

The University of Iowa American Studies Newsletter

February 2003



Food for Thought

In December's newsletter, I usually thank those who have made a monetary gift to American Studies during the calendar year. Upon getting ready for this issue, I realized that I had overlooked this annual thanksgiving last December. My oversight was certainly not due to lack of gratitude but to my total immersion in readying the *American Studies Cookbook* for publication and distribution [see related story, page 4]. Now that our delightful compendium of recipes and foodways lore has "hit the streets," I can first thank all of you who purchased a cookbook or who *will* purchase a cookbook in the future because cookbook profits contribute to the American Studies Foundation funds. Then, I can return to a thank you to our alumnae and friends who sustain us year after year in making possible funding for fellowships, graduate student travel to conferences, and special events programming for graduate and undergraduate students. For gifts made during 2002, we wish to thank: Dr. Eric J. Sandeen, Paul A. Deaton, Dr. S. Coultrap-McQuin, Dr. Sarah K. Fields, and Dr. Stephanie Bennett-Smith.

If the Newsletter has frequently been a forum for my reflection and speculation on any number of topics related to American Studies, I have to beg off this month since we are so busy *doing* things here that there is no time for contemplation! In this issue of the Newsletter, you'll find information not only about graduate students, faculty, and alumnae but about the many activities we are pursuing that make American Studies an ever-livelier center at Iowa. At the end of March, we will host Ida Beam Distinguished Visiting Professor David Hall, Professor of Religion and American Civilization at Harvard University. From April 10-12, we will host the annual conference of the Mid-America American Studies Association, this year a jointly held conference with the Great Lakes American Studies Association. We received a record number of 100 proposals for sessions that will address everything from American culture in international contexts to legal issues of citizenship and power to questions of identity to regional studies to popular culture to sports, arts, and to historiography. The conference will feature as a keynote speaker Eric Lott, Professor of American Studies – Cultural Studies at University of Virginia, and he will give a talk on: "The First Boomer: Clinton, George W., and Fictions of State."

We have already begun planning for next year as well. I am happy to announce that Eric J. Sandeen, Director and Professor of the American Studies Program at University of Wyoming, has been named a 2003 College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Alumni Fellow. Eric will be flown to Iowa City in mid-September to receive his award, to spend two days with faculty and students in American Studies, and to give a presentation to American Studies.

American Studies is also sponsoring (with African-American World Studies, History, and American Indian and Native Studies) a year-long lecture series in 2003-04: Cultural Frameworks for Civil Liberties: A Lecture Series Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka*. More information on this series will be available later, but we plan to host eight lectures – one each month -- by distinguished scholars from Iowa and elsewhere. We expect this series to be a bigger, more powerful event than anything we have done as a community over the last several years.

Lastly, if you have grown at all fond of my ruminations and reflections in the "From the Chair" department of this newsletter, I will be returning regularly with further thoughts as I have just been re-appointed Chair of the Department of American Studies through July 2006.

Congratulations

Ulrich Adelt and **Charles Williams** were admitted to candidacy, and **Kristin Solli** held a successful prospectus meeting.

STUDENT NEWS



Mary Anne Beecher will present a paper at a symposium called "Gender Bound: Representations of Difference in Environmental Design" hosted by Arizona State University's College of Architecture and Environmental Design. Her presentation is titled "Notes in the

Margins: Interpreting Domestic Storage (1941-1954)." The symposium is March 8-10, 2003.

She is also giving a paper this spring at the 2003 Vernacular Architecture Forum Annual Meeting in St. Pierre and Miquelon, France--islands off the south coast of Newfoundland. That paper is titled "The Integrated Cabinet: Vernacular Storage and Interior Space (1900-1950)." That conference is June 4-7, 2003.

Brian Hallstoos will be presenting at the 18th Annual Graduate Student Symposium being held at the University of Iowa on February 28 and March 1. The title of his presentation is "Nation Before Race: James Porter and the Question of a Black Aesthetic."

