



RHODE ISLAND
COUNCIL
FOR THE
HUMANITIES

RICH *views*



Winter 2006

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

RICH BOARD MEMBER HIGHLIGHT JOSSELYN P. VELÁSQUEZ



Josselyn

One of RICH's newest Board Members is twenty-three year old Josselyn P. Velásquez. Josselyn was born in Guatemala, immigrated to the United States at a very early age and was raised in Los Angeles, California. Since moving to Rhode Island five years ago, she has become part of a community organization, *English for Action*, and uses her experience and cultural sensitivity to work on a youth program called *Our School*.

JV: "I've been involved in working with the community since my arrival to the smallest state. In the past I've worked with Progreso Latino as the Youth and Family Coordinator, RICJ (formerly known as the NCCJ) as a camp advisor

for their youth leadership summer camp, and I've also done a lot of advocacy work for immigrant rights through various coalitions. I am also an artist, my medium of preference is acrylic and I dabble mainly in surrealism."

RICH: Currently you serve as the coordinator for *VozMujer*, a women-only program. Tell us why this program was started and why it is important.

JV: To answer this question we must first analyze what exactly *VozMujer* means. First you have the "Voz" which is a play on words in Spanish as in one sense it means "voice" and in another sense it informally mean "you" as an individual. Follow that with "Mujer" which means woman and you have, as one of the women in our classes so beautifully articulated, *VozMujer* is an invitation to you as a woman to find your inner "Voz" your "you", your "voice".

VozMujer was started in response to the need for a space for women to share and learn not only English but from each others experiences. Through *VozMujer* we are

able to discuss issues directly impacting women that would often times be overlooked or not provided enough time in regular ESOL classes. Although language learning is a priority, the beauty of *VozMujer* is the very conscious analysis of women and society, history, power, gender, race, and class. Together we are able to delve into these issues and foster a space where we can critically analyze these issues and how they relate to us. Through these experiences women are able to find strength in each other and themselves to help them reach the goals they have set for themselves, which is the ultimate goal and the purpose for *VozMujer*!

RICH: What do you see in the future for *English for Action*; what are your hopes for the programs?

JV: *English for Action* holds a warm and loving place in my heart; my hopes are that it will continue to thrive not only as a language learning organization but also in its innovative pedagogy of love and creating community through incorporating relevant issues around social justice, immigrant rights, education and other such issues in their classrooms.

RICH: What are your thoughts about RICH as you become a new board member?

JV: Personally I am thrilled to be a part of RICH. I see it as both an opportunity and a challenge to expand access to critical dialogue to the Latino community. My hopes are to encourage more Latinos in general to participate in the amazing array of opportunities that RICH provides but more specifically I would like to encourage women and youth.

RICH: What books are you currently reading (or have read and loved) that you would recommend to our readers?

JV: I have several books sitting on my nightstand some of which are *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* by Salman Rushdie, and *Open Veins of Latin America*, Eduardo Galeano and also by Galeano *The Book of Embraces*, which is very quickly becoming my favorite book. Some of my all time favorite books are *100 years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *Drink Cultura: Chicanismo* by José Antonio Burciaga, and *Life Death and Revolutionary Comedy* by The Culture Clash.

For more information on the program *English for Action*, please visit the website at www.englishforaction.org.

GET ON BOARD

RICH SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

The Rhode Island Council for the Humanities (RICH) invites nominations for Council membership. RICH seeks a membership that is truly representative of the state's cultural diversity. We seek to find balance in our membership in gender, age, and ethnicity; as well as regional and institutional affiliation.

Some members must be humanities scholars; some must represent the general public. The RICH Board is a working board that demands time and energy from its members. Nominees must demonstrate a commitment to the work of the public humanities and act as strong

advocates for RICH's mission. Nominees should show prior commitment of public service and clear evidence of participation in public intellectual life. Nominees must show the capacity to take on the range of responsibilities that membership requires and must be willing to make RICH a priority among other interests and commitments. Candidates must live or work in Rhode Island.

In 2006, RICH may elect up to 5 members. Individuals nominated by April 26, 2006, will be considered for election to a three-year term beginning July, 2006. RICH requires a letter from the nomina-

tor describing the nominee's potential contribution and willingness to serve on the RICH Board, a copy of the nominee's resume, and any additional supporting documentation the nominator deems appropriate.

