



American Culture Program

RANDOLPH-MACON *woman's* COLLEGE

Feb. 2005

Vol. 3, Issue 4

Inside this issue:

Read With Us	2
Travel With US	2
Do You Believe in Magic? An American Voice: Hiawatha Johnson	3
Student Spotlight	4

in the spotlight

For the first time ever the American Culture Program students will be in the spotlight.

A Documentary.
2005.

Coming This
Spring
to a Theatre
Near You.

GOD OR GORILLA?

Clark Awarded NEH Fellowship for Book on Evolution in the Jazz Age



Constance Clark, assistant professor of American culture, has been

awarded a year-long fellowship by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) for academic year 2005-06.

The award will allow Clark to finish her book, *Evolution in the Jazz Age*, now under contract with Johns Hopkins University Press. "The book explores the

evolution debates of the 1920s and the protean appearance of evolutionary theory as it passed through a series of different lenses into popular culture," says Clark. "Images mattered because the debates were, ultimately, about symbols. The authority of science—and of scientists—was at issue, and scientists disagreed about the boundaries of that authority. Many were uneasy about publicity, public relations and celebrity in this volatile decade. Not

all scientists chose to join the debate; some saw it as beneath their dignity as 'scientific men.' Those who did participate were not always typical of the new wave of scientists; yet they were the people who were presented to the public as custodians of scientific opinion." This year's NEH fellowship program was very competitive. Clark was among 220 recipients from a pool of nearly 1,500 applicants.

INTERN INITIATES ART PROJECT



Lyndsey Pelham, American Culture Program intern and studio art major plans to use

her American Culture Program experiences to inspire her in the studio this spring.

"I'm looking forward to applying my art skills to benefit the American Culture Program. Interning will allow me to build upon my experiences from last year as a student in the Program, and it will comple-

ment my studio art major" says Pelham.

Pelham plans to design and paint a mural for the American Culture Program office that will highlight travel destinations, voices, and themes of this year.. She will also work with other studio art majors who are enrolled in the Program to put together a visual memoir of the semester.

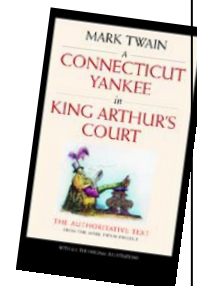
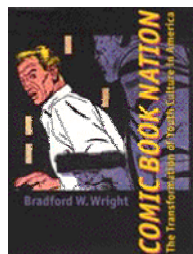
"This will be a wonderful opportunity to work with other artists," says Pelham. "I really enjoy the creative

process of collaboration."

Pelham is an outstanding student-athlete at R-MWC. She is Vice-President of Omicron Delta Kappa, a three-year captain of the soccer team, and a Presidential Scholar.

"We are thrilled to have a student like Lyndsey working with us this year," says Emily Johns, Program coordinator. "She will most certainly be an asset."

READ WITH US...



SEMINAR

- *Humbug: The Art of P.T. Barnum* by Neil Harris
- *The Plot Against America* by Philip Roth
- *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles* by Engelhardt and Linethal
- *Changing Presentations of the American Indian* by W. Richard West
- *The Meaning of Sports* by Michael Mandelbaum
- *Cheerleader! An American Icon* by Adams and Bettis
- *Reality TV: Remaking TV Culture* by Murray and Ouellette
- *Fallingwater Rising* by Franklin Toker
- *See America First* by Marguerite Shaffer
- *Rex Appeal* by Larson and Donnan
- *An American Mind* by Teddy Roosevelt
- *Great White Fathers* by Taliaferro
- *America (The Book)* by Jon Stewart

IMAGES

- *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* by Mark Twain
- *Dr. Strangelove* directed by Stanley Kubrick
- *Pocahontas: The Evolution of an American Narrative* by Robert S. Tilton
- *The Natural* by Bernard Malamud
- *Confessions of a Hero-Worshipper* by Stephen J. Dubner
- *Merchant Princes: An Intimate History of Jewish...* by Leon Harris
- *Call of the Mall* by Paco Underhill
- *Raiders of the Lost Ark* directed by Steven Spielberg
- *Babbitt* by Sinclair Lewis
- *Pat Hobby Stories* by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- *Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America* by Bradford Wright

TRAVEL WITH US...

Plan your own trip in our foot-steps.

PI TTTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

What to read:

- Fallingwater Rising*, by Frank Toker
- Merchant Princes*, by Leon Harris
- See America First*, by Marguerite Shaffer
- Call of the Mall*, by Paco Underhill



What to view:

- The Fountainhead*
- Fallingwater's video
- J. Edgar Kauffmann

What to do:

Day 1:

- Have breakfast with Frank Toker
- Tour Kaufmann's Department Store
- Stop by Kauffmann's YWHA building
- Consider other American Idols and the popularization of them through Andy Warhol. Visit the Warhol museum. www.warhol.org

Day 2:

- Tour Fallingwater
- Enjoy lunch at the Fallingwater Café
- Walk the grounds of Bear Creek with a guide



DO YOU BELIEVE IN MAGIC?