Jennifer Pustz co-starred in an original reader's theatre presentation entitled "Dear Sweetheart" in the Bruce more Visitor Center on February 14 through

16th. The performance was based on letters written between Howard and Margaret Hall, the last residents of Bruce more. The presentation focused on the period between the late 1930s and the early 1950s. Some of the topics featured were the Halls' pet lions, Howard's trips to Hollywood, their vacation homes, and World War II. In addition to portraying Margaret Hall, Jen also worked with the Assistant Director, Jim Kern (who played Howard), on putting the letters together into a "script."

Sharon Romeo's paper, "Vagrant Women and Sexual Stereotypes in Reconstruction St. Louis" has been accepted to the Sixth Southern Conference on Women's History. She'll be on a panel titled "The Legal, Social and Sexual Regulation of Black and White Women in the Post-Bellum South" with Brandi Brimmer from UCLA and Yvonne Pitts from the University of Iowa history dept. The Conference will be held in Athens, GA this June.



Dan Nathan (Ph.D. '97) writes with several new events. His new book, Saying It's So: A Cultural History of the Black Sox Scandal (University of Illinois Press, 2003) was

released. He presented a paper at the recent American Historical Association Annual Meeting in Chicago. All is well at Skidmore, and his son, Ben, is doing terrific. His departmental web site is http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/american_studies/dan.html

Jane Simonsen (PhD '01) and Michael Augspurger (PhD '01) write with this news: Mike has been teaching at the University of Regensburg in Bavaria, Germany, since September. He's teaching courses on American business culture and on social class and literature. Jane was teaching a course on social class this term, too, so they linked their classes for listserv discussion about class in the two countries. Jane headed off for Germany in December, and was looking forward to seeing Mike again, and to spending 7 months abroad! The Honors College at University of Central Arkansas was kind enough to give Jane a leave of absence for the semester. Mike's working like crazy on his book manuscript, and that's what Jane hopes to do when she gets there (although she wrote recently that she's working hard on enjoying fine beers, cheeses, and sausages!).

John Zalenski (PhD '92) is among ten human services innovators selected by the Annie E. Casey Foundation for its 2003 Children and Family Fellowship. Established in 1993, The Children and Family Fellowship is a full-time, 11-month, intensive program that provides an opportunity for accomplished professionals in the social, human, and community development fields to expand their professional and personal horizons through workshops, seminars, study tours, and field placements.

Zalenski is the Associate Director for Technical Assistance at the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Family Centered Practice in Williamsburg, Iowa, where he develops innovative system improvements based on research, and serves as a consultant to local, state, and federal agencies on child welfare policy.

Deceased: Dr. James Dorsey (PhD '99), and Dr. Vashti Lewis Holman (PhD '81).



Jane Desmond "I'm pleased to announce that the UI Library will be hosting an exhibit on writings about companion animals this spring. I

proposed this exhibit in conjunction with librarian Kathy Magarrell. It is a wonderful opportunity for both of us to integrate our professional lives with our community volunteer work, since we each are involved in the Animal Care and Adoption Center in Iowa City. "Animal studies" is a newly emerging field internationally, and I'm very involved in it--it's great to see current scholarship highlighted in such a striking way at our own university library.

I've joined the national advisory board for a new book project called New American Alchemies: Reconfiguring American Studies in Changed Contexts, to be published by Blackwell. Jan Radway, Kevin Gaines, Barry Shank, and Penny von Eschen are the editors, and it promises to be an exciting, ambitious, and category-stretching endeavor.

In the next few months I'll travel to South Africa and Germany to start work on the IFUSS "Americanization Project", then to Leiden for the first conference of the International American Studies Association, for which I serve on the executive council. So far, scholars from 70 countries are planning on attending, so it should get the new organization off to a vigorous, lively start."

Rob Latham "I was interviewed for an article entitled "The Soul of a New Machine" by Scott McLemee that appeared in the Chronicle on January 31, 2003. The article focused on the current popularity of the figure of the cyborg within the humanities.