Please direct nominations to Sara Archambault, Executive Director, 385 Westminster Street, Suite 2, Providence, RI 02903; sara@rihumanities.org; (401)454-4872 (fax)

Visit RICH on the web at: www.rihumanities.org

OCTOBER 2005 CELEBRATION OF THE HUMANITIES



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

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



Left to Right: Sara Archambault, Sarah Beinecke Richardson, Secretary of State Matt Brown, & Senator Elizabeth Roberts

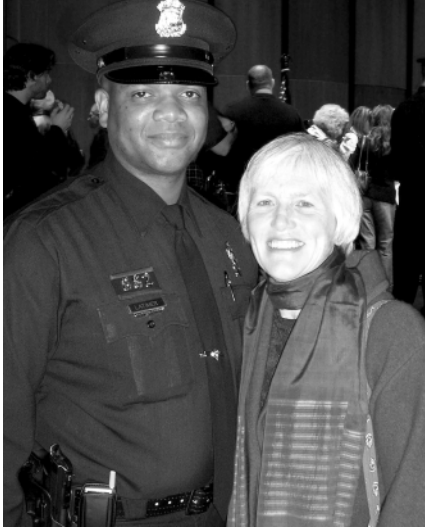


Left to Right: Clay Pell, Mrs. Nuala Pell, RICH Board Chair Elizabeth Delude-Dix, & Senator Claiborne Pell

HUMANIST COPS HIT THE STREETS

Contributed by Pam Steager

RICH pilot program culminates in graduation of twelve new recruits from Providence Police Academy



To Protect and Serve Project Director Pam Steager and Detective Donald Latimer from the Providence Police Academy

On Friday, January 6th, twelve new recruits to the Providence Police Department were sworn in by Mayor David Cicilline. In the audience in Sapinsley Hall at Rhode Island College that afternoon were family members and friends of the recruits, other law enforcement and city personnel, media and community organization representatives, and staff and board members from RICH. The graduation ceremony, while not marking the end of RICH's *To Protect and Serve: Understanding Diversity and Community* project, definitely was the culminating event in last year's efforts. These twelve new officers are entering their service as community police officers having completed the first humanities enhanced curriculum at the police academy. The collaborative project was a learning experience for all involved, not just the recruits.

It seemed like strange bedfellows to many who first heard about this collaboration between RICH and the Providence Police Academy. *To Protect and Serve* was, however, right in line with both RICH's commitment to reach new and nontraditional audiences and with the Providence Police Department's transition to a community policing model.

The collaborative effort produced an eleven day, 55 hour curriculum which brought in over 30 presenters from the community, including local scholars, who facilitated 20 sessions on the multiple issues of cultural competency for law enforcement in the 21st century. The new Cultural Competency unit included daily quotations and reading assignments as well as opportunities for oral and written reflection on the readings and session topics. Poetry, print and audio essays, short stories, documentary films, song lyrics and textbook readings were all utilized to, as one project goal stated, "create professionally relevant and personally resonant learning about cultural values and experiences across the boundaries of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age and ability."

Although the project evaluation is still in progress, early reports indicate that the recruits, who include among their ranks former correctional officers and military personnel, found the unit very informative and helpful for their careers as community police officers.

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

How quickly dark becomes dawn.

There are times, despite life's wonders and joys, when we all get a little discouraged. Headlines highlight famine, war, and disaster. The TV and radio shout and scandalize. Where is the time for listening? When do we learn from each other; go deeper; reflect? My colleagues on the RICH staff often teasingly refer to me as their "fearless leader." And I am quick to correct them, "Fearful, friends. Fearful."

I was having a moment like that today, and then the copy for the RICH newsletter crossed my desk. As I look over the wonderful community-generated projects happening across Rhode Island, reflect on the impact of our EnRICHment Opportunities and To Protect and Serve

programs, and marvel at the leadership on our Board, at our libraries, and in our business community, my heart warms. Rhode Islanders do want to learn from and listen to each other. We do want to go beyond sound-bite culture and dig in. And RICH is an integral part of that reach beyond.

The only thing that troubles me now, as I begin to feel like a proud parent, is that with so little room in the newsletter, we just can't include it all. Our film series in collaboration with RI PBS, titled *Here at Home: What Unites Us? What Divides Us?*, is thoughtfully exploring a variety of issues linked to the theme in addition to inspiring and supporting original short films from RI filmmakers. Our work with the Rhode Island Commission on Civics Education contributed to a suc-

cessful retreat of educators, cultural workers, and civic leaders in setting a vision for civic education for our state. And these are just snapshots of how RICH contributes to the cultural and educational lives of Rhode Islanders.

