



RHODE ISLAND
COUNCIL
FOR THE
HUMANITIES

RICH *views*



an independent, not-for-profit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities

Spring 2007

COMING SOON!! POET AND WRITER MARGE PIERCY

YOUR COUNCIL IS DELIGHTED TO BRING WRITER AND POET MARGE PIERCY TO PROVIDENCE TO KICK OFF OUR SPRING SERIES: LEAP OF FAITH

The RI Council for the Humanities is pleased to present our Spring Series: LEAP OF FAITH as part of our overarching theme of "Common Ground: What Unites Us? What Divides Us?" The series of public events will explore faith as it relates to the part of the human spirit that allows us to leap without necessarily knowing where we'll land, and will tackle the philosophical notion that the humanities inform our understanding as much as scientific proof does.



Marge Piercy

To kick off the Series, poet and author Marge Piercy will read from her work, *The Art of Blessing the Day*.

Marge Piercy is the author of seventeen novels including *The New York Times* Bestseller *Gone To Soldiers*; the National

Bestsellers *Braided Lives*, *The Longings of Women*, and the classic *Woman on the Edge of Time*; seventeen volumes of poetry, and a critically acclaimed memoir *Sleeping with Cats*.

Ms. Piercy has been a featured writer on Bill Moyers' PBS Specials, Garrison Keillor's *Prairie Home Companion*, Terri Gross' *Fresh Air*, the *Today Show*, and many radio programs nationwide. Praised as one of the few American writers who are accomplished poets as well as novelists, Piercy is one of our country's best selling poets. She has taught, lectured and performed her work at well over 400 universities around the world.

Marge Piercy, *The Art of Blessing the Day*, Thursday April 19, 2007 at the First Unitarian Church; One Benevolent St. Providence. Books will be available for purchase and signing at the event

Please see (below) "Other Events in 'Leap of Faith' 2007" for more information on other events in this series.

These programs are all free and open to the public. The series is made possible, in part, through a grant from the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts (RISCA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), RIPBS and the generosity of the venues.

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW:

JUSTICE TALKS – REFLECTIONS ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Justice Talks is a unique discussion series which generates challenging, open discussions about service, justice, and civic engagement for AmeriCorps volunteers and staff.

Presented in partnership between our Humanities Council, the Rhode Island Service Alliance, and the Feinstein Institute for Public Service at Providence

College, each session is oriented around one or two brief but provocative readings. All sessions are facilitated by an instructor attentive to the questions raised by the participants as well as by the readings. Uniquely to Rhode Island, due to the size of our state, ALL Rhode Island AmeriCorps volunteers, including one group of Spanish speakers, are participating.

Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth Roberts, in her role as spokesperson for the *Justice Talks* series in Rhode Island notes – "*Justice Talks* will be an incredible way for all 200 of the AmeriCorps members in Rhode Island to reflect on their public service and tackle the issues and questions at the heart of our commitment to the public. This exciting collaboration...will have a lasting impact on the lives and careers of these young public servants for years to come."



Rick Benjamin, of Rhode Island Service Alliance, Risa Gilpin, from our council, Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts, and Ellen Salvatore, of Providence College, listens to Dילiana Inoa read Pablo Neruda's "Lamb & Pinecone" in Spanish.



Photo of Conrad Building c. 1890, courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Society.

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...inspiring and supporting intellectual curiosity and imagination in all Rhode Islanders...

OTHER EVENTS IN 'LEAP OF FAITH' 2007

THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 2007 7PM

FAITH ON FAITH: THEOLOGIANs CHAT ABOUT THE UNITING/DIVIDING POWER OF FAITH

Panel discussion with:
Jonathan Rubin, Managing Editor, Jewish Voice and Herald, moderator
Abudl Hameed, Imam, Islamic Center of Rhode Island, Providence
Elyse Wecterman, Rabbi, Congregation Agudas Achim, Attleboro
Russell Ruffino, S.T.L., PhD Philosophy, Episcopal Diocese of RI
Donald Zeyl, Elder, Christ Church Evangelical Covenant, East Greenwich; Chair, Philosophy Department, URI

The panel discussion will be held at the Rodgers Recreation Center, Conference Room at Salve Regina University, Newport RI

THURSDAY, MAY 3, 2007 7PM

THE STORY OF GOSPEL MUSIC

Screening of BBC's *The Story of Gospel Music: The Power in the Voice*; talk back following with Pastor **Jeffery A. Williams**

Cranston Public Library,
140 Sockanosset Cross Rd, Cranston, RI

THURSDAY, MAY 10, 2007 9PM

RHODE ISLAND PBS, COX 8/CHANNEL 36

TIES THAT BIND

PBS broadcast of documentary film *Ties That Bind* – Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities are brought together through their women spiritual leaders.