I was also interviewed for an article entitled "Reviving Romance with Space, even as 'Space Age' Fades" by Amy Harmon that appeared in the "Science and Technology" section of the NY Times on February 4, 2003. I'm quoted regarding the loss of an "imaginative spark" in the representation of space travel in US popular culture since the 1960s.

On the conference front, I'll be giving a paper entitled "Science Fiction and the Critique of Technological Culture" at two international conferences in the coming months: at the Technoscience, Material Culture, and Everyday Life Conference at the Chinese University in Hong Kong in late March and at

the Science Fiction Research Association Conference at the University of Guelph in Ontario in late June."

Lauren Rabinovitz "My first book, Points of Resistance: Women, Power and Politics in the New York Avant-Garde Cinema, 1943-71, just came out in a second edition with a newly-written preface. I received the May Brodbeck Humanities Fellowship for 2003-04, which will enable me to do research in London and work on a monograph on Hale's Tours, early motion simulation or amusement park rides that incorporated cinema before World War I and introduced cinema from its outset as a multimedia experience. I am delivering a paper at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies annual conference in early March: "Writing the Body Back into Feminist Film History: Slapstick Comedy, Physicality, and 'Jouissance.'" I will also be presenting a paper entitled "The Riddle of the Black Maid: Early Cinema, Race, Gender, and American Studies" at the MAASA/GLASA conference here in April (which I am also coordinating). While in England this summer, I will be presenting at two conferences, one in London on "Cinema and Everyday Life" in late June and one on "Multimedia Histories" in Exeter in late July."



Ida Cordelia Beam

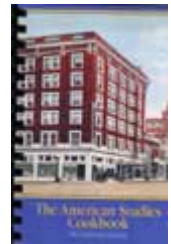
**AMERICAN
STUDIES TO HOST
IDA BEAM
DISTINGUISHED
VISITING
PROFESSOR**

David D. Hall will be visiting Iowa as an Ida Beam lecturer on March 27, 28, and 29, sponsored by the American Studies Department, Center for the Book, School of Religion, and the Office of the Provost. While we don't yet have the titles of his public lectures, he will be presenting on Thursday, March 27 at 8:00 p.m. and on Friday, March 28 at 4:00 p.m.

He will also speak informally at a lunch that will be provided by American Studies at noon on Friday, March 28, and at a seminar on Saturday, March 29 at 10:00 a.m. Further details about these events will be forthcoming as his visit nears, and all members of the community are cordially invited to attend and participate in them.

David Hall is professor of American religious history at the Harvard Divinity School. His training is in American Studies (Yale) and his intellectual interests are richly interdisciplinary. He has written about early New England's religious history from the standpoint of popular culture and about popular religious practices in later eras. He is as well a leading figure in the history of the book. His visit promises to be a very lively one.

**AMERICAN STUDIES
COOKBOOK**



American food is shrouded in mystery. Where did Jell-O come from? Why do some oats cook in one minute while others take 20? When did popcorn start appearing in movie theaters? And just who is Betty Crocker? The answers to these questions and many others can be found along with a host of regional, ethnic, and time-honored family recipes in the first-ever University of Iowa American Studies Cookbook.

The book grew out of a fall 2002 American Studies graduate seminar on foodways and American culture. It features recipes submitted not only by the students in the class but also by alumni, faculty, staff, and students as well as friends of the UI American studies department. Alumni from as far away as China sent in contributions.

The cookbook has been heralded in the Gazette, and the January 2003 @Iowa (electronic newsletter) at <http://www.uiowa.edu/%7Eournews/2002/december/1218cookbook.html>). Look for it in upcoming issues of the Iowa Alumni magazine, and the CLAS Arts &

Sciences Magazine. To order a copy, send \$14.95, plus \$2.00 postage, to American Studies Cookbook, American Studies, The University of Iowa, 701 Jefferson Building, Iowa City, IA 52242.

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES HONORS AMERICAN STUDIES ALUMNUS

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences of the University of Iowa has selected Eric Sandeen (PhD, American Studies, '77) as one of the Class of 2003 College Alumni Fellows.

