (MA '99) "I think this may be my first submission to the newsletter since I got my M.A. in 1999...

As many whom I've been in touch with over the last few years know, I continue to exist in a decidedly non-academic environment, working as a Product Manager at U.S. Bank in Minneapolis. My "product" is actually a credit card, one that is designed for use by corporate travelers. Perhaps the only similarity between my current job and life as a T.A. is that I still hold my office hours in a cubicle! Nevertheless, it suits me well (for now).

What prompted me to finally send an update is the joyful announcement that I am engaged to marry David Marcou, a Twin Cities native who I met in the spring of 2002. We are now in the hectic process of house hunting, with the hope of moving and getting settled before our wedding on May 15, 2004. If anyone is looking for an interesting research topic in contemporary culture, ask me about Match.com! I hope this finds all well in Iowa City!"

**Charlie Dee** (MA '73), a faculty member in History and English at Milwaukee Area Technical College, is on sabbatical this year in Norway.

**Jenifer Rasin Denniston** (MA '98) spent this past summer in Arizona researching the Lonely Planet guide to the Grand Canyon, the third of their national park series guidebooks. Husband Rhawn and daughters Anna and Harper accompanied her.

**Drake Hokanson** (MA '88) reports "In an unusual, if auspicious, alignment of the planets, two periodicals this summer featured my work about the Great Plains:"

*The Aug./Sept. issue of CameraArts carried a 4-page article, with images, about my panorama photographs of the Plains.*

*The July/August issue of Speakeasy features my essay "Across the Grain: Flying a Plane of One's Own," a piece about flying the Great Plains from West Texas to North Dakota low enough to look around.*

Some day all this will be together in a book. Stay tuned..."

**David Marcou** (MA'78) "directed and co-edited a group literary-photographic anthology that won the top book award in 2002 from the Sept. 12th Initiative -- *Spirit of America: Heartland Voices, World Views* (Speranza, Sept. 2001). Two-time Pulitzer-winning historian David McCullough wrote to me to say he was very impressed by our book and happy to add it to his library. Following that book's publication, I directed and co-edited *America's Heartland Remembers: Words and Pictures Before, During, and After September 11th, 2001* (The Writers' Collective, Sept. 2002). Most recently, I directed and co-edited a group photobook (the works of more than 100 photographers are included in it) that was inspired by Edward Steichen's *The Family of Man*. Our new photobook is *Light, Shadow, & Spirit: On the Path of a Picture-Family of Life-Reflections* (Speranza, July 2003). I contributed some of my own materials to all of these books, and I've taught writing and/or photography to many of the adult contributors. Finally, my son, Matthew, typed the entire manuscript for the 2001 book, when he was 13 years old. He typed most of the manuscript for the 2002 book, as well. And he scanned more than 600 photos for the photobook, too. A few Iowa-related materials went into these books, including a picture of the most famous bridge from the film "The Bridges of Madison Country," the one that burned down last year. That photo was taken by Russ Paulson and was published in *L, S, & S*. In addition, a feature I wrote and took the pictures for, "A People Person", was published on 18 June 2003 in the *British Journal of Photography*, and I recently became a member of Britain's Royal Photographic Society, as well."
Allison McCracken (PhD ’00) has begun a tenure-track job in American Studies at DePaul University in Chicago. She has finished moving and is finally beginning to settle in. Allison looks forward to seeing classmates at some conference or another.

Jan Olive Nash (MA ’89) is working on a dissertation in American History at Loyola University Chicago. Her subject is the survival of small-town Iowa.

Megan Nelson (PhD ’02) has accepted a job as Assistant Professor of American Studies at Texas Tech University. Dan and I moved down to Lubbock in August. Dan commutes between Lubbock and Boston (two weeks here, two weeks there). As Lubbock is a six-hour drive from anywhere, we harbor no illusions that any of you will ever be in the neighborhood. But should you have a hankering for brisket, margaritas, or Big XII football, do come for a visit!

Kevin Quirk (PhD ’03) “After defending my dissertation in May, Michele and I drove the next day to Chicago to look for a place to live. After five days, and then some wrangling, we bought a condo in the Edgewater neighborhood. We moved here in August. Michele got hired to a tenure track position to teach non-fiction writing in the Dept. of English at DePaul University. They sweetened the deal by throwing a one-year joint appointment in English and American Studies my way. Right now I’m writing from my office, which is two doors down from Allison McCracken’s. Hers in the door with the Buffy posters. Anyone stopping by or passing through should drop me a line at kquirk@depaul.edu.”

Jane Simonsen (PhD ’01) and Mike Augspurger (PhD ’01) “Mike and I are back in Arkansas again, having returned from Regensburg, Germany in July. We had a fantastic time there, taking some extended bike trips and making excursions to the Czech Republic in the summer months. We also were excited to see Jane, Virginia, Kristin, Pat O., Ulli, and Amy Spellacy at the American Studies conference in Munich and to spend another few days showing Amy and Pat around Regensburg.