It's easy, at times, in our busy lives with so much trouble around us to forget that our state is full of committed, passionate people and organizations working hard to create opportunities to connect and learn from each other. RICH is proud to be one of them, and to help bring so much of this good work to light.

Sara J. Archambault
Executive Director

ENRICHING EXPERIENCES

WHY MIDDLETOWN LIBRARY LOVES PROVIDING ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR LIBRARY USERS

Middletown Library is a vibrant place; a community center, a gathering place for native Rhode Islanders, military personnel, and folks from New Orleans, recently displaced victims of Katrina.

This wonderful mix provides a challenge to Library Director, Robert Balliot, while he is pondering lively programming for this diverse group. As the library uses many of RICH's *EnRICHment Opportunities* Speaker's Bureau offerings to satisfy these needs, we recently asked him how he goes about the task -

"We have a very diverse and changing population. The Naval War College and NETC bring in people from all over the world to study. Many bring their families along. We are able to share Rhode Island with them and the many cultural opportunities available around the area with our 'Museum Pass' program. We determine programming by past experience and input from our Friends of the Library group along with our Board of Trustees. Our past experience with RICH has been

excellent so we continue to select from the speakers group, *EnRICHment Opportunities*. There is something for everyone at RICH - for example, I think we could have Professor Onesimo Almeida (*Portuguese Discoveries; Azoreans in America*) back at least 10 times and no one would be bored!"

EnRICHment Opportunities is a program available to all non-profit organizations in our state. It includes a wide range of topics including architecture, civic life and education, cultural identity, Rhode Island history, philosophy, ethics, literature, and more. The scholars involved in the *EnRICHment Opportunities* program are all experts in their fields. Not only are these speakers highly knowledgeable, but they are also skilled facilitators who enjoy the challenge of making learning fun. These folks believe in spreading the wealth of the academy and bringing the joy of lifelong learning to the broader community.

Since 2002, dozens of EnRICHment programs have been held at the library. This year, the library is again scheduling a full slate of programs. Some of the speakers have been to the library before, but as Mr. Balliot indicated, the discussions are always lively and the talks vary depending on the makeup of the audience.

While the programs are free, seating is limited and the library makes tickets available two weeks in advance of each program. Patrons are encouraged to check the website for a list of upcoming programs (www.middletownpubliclibrary.org).

For more information about program offerings through *EnRICHment Opportunities*, please check the RICH website at www.rihumanities.org.

GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

October 2005's *Celebration of the Humanities* was that much more festive thanks to the contributions of a local Providence business owner. While it seemed to us that Greg Matta was very generous to the organization and its fundraising event, according to Greg it was just part of his basic philosophy and the way he does business.

Since it opened its doors in the early 1970s, Campus Fine Wines, located at 127 Brook Street in Providence has always been part of the community. While the Fox Point and Wickenden Street areas have undergone much change in the past 30 years, the store has steadfastly given back to the community because the community has supported the store.

And, while other businesses have cut back on their support for non-profits, Campus Fine Wines has stayed focused and every year selects various arts and cultural organizations to assist. "We set aside an amount of money," said Greg, "and we budget in charitable contributions and make sure we give to arts groups, schools, the humanities and libraries." "When you are part of a community like Providence, with customers who support your business, it is only right to, in turn, see the bigger picture."

Campus Fine Wines has a large selection of wines from all over the world, even stocking organic wines, which are gaining popularity. Recently the business has also begun to move outside the walls of the store, partnering with Farmstead Fine Cheeses, located in Wayland Square, to host a wine and cheese tasting before select performances at Trinity Rep.

For more information on Campus Fine Wines, please stop by the store, 127 Brook Street, Providence, or visit the website at www.campuswines.com.



Greg Matta from Campus Fine Wines at the RICH October event.

RECENT GRANT AWARDS

PUBLIC PROJECT GRANTS

PAWTUCKET HUMANITIES FORUMS: STRAIGHT TALK AND SHARED SUNDAYS

The Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre
\$4750

Pawtucket Humanities Forums: Straight Talk and Shared Sundays are humanities discussion programs hosted by scholars at the Gamm Theatre. *Shared Sundays* is a series of post-performance talk-backs accompanied and supplemented by program essays for a general audience and study guides for youth audiences. *Straight Talk* is a pilot program consisting of a series of staged readings of theatre pieces based on documentary records, followed by audience discussions.