SUN, MAY 20, 2007 2PM & 7:30PM

GRACE NOTES – AUREA ENSEMBLE WITH BLAIR THOMAS, PUPPETEER

Aurea Ensemble (Nigel Gore, Actor, Chris Turner, harmonica virtuoso, Charles Sherba, violin, Katherine Winterstein, violin, Consuelo Sherba viola, Emmanuel Feldman, cello) with **Blair Thomas, puppeteer** presents a program of music and poetry: featuring Ben Johnston's String Quartet, "Amazing Grace", in tandem with Wallace Stephens' "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" and Blair Thomas' Bunraku shadow puppets

2pm: United Congregational Church, 4 Commons, Little Compton

7:30pm: Beneficent Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, 300 Weybosset Street, Providence, RI

LETTER FROM THE ACTING DIRECTOR

Suddenly, the season of new life, Spring, has arrived!

As extra sunlight and warmth begins to fill our days, our Council too is experiencing a time of transition, marked by searching for our next permanent Executive Director and being dislocated by an office flood, caused by a burst sprinkler main in January.

Being displaced from our office has been a challenge. As I have sifted through damaged materials with feelings of great sadness, I have also felt a sense of discovery and a desire to preserve the knowledge therein and connect with the individuals involved in their creation.

So many individuals and institutions across Rhode Island have worked with us

to create outstanding public humanities projects over the years. It is my hope that we will preserve and extend the life of many of the wonderful projects of which we have been and will be a part. Collectively, we have contributed to over 30 years of Rhode Island history and culture. Together, we will continue to do so for many years into the future.

With challenges like these, come opportunities - including opportunities to reflect and connect. Not only have we received a valuable reminder of our potential fragility, but also a reminder that our resilience and strength lies in our relationships with the community around us that span the years.

We are so thankful to all of you who have recently expressed understanding

and support for our Council and our work. You have told us how it is remarkable that we have kept to our spring program and grants schedule. It is undeniably a challenge, but our Council is blessed with an incredibly dedicated staff and board who believe our work comes first, even against the odds.

“Leap of Faith” is the topic of our upcoming program series. I can’t help but reflect on how appropriate it is.

We look forward to seeing you at some of the exciting upcoming events.

With you, we Leap....

Dr. Maitrayee Bhattacharyya
Acting Director



Acting Director, Maitrayee Bhattacharyya

RHODE ISLAND COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS TO OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Rhode Island Council for the Humanities is proud to announce four new additions to our Board of Directors. Gladys Corvera-Baker, Marta Martínez, Annu Palakunnathu Matthew, and Mary Sokolowski will bring a wealth of experience to the Board.

Gladys Corvera-Baker, of Newport, is owner and Founding Director of Galeria Internacional de Herencia y Cultura (International Gallery for Heritage and Culture) in Cochabamba, Bolivia, where she develops art and cultural programs for a variety of constituents including children, seniors and low income families, and coordinates art and culture exchange programs with the U.S. She has served on numerous boards

including Progreso Latino and the International Institute of Rhode Island and as a member of the Providence Special Committee for Hispanic Youth for the Governor’s Justice Commission. Her awards include the 2006 Distinguished Woman Award, given by City Officials of Cochabamba, Bolivia, and a Philanthropic Award from the Philanthropic National Society.

Marta Martínez lives in Warwick and is currently an independent writer, editor, graphic designer, and an oral historian with an emphasis on Latino and immigrant stories. She is fluent in English, Spanish and sign language. In 2006, she coordinated and developed “Coming to Rhode Island – Dominican Gallery” for

the Providence Children’s Museum. She serves on the advisory council of the Juanita Sanchez Fund and is a contributor to Hispanic Link Weekly Report and to National Hispanic Reporter and a features writer and freelance contributor to the Providence Journal. She was a 2005 recipient of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission’s Education Award.

Annu Palakunnathu Matthew is a distinguished photographer and an associate professor of photography at the University of Rhode Island. Her work has explored how people from different cultures understand and experience intercultural exchange. Over the past decade, her work has

been exhibited around the world and is now included in public collections in India, Canada and the U.S., including the collection of the Rhode Island School of Design Museum. She has received numerous grants and fellowships, has published widely, and has served as panelist for a variety of symposia.

The Board and staff of the RI Council for the Humanities looks forward to working with these new members of our team and continuing to support and inspire intellectual curiosity in ALL Rhode Islanders through lifelong learning in the humanities.

CUT THIS OUT AND SEND IT IN

YOUR DONATIONS WILL HELP US INSURE THAT OUR HISTORY AND OUR LEGACY WILL BE PRESERVED TO REMAIN A RESOURCE FOR ALL RHODE ISLANDERS.

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WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

RHODE ISLAND COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES CATCHES UP WITH A FORMER GRANTEE

REMEMBERING RHODE ISLAND JAZZ, SWING, AND BLUES

MAY 6, AT 3:30 PM, AT THE HI HAT CLUB IN PROVIDENCE

Independent research grantee Norm Grant's oral history/film project portrays the difficulties, joys, and triumphs of some of Rhode Island's musical legends: from jazz great Paul Gonsalves who grew up in Pawtucket to Celebrity Club owner Paul Filippi. See an advance showing of footage from his up-coming documentary on the Celebrity Club and RI jazz history as well as images from private photo collections documenting the RI Jazz, Swing and Blues scene. Former



Ed D'Alfonso Band

radio personality Steve Kass will moderate a panel discussion on the Celebrity Club's distinctive role in jazz history to close the afternoon.