It’s good to be home and back at work, though we are suffering from Bavarian beergarden withdrawal. I’m back teaching full-time at the UCA Honors College, and Mike is also teaching full-time in the English Department this year. I’ll be presenting a paper at the Society for the Study of American Women Writers conference in Forth Worth, Texas next month. While I’m still working on revisions to my manuscript (now with the motivation of a contract!) Mike has finished his book manuscript and sent it off to Cornell University Press. Greetings to all!”

Jenny Strayer (PhD ’96) “In January 2003, I moved to Pittsburgh to take the position of director of the Regina Gouger Miller Gallery at Carnegie Mellon University. The gallery, 9000 sq ft on three floors, exhibits contemporary art.” www.cmu.edu/millergallery jstrayer@andrew.cmu.edu

Yuval Taylor (MA ’88) is currently Senior Editor, Chicago Review Press. He’s had several books published since he left Iowa; I Was Born a Slave: An Anthology of Classic Slave Narratives (editor); The Cartoon Music Book (co-edited with Daniel Goldmark); The Future of Jazz (editor). He also had a piece published in A Friendly Game of Poker: 52 Takes on the Neighborhood Game, edited by Jake Austen, called “Toward an Aesthetic of Music for Poker (plus a few tips).” He and his wife have 2 children, Jacob, 2, and Thalia, 5.

First Impressions
Tsira Chikvaidze

I’d like to share with you my first impressions of Iowa City, the University of Iowa and our department – the Department of American Studies. I am an associate professor from Georgia. As a rule I always emphasize: “It isn’t Russia, nor Atlanta. It is ’real’ Georgia, the country Georgia.” I teach the following courses at Tbilisi State University: Contemporary History of the American and European Countries; U.S. history Since 1918; Introduction to the International Relations and Diplomacy, and Globalization and Global Problems.

I am a scholar in the Junior Faculty Development Program (JFDP) sponsored by the American Councils for International Education. I’ll stay here, at The University of Iowa, Department of American Studies, for one academic year working with a UI
faculty member on my research project and new courses for my University. I'll sit in courses, audit and observe these classes. I have already attended the following courses: American Values, American History 1877- Present, Sources for American Studies, Introduction to International Relations, Politics of International Economics, The World of Ancient Greece.

When I was informed (after a year of competition) of my placement, some people said: "Where are you going? Iowa! It's like American Siberia!" (It was said that the cold was not the only reason). When I was flying I could just see big cornfields. When I tried to find Jefferson Building, some people said that it was formerly a hotel. So you can imagine my feelings.

Now, after being here about a month I can say: "No, It is not American Siberia. It is a very cultural and very friendly city." Our department is also a very friendly department. It is like a strong, good team, where each person tries to help each other. This aspect is very important for visiting scholars. I am so grateful to Jane C. Desmond. She was the first person that I met from our department. She gave my name to the secretary to put on the faculty list. Thanks to this I can get all the information about the activities in our department and participate in it. I have attended many activities and the main things, which I recognized here are: the friendly atmosphere in the department, many activities for professional development (meetings, special speakers). I especially like it when graduate students participate in any activities.

We have a Center of American Studies at Tbilisi State University. I work at this center, too. Our center organizes annual conferences in April-May and the American Embassy in Georgia helps us to invite special guests - American Scholars from the U.S. American Studies is a new academic field in Georgia and is very popular. Many universities are establishing American Studies as a new specialization. I have one request: if you have some books in American studies or in History, which you don’t want any more, please inform me through the secretary of our department. I’d like to collect them for my department at Tbilisi State University. I would be very grateful to you.

Tsira Chikvaidze is an Associate Professor in the Department of History at Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, Georgia

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Cultural Frameworks for Civil Liberties
A Lecture Series Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka

Friday, October 31 - Barbara Biesecker
Associate Professor of Communication Studies, The University of Iowa
"Renovating the National Imaginary: Remembering World War II"

Friday, November 14 - Jacki Rand
Assistant Professor of History, The University of Iowa
"Colonial (Counter)Inscriptions: 19th-Century Captives of the American Indian Assimilation Policy"

All talks are at 4:00 in 704 Jefferson Building (on the corner of Washington and Dubuque Streets)

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laura-kastens@uiowa.edu

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http://www.uiowa.edu/~amstud/Events/Newsletters.htm
**Events To Remember**

**October 31** – Barbara Biesecker, University of Iowa  
"Renovating the National Imaginary: Remembering World War II"  704 Jefferson Building, 4:00 p.m.

**October 31** – Sabine Golz, University of Iowa  
Associate Professor of Comparative Literature  
"Incendiary Reading: Close-Ups of Walter Benjamin’s ‘Little History of Photography’"  304 EPB, 4:00 p.m.