THE JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE: 150 YEARS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Brown University
\$2518

The Jerusalem Perspective: 150 Years of Archaeological Research will convene an international group of scholars for an interdisciplinary conference that includes a series of public lectures related to the city of Jerusalem's archaeological and cultural heritage.

AMERICA'S HISTORY IN THE FIRST PERSON: INTERPRETING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AT THE WANTON LYMAN HAZARD HOUSE

Newport Historical Society
\$6840

America's History in the First Person: Interpreting the American Revolution at the Wanton-Lyman-Hazard House is an educational program that will serve youth, families, and adults throughout Rhode Island. The Newport Historical Society will offer two new interactive educational programs at the house including field trips for youth in grades four through seven and an enhanced tour on Saturdays this fall for all ages.

ORCHARDS IN THE OCEAN STATE: RHODE ISLAND'S APPLE GROWING CULTURE

Cranston Public Library
\$4432

Orchards in the Ocean State is a traveling exhibition based on the *Vanishing Orchards* documentation project funded previously by the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities. The exhibit includes photographs and film that will be accompanied by interpretive text. The exhibit will describe the early and recent history of apple-growing in Rhode Island and will explain how Rhode Island's apple growers have responded to changing technology and markets and survived through resourceful adaptation.

WORKING STORIES: NARRATIVES OF PEOPLE AND THEIR WORLD

The Slater Mill Historic Site
\$4877

Working Stories: Narratives of People and Their Work is a multi-media exhibit on the lives and histories of working people in Pawtucket, Rhode Island that will be presented at the Slater Mill Historic Site and afterward on the web. The exhibit will use oral histories, photographs, and objects to introduce the stories of Pawtucket's mills and its workers.

VISCERALLY OR VIRTUALLY AMERICANS

University of Rhode Island
\$2470

Viscerally or Virtually Americans is a traveling multi-media exhibit and exhibit catalogue and website based on current research with South Asian immigrants and South Asian call center workers with regards to the negotiation of identities and the experience of virtual immigration. The exhibit catalogue will provide a record of recent research into the experience of these immigrants, including humanities essays on the subject and a DVD with excerpts of interviews of the immigrants.

EVERYDAY HAPPINESS

Hera Educational Foundation
\$2755

Project Director: Lisa Delmonico

Everyday Happiness is a monthly television series on RI PBS that examines the topic of the Pursuit of Happiness from a broad variety of perspectives held by Rhode Island residents and scholars. Episodes have examined what happiness means to seniors, to immigrants, and faith worshippers. Upcoming episodes will include an episode that examines happiness from the perspective of seventh graders.

THE MOBY DICK PROJECT

Mixed Magic Theatre
\$1900

Mixed Magic Theatre and scholars of the Herman Melville Society will meet to plan *The Moby Dick Project*. This project will bring high school students, scholars, artists, other professionals, and members of the public together to study Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* and then work together to write and produce a modern stage version of the novel.

HUMANITIES RESOURCE GRANTS

PROVIDE ACCESS TO 1200 GLASS PLATE PHOTOGRAPHS, 1889-1940'S

University of RI, Special Collections
\$6000

The *Provide Access to 1200 Glass Plate Photographs, 1889-1940's* project will convert and index a collection of glass plate and film negatives from 1889-1940's that are housed in the University of Rhode Island Library in order to create public access to these images and this research collection.

MEDIA PRODUCTION GRANTS

A VOLUNTEER FOR JUSTICE: THE MARTHA SHARP COGAN STORY

Keene State College
\$8550

A Volunteer for Justice: The Martha Sharp Cogan Story is a documentary film that recounts the remarkable contributions of a woman raised and educated in Rhode Island who worked with her husband the Reverend Waitstill Sharp to administer aid to thousands of Europeans during WWII.

PRISCILLA'S HOMECOMING

Rice Coast Films, Inc.
\$4418

Priscilla's Homecoming is a documentary film that examines the slave trade through the story of "Priscilla" a young girl who was taken from Sierra Leone in 1756 and transported to Charleston, South Carolina on the ship "Hare" owned by the Vernon brothers of Newport, Rhode Island and one of her descendants Thomalind Martin Polite of Charleston,

LUCAS FOGLIA THE GARDEN



Photo: Lucas Foglia

LUCAS FOGLIA FINDS MORE THAN VEGGIES IN COMMUNITY GARDENS

"A community garden allows its gardeners to produce food for their families and for sale to local markets. On a deeper level, a garden enables its gardeners to retain their cultural traditions and it fosters dialogue between cultures. The garden is a lens into the intricate dynamics of the neighborhood that it serves."