In only its fourth year, the Alumni Fellows program formally recognizes Iowa alumni for their outstanding contributions to society, their professions, the College, and the University. Eric, Professor and Director of American Studies at University of Wyoming, is one of six alumni to be honored as an Alumni Fellow for 2003.

As a College Alumni Fellow, Eric will be flown here in September for a visit to the University of Iowa. He will be recognized at a luncheon on Thursday, Sept. 11, where he will receive a commemorative award, and he will attend the 2003 Dean's Club Dinner on Friday, September 12.

In addition, he will be available Thursday and Friday to meet informally with American Studies faculty and students, to be available for much socializing, and he will be our Floating Friday speaker on Friday, September 12.

Eric deserves the recognition for his many contributions as both an academic and as a public intellectual and activist to American Studies, but especially for his efforts at internationalizing American Studies for over 25 years. We're all thrilled, proud of Eric, and will be happy to have him as our guest speaker in September.

MAASA/GLASA 2003 CONFERENCE APRIL 10-12, 2003

By Eleanor McConnell

This coming April, the Iowa American Studies Department will be hosting the Joint Conference of the Mid-America American Studies Association and the Great Lakes American Studies Association (MAASA/GLASA). We received a record number of paper proposals this year, from scholars at over 20 different universities, so the conference promises to be jam-packed with interesting and diverse presentations. As one would expect from an American Studies gathering, conference participants will be able to choose from a wide variety of creative panel offerings—everything from bird-watching to Mexican dancing to cross-dressing! In addition to the numerous panels and workshops, we are especially thrilled to be able to bring Eric Lott here to deliver the keynote address, intriguingly titled “The First Boomer: Clinton, George W., and Fictions of State.” Other highlights include a screening of Lois Weber’s 1921 film *Too Wise Wives*, with live piano accompaniment, and a “mock interview” workshop on strategies for getting a job in American Studies. We are looking forward to hosting this exciting conference and hope that many of you will come—it’s a great opportunity to reconnect with old friends from the American Studies community, and a great place to share ideas with new friends.

For more information about the MAASA/GLASA conference, please contact The Center for Conferences and Institutes (1-800-551-9029), or me, the Assistant Conference Coordinator (eleanor-mcconnell@uiowa.edu).

**PORTLAND (OREGON)
STATE UNIVERSITY**

Assistant Professor of
University Studies

Date posted: 2/14/2003



Applications are invited for the position of Assistant Professor of University Studies beginning Fall 2003. This position is open to candidates with a background in composition/rhetoric who can also teach in the field of Popular Culture, especially in Science Fiction. **Qualifications:** Ph.D. or other appropriate terminal degree required; a record of excellence in teaching interdisciplinarily, research, and service; and an interest in faculty collaboration. For more information, visit

<http://www.ous.pdx.edu>.

Send letter of application, vita, statement of teaching philosophy, and the names and contact information of three references to:

Tenure Track Search Committee
University Studies
Portland State University
P.O. Box 751
Portland, Oregon 97207

Review of applications begins **March 17, 2003**. Open until finalists are identified.

Portland State University is an Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity institution and, in keeping with the President's diversity initiative, welcomes applications from diverse candidates and candidates who support diversity.

**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS
AMERICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION**

The Executive Committee of the American Studies Association invites self-nominations and suggestions for committee positions (see complete list at <http://www.georgetown.edu/crossroads/AmericanStudiesAssn/newsletter/current/nom03.htm>). Candidates must be association members and should possess

expertise appropriate to the committee's work. Applications from minorities and women are particularly invited. Applicants must submit a brief statement outlining their qualifications and experience and a complete resume. Letters suggesting or recommending a candidate should also relate the candidate's experience to the committee's work. Materials are due on or before **April 1, 2003**. Send to the Executive Committee, American Studies Association, 1120 19th Street NW, Suite 301, Washington, DC 20046. Fax: 202/467-4786. E-mail: pp001366@mindspring.com

**The Meaning of Things: Ordinary & Extraordinary
Objects in American Culture**

The New York Metro American Studies Association (NYMASA) is seeking abstracts and papers for "The Meaning of Things," a conference to be held at the New York Historical Society on Saturday, November 8, 2003.