April 2007 marks the 6th Annual Celebration of Jazz Appreciation Month (JAM)! For more information on Jazz Appreciation Month and to access some of the online materials please check the JAM website http://www.smithsonianjazz.org/jam/jam_start.asp. You can also learn more about jazz-related funded projects, resources, and lesson plans on the NEH website <http://www.neh.gov> and EDSITEMent.

MAJOR AND INDEPENDENT RESEARCH GRANTS SPRING CYCLE 2006

MAJOR GRANTS TO NON-PROFITS:

THE PORTUGUESE IN LITTLE COMPTON

Little Compton Historical Society, \$10,000

RICH funds support collection of oral histories, the creation and presentation of a new exhibit, related special events for the public, including an exhibit preview and family day festival, and project DVD.

OUR TOWN: PROJECT DISCOVERY PLUS

Trinity Repertory Company, \$7700

RICH funds support an off-site educational program for high school students in which students will view the theatre's production of *Our Town* and participate in-school workshops before and after seeing the show. RICH funding will enable Trinity to offer the workshops free for hundreds of students at public schools from Central Falls to Woonsocket.

PAWTUCKET HUMANITIES FORUMS: STRAIGHT TALK AND SHARED SUNDAYS

The Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre, \$9570

RICH funds support Pawtucket based post-performance humanities talk-backs, essays, and study guides that accompany Gamm's theatre productions. RICH funds also support a series of readings of contemporary documentary plays followed by a discussion of the historical and philosophical issues raised by the play with scholars and experts.

HUMANITIES SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE INITIATIVE

The Providence Black Repertory Company, \$9088

RICH funds support the development of a pilot series of humanities programs with the assistance of two scholars-in-residence. Black Rep will produce a series of post-performance theatre discussions

and incorporate humanities essays and content in their theatre magazine produced twice a year.

IDEAS INTO ACTION

Salve Regina University, \$6971

RICH funds support a series of public lectures and an essay contest involving local students.

MINI GRANTS TO NON-PROFITS:

LANGUAGES OF THE LAND: A DIALOGUE WITH SALTER GROVE

Warwick Museum of Art, \$2000

RICH funds support panel discussions, accompanying the main exhibit, which encourage both participants and audience to consider how the landscape of Salter Grove influences and, in turn, is influenced by memory, imagination, and creativity for groups as diverse as Native Americans to teenagers to country-clubbers.

RADIO AT BROWN: A UNIQUE RHODE ISLAND INSTITUTION

Brown Broadcasting Services, Inc., \$1750

RICH funds support the production of a 60-minute radio documentary chronicling over 70 years of history and influence at Brown University's student radio stations WBRU and WBSR respectively.

LOCAL HISTORY ACTIVITY WORKBOOK

Barrington Preservation Society, \$2000

RICH funds support the production of a 20-page history activity workbook about Barrington, Rhode Island for third graders.

JOURNEY TO FREEDOM LECTURE SERIES

Touro Synagogue Foundation, \$2000

RICH funds support a lecture series, featuring the theme Soul Liberty: America's Heroes and Unsung Heroines.

IN VOGUE: NEWPORT AND THE AMERICAN FASHION PRESS 1881-1914

Preservation Society of Newport County, \$2000

RICH funds support research for the upcoming exhibition.

WHAT IS LOVE?

Everett Dance Theatre, \$2000

Youth work with a scholar to research the history, language, literature and philosophy around love for presentation in a public forum.

MINI GRANTS TO INDIVIDUALS:

BLACK GRAYS AND COLORED GIANTS: BLACK BASEBALL IN RI, 1886-1949 AND AND NOW TO OUR LOCAL BOYS ON THE DIAMOND: RI BLACK BASEBALL IN THE AGE OF INTEGRATION, 1946-1955*

Robert Cvornyek, \$3000

In the first project, the researcher will collect oral histories, create a traveling exhibit, and host a panel discussion on the relationship between black baseball, historical commemoration, and African American fraternal organizations in Rhode Island. In the second project, the researcher will develop a public talk on how integration of baseball in local communities relates to race formation, identity, and cultural expression.

GRACE CHURCH CEMETERY: A MODEST MEMORIAL OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY GRAVESTONES*

Anne Tait, \$2000

Research will result in an on-line text and photo essay presentation examining the iconography of the gravestones in the Grace Church Cemetery and examine what the stones reveal about the way the lower middle and middle class planned their deaths.

THE STORY OF DORIS AND LEAH*

John Eng-Wong, \$1605

Research will result in a slide presentation that presents a look at the circumstances of Chinese American life in Rhode Island through one of the key figures in the history of the RI Chinese community now in her 90's.

WHO WAS MADAME ELIZA JUMEL?*

Jane Lancaster, \$2000

Research will result in a power point lecture presentation on the story of Betsey Bowen, once desperately poor, who reinvented herself as Madame Eliza Jumel, one of America's wealthiest women.

** Projects funded through What Unites Us? What Divides Us? a special initiative funded in part through the We the People Initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities. All grants made possible with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities.*



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