For more than two years, Lucas Foglia has worked to create a photographic documentary exhibit of the Somerset Community Garden, where he shares a garden plot. Filling one square block in the Southside of Providence, the garden contains seventy-two garden plots. Families from the garden and from the neighborhood welcome Lucas as a fellow gardener, as a photographer and as a friend.

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South Carolina who embarks on a symbolic "homecoming" to Sierra Leone. Polite will travel to Rhode Island schools to speak about her experiences.

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH GRANTS

Chuck Vietry
\$950

A View into Power, Class and Gender: The History of the Great Striped Bass Clubs of Rhode Island During the Gilded Age is a research project that examines the history and social impact of these exclusive sporting clubs, the power dynamics within these clubs, and the attitudes that lead to the practice of fishing for recreation rather than sustenance.

Lucas Foglia
\$1900

The Garden project is a research project that documents the community garden through interviews and photographs. The research will result in a public exhibit at a local gallery and on the web.

Meagan Grundberg
\$1900

On These Streets is a research project that examines how Providence's neighborhoods are changing and seeks out their unknown stories for presentation in a series of radio and discussion programs.

EARLY RESPONSE GRANTS

THE OTTOMAN - TURKISH CULTURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Turkish American Cultural Society of RI
\$2000

This project presents an exhibit and lecture series about Ottoman art, culture, and history in collaboration with the RISD Museum.

NOT YOUR CLASSROOM RADIO PROGRAM

AS220
\$2000

This weekly radio program produced for Brown Student Radio features interviews with RI university faculty about their

current research and its connection to the greater world.

ARCHIVAL STORAGE FOR DRESSMAKER PATTERNS

University of Rhode Island
\$1625

This project helps to preserve, archive, and make accessible tissue paper patterns manufactured for the home-sewer dating from 1864 to the 1990s.

TRUDEAU CENTER RESTORATION & DIGITIZATION PROJECT

J. Arthur Trudeau Memorial Center
\$1000

This project seeks to preserve and digitize the Trudeau Center's collection of historic photographs, films, newspaper clippings and policy papers relating to the history of social welfare in RI.

HUMANITIES OUTREACH: A PILOT PROJECT

2nd Story Theatre
\$2000

The project brings a humanist-in-residence to the theatre to develop scholarly essays and host audience discussions on themes presented in the plays produced from January to June 2006.

WHITMAN, THE PRINTER

John Russell Bartlett Society
\$610

This lecture at the URI Library features the Whitman scholar Dr. Ed Folsom from the University of Iowa examining Whitman's use of the art of printing to convey his poetry.

MARCH INTO READING! A CHILDREN'S LITERACY FESTIVAL

Salve Regina University
\$2000

This program highlights the importance of reading as the cornerstone of education, enabling a lifelong pursuit of knowledge. Local authors and illustrators will join with others to excite interest among children and parents alike by presenting storytelling as an accessible process.

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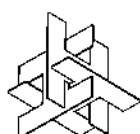
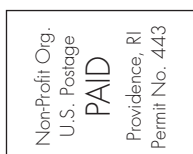
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THE GARDEN *continued*

The families who garden there are of African-American, European, Cambodian, Dominican, Hmong, Laotian and Liberian origin. These people have been photographed by Lucas in their gardens and in their homes, in their workplaces and in their places of worship. But pictures are not enough. This project will also document the gardeners by way of interviews. Answers to questions posed by Lucas reveal their heritage and how each of these groups has adapted to American culture.

Through this documentation project and public exhibit, Lucas hopes to communicate the importance that the Somerset Community Garden holds in the lives of its gardeners and of its neighbors. Another goal of this project is to cultivate greater understanding across Providence, across Rhode Island and across the country of how community gardens form and their role in the community.

A solo exhibit is scheduled for the Children's Museum this spring with a major exhibit being planned for later in the year. To view more photos of the Community Garden and the gardeners, please visit www.LucasFoglia.com.

For information on RICH events please visit our website at www.rihumanities.org or call the office at 273-2250.

If you would like to be placed on our mailing list to receive this publication, please contact RICH at 273-2250.