AN AMERICAN VOICE: HIAWATHA JOHNSON

By Mary Anna Richardson and Lyndsey Pelham

What comes to mind when you hear the word “magic?” White rabbits being pulled from top hats? Card tricks? Voodoo? The FBI? Wait! The FBI is magic? After the first American Culture Program Voices I class if you asked one of the AMCP students what comes to mind when they think magic, you may have gotten surprising responses. The program’s first Voice of the year was local artist, musician, and magician, Hiawatha Johnson. After this first class, the Program students began considering a broader view and definition of magic in our world.

Students and Professors gathered in the Ribble lounge on January 18th for what proved to be a very exciting and inspiring evening of entertainment and conversation. “Magic” is a real passion for Hiawatha, who has been studying magic since childhood. He told us that he first became interested in magic around age 4 when his brother came home from school and performed a simple disappearing coin trick. It messed with his mind. He had to know the secret!

“Magic,” Hiawatha explained, “is a way of life” for him. He asked how many of us had ever looked over the syllabus for a class at the start of a semester and wondered how we would ever prevail? Yet, at the end of the semester, the course was completed and we had somehow survived. For Hiawatha, the accomplishment of the seemingly impossible and the overcoming of obstacles can be viewed as magic.

So what about that FBI reference? Hiawatha informed us that some of the greatest magicians in the world are employed with the CIA, FBI, the military, and politicians. Many of our new technologies were developed by magicians who had to come up with creative ways to complete a task for these agencies, institutions, and individuals. Who do you think invented camouflage? A magician, of course! The government never releases

the newest technology to the general public. Hiawatha told us about the satellites they have today that can read license plates off cars at football stadiums and concerts and invited us to speculate of what they were really capable. The magic of technology messes with his mind, and he had it messing with ours as we listened.

However, the most awe-inspiring magic that Hiawatha said he witnesses are things like the daily rising of the sun, regardless of what man does to screw it up. Has the magic been lost? According to Hiawatha, “Absolutely not!” As an artist, Hiawatha sees things through an artist’s eye. He has a different view than most people in American culture today. He can see magic happening in the simplest forms, in nature, science, and technology. Are we growing desensitized from over stimulation or lack of purpose? Or are Americans just content with an explanation? Perhaps Americans are so used to breakthroughs and miracles happening daily that we come to expect them as the norm. We forget that the actual happenings are magic.

Hiawatha has a way of recharging the human spirit through magic, literally, it is magic. The art of magic is curious, it messes with our minds, but it connects us. The explanation of things should not take away the majesty of nature, science, and technology. In a world where human connections are becoming increasingly unusual due to technology, Hiawatha’s magic serves to reconnect people through emotions.

Even without the tricks, Hiawatha could convince just about anyone that magic exists today. Most importantly though, he showed us how to see it. Degas said, “Art is not what you see, but what you make others see.” We learned from Hiawatha that he not only sees magic in his everyday life, he makes magic happen for others.



2500 Rivermont Avenue • Lynchburg, Virginia 24503
Tel 434-947-8480 • Fax: 434-947-8138 • ejohns@rmwc.edu

The Randolph-Macon Woman's College American Culture Program, the first such program of its kind in the United States, was established in 1991. The Program occurs in the spring semester of every academic year, from January to May. The purpose of the Program is to analyze the United States in ways that go beyond typical approaches to American Studies. The Program is based on the idea that America is more than a geographic location; that for centuries it has also been a state of mind as well as a set of hopes. It focuses not only on American realities but on what Americans, who represent diverse backgrounds and perspectives, think the realities are.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT SHASTAN KUSCHKE

The Program is self-contained, offering 12-15 credit hours of study through course work, tutorial, travel, and practicum.



Hometown: South Africa, New Jersey

Grad Year: 2006

Major: Studio Art

Calling both South Africa and America home, Shastan Kuscke comes to the American Culture

Program with a different perspective than most. She is taking a unique approach to her journal, combining her narrative with photography, which, she feels, will strengthen her voice and make her ideas and opinions accessible to more people.

Q: Is there any event/memory/idea that stands out in your life that sparked your interest in the American Culture Program, or did you apply purely out of curiosity?

A: The idea of trying to find a middle ground between 2 worlds: one in which I was born, and one in which I now live, drew me to the program. The fact that that it (The AmCP) gives me a financially agreeable way to learn about the country from a different perspective was also a huge appeal.

Q: How has being from another country influenced your ideas about American Culture so far this semester?

A: I think being from another country, especially a third world country, gives me somewhat of an outside perspective, and an appreciation for the benefits of living in America.

Q: Do you think it puts you at an advantage or disadvantage?

A: Definitely at an advantage. Like I said, I appreciate more, I question more, and I understand things from a different point of view.

Q: How do you plan to use photography to enhance your understanding of the program, or how will you use it throughout the semester, for what purposes, etc?

A: I believe that a picture speaks to a greater audience, and to a higher state of mind than words. The greatest part of taking photographs is to be able to capture moments and freeze them for a lifetime. It will allow me to not only tell people about my experience, but to show them. I'm linking it with all our trips, publications, my journal, and just an overall portfolio of the semester.

At the end of the semester, Shastan will work with Emily Johns and Lyndsey Pelham (AmCP intern) to put up an exhibition of her photographic journal.

WWW.RMWC.EDU/AMERICANCULTURE