How might we describe the life of objects? Certainly, the lives of things are often extricable from our own lives: they surround us, entertain us, protect us from the cold, inform us, feed us, irritate us, please us. How can we separate U.S. culture from the things that it creates and contains? In this conference we hope to explore the multiple meanings of things and the increasingly thin line between things and the people who make and use them. "The Meaning of Things" is broadly interpretable: across history, region, discipline, context.

We are particularly interested in papers and panels that could take advantage of the holdings at the New York Historical Society, which will be hosting the conference. The conference will include a variety of formats: panels of papers, roundtables, an online component, to name a few. If you would like to

propose a collection of presentations, please indicate what form it will take.

Please submit abstracts by **April 1, 2003** to Sarah Chinn (sarah.chinn@hunter.cuny.edu).

CALL FOR PAPERS FOR THE 2003 MLA SAN DIEGO CONFERENCE (Science Fiction and Utopian and Fantastic Literature Discussion Group - S5)

How has science fiction, utopian literature or fantasy (in any medium) tried to imagine peace: approaches to it and/or costs of it? Possibilities might include: efforts between nations, genders, races, species, ideological or theoretical camps. Abstracts due by **1 March**. Abstracts via email are fine but please do not send attachments.

Lisbeth Gant-Britton, UCLA Bunche Center for African American Studies, 153 Haines Hall, Box 951545, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1545; lbritton@ucla.edu.



THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA (SHSI)

announces a grant program for the 2003/2004 academic year. SHSI will award up to eight

stipends of \$1,000 each to support original research and interpretive writing related to the history of Iowa or Iowa and the Midwest. Preference will be given to applicants proposing to pursue previously neglected topics or new approaches to or interpretations of previously treated topics. SHSI invites applicants from a variety of backgrounds, including academic and public historians, graduate students, and independent researchers and writers. Applications will be judged on the basis of their potential for producing work appropriate for publication in *The Annals of Iowa*. Grant recipients will be expected to produce an annotated manuscript targeted for *The Annals of Iowa*, SHSI's scholarly journal.

Applications for the 2003/2004 awards must be postmarked by April 15, 2003. Download application guidelines from their web site (http://www.iowahistory.org/grants/shsi_grants/research_grants.html) or request guidelines or further information from:

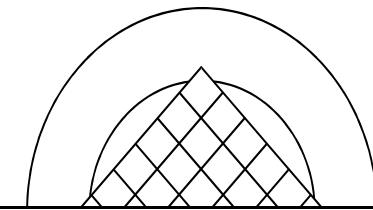
ch_grants.html) or request guidelines or further information from:

Research Grants
State Historical Society of Iowa
402 Iowa Avenue
Iowa City, IA 52240-1806
Phone: 319-335-3931
e-mail: marvin-bergman@uiowa.edu

Would you prefer to receive an electronic version of the American Studies Newsletter, instead of a paper copy? If so, please send your email address to

laura-kastens@uiowa.edu

Each issue will also be available at our website
www.uiowa.edu/~amstud
(beginning fall 2003)



American Studies Department

Faculty:

Lauren Rabinovitz, Chair
Susan Birrell
Jane Desmond
Richard Horwitz (on leave)
Rob Latham
Mary Ellen Lennon (visiting)
Kim Marra
John Raeburn
Laura Rigal

Staff:

Carrie Louvar
Laura Kastens
(newsletter editor)
The University of Iowa
701 Jefferson Building
Iowa City, Iowa 52242
319-335-0320
Fax: 319-335-0314
american-studies@uiowa.edu

American Studies Alumni

We'd love to hear what you're doing, where you're living/teaching, what you're publishing and/or writing, interesting events in your life. Please take a moment to drop us an email (laura-kastens@uiowa.edu) and we'll include your news in the April newsletter.

Also, please let us know if it's OK to give your email address to old friends who may ask for it. We've had some requests!

*The American Studies Department
The University of Iowa
701 Jefferson Building
Iowa City, IA 52242*