**November 18** – Robert A. Schanke, reading from his new biography of Mercedes de Acosta, That Furious Lesbian. Schanke co-edited Passing Performances and Staging Desires with AS faculty member Kim Marra.  8:00 p.m., Live at Prairie Lights Bookstore.

**November 18** – Ed Holtum "The John Martin Rare Book Room, Hardin Library."  12:30-1:30 Room 401, Hardin Library

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**American Studies Program at Penn State Harrisburg**  
Tenure-track position as Assistant or Associate Professor of American Studies and Art History/Visual Culture in the School of Humanities at Penn State Capital College. The American Studies program invites applicants with research and college teaching experience in American art history, visual culture, and museum studies. Responsibilities include teaching required program courses and School of Humanities core curriculum. Experience in museums and other public heritage institutions desirable. Ph.D. in American Studies preferred. Send a cover letter explaining experience and match with this description, three letters of reference, evidence of teaching effectiveness (e.g. syllabi, course evaluations, peer observations), and curriculum vitae to: American Studies Search Committee  
c/o Mrs. Dorothy Guy  
Director of Human Resources  
Penn State Capital College  
Box CHE  
777 West Harrisburg Pike  
Middletown, Pennsylvania 17057-4898  
Review of applications will begin October 24, 2003, and continue until the position is filled.

**Drury University**, Springfield, Missouri, invites applications for a full-time tenure-track position teaching courses in the American Experience, Global Diversity, and Globalization. They seek a broadly trained teacher/scholar with an active research agenda in any Area study, Culture Studies, Ethnic Studies, Gender Studies, Global Studies, and/or the Social Sciences. Ph.D. by August 2004 preferred. Send a letter detailing qualifications for position, a current c.v., 3 letters of reference, evidence of teaching excellence to:  
Dr. Richard Schur, Director  
Interdisciplinary Studies Center  
Drury University  
900 N. Benton Avenue  
Springfield, MO 65802  
Screening will begin December 1, 2003. Website:  
http://www.drury.edu

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**Fellowships & Scholarships**

**The Luce Scholars Program** provides stipends and internships for eighteen young Americans to live and work in Asia each year. Dating from 1974, the program’s purpose is to increase awareness of Asia among future leaders in American society.

Those who already have significant experience in Asia or Asian studies are not eligible for the Luce Scholars Program. Candidates must be American citizens who have received at least a bachelor’s degree and are no more than 29 years old on September 1 of the year they enter the program. Nominees should have a record of high achievement, outstanding leadership ability, and a clearly defined career interest with evidence of potential for professional accomplishment.

Luce Scholars have backgrounds in virtually any field—other than Asian Affairs; for these purposes Asian Affairs includes Asian language, literature, history, politics, philosophy, or any other aspect of Asian studies. Placements can be made in the following countries in East and Southeast Asia: Brunei, Cambodia, China and Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Philippines,
Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. The award tenure extends from late August 2004 to July 2005. Luce Scholars receive a monthly stipend sufficient to meet normal expenses in Asia, economy-class airfare, freight allowance, medical and travel insurance.

Additional information can be found at "http://www.hluce.org/3scholfm.html"

Applications can be obtained on-line http://www.hluce.org

Completed applications must be submitted to Roberta M. Marvin, International Programs, Grants and Development, IC 226, by Friday, November 14, 2003, to be eligible for consideration for nomination.

The American Studies Cookbook is still available for purchase! Now in its third printing, it makes a great gift. Dean Maxson of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences purchased copies to give as gifts at the annual Alumni Fellows dinner in September (see article about Eric Sandeen on page 2)! To order your very own copy, send $14.95, plus $2.00 shipping and handling to:

American Studies
701 Jefferson Building
129 E. Washington Street
Iowa City, IA 52242

Checks should be made payable to American Studies Cookbook.

CONFERENCES AND CALLS FOR PAPERS

International Conference on Television, Audio, Video, New Media and Feminism: Console-ing Passions

May 30 - June 2, 2004

New Orleans, Louisiana

We're back! The International Conference on Television, Audio, Video, New Media and Feminism: Console-ing Passions welcomes proposals for papers, panels, workshops and screenings on television, audio, video, new media and feminism.

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: NOVEMBER 15, 2003

See http://www.tulane.edu/~communic/cpnola for proposal submission instructions.

Visit the newly designed American Studies website at http://www.uiowa.edu/~amstud/

Among the new features are links to American Studies newsletters, course information, updated faculty information, news and events, and undergraduate internships.

Check it out!
Tell us what you’re doing

As part of the Department’s effort to find out how its graduates use their training in American Studies, we are eager to hear from you. Tell us about your accomplishments, your career path, your recollections of being a student in the American Studies Department at Iowa, etc.

Name/Degree/Year

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Comments:

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Alumni Survey
American Studies Dept.
701 Jefferson Building
University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA 52242

Or email to:
laura-kastens@uiowa.edu

☐ Yes, you may print these comments in the newsletter

☐ No, please keep these comments confidential

The American Studies Department
The University of Iowa
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