



RICH *views*

RHODE ISLAND COMMITTEE for the HUMANITIES

Fall 2001

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

A STORY TO TELL AN INTERVIEW WITH KATRINA BROWNE

by Ingrid Ahlgren, Program Officer

Americans for the Arts recently awarded the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities (RICH) and documentary filmmaker Katrina Browne \$150,000 to participate in the Animating Democracy Initiative's Lab. The Animating Democracy Initiative (ADI) is an arts advocacy program sponsored by Americans for the Arts and supported by the Ford Foundation. ADI looks at the role the arts can play in democracy, and its goal is to foster civic dialogue on important contemporary issues.

In collaboration with the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ), Browne will experiment with creative dialogue and interview approaches in her film. Eventually, the documentary will be screened and used in dialogues in Rhode Island's 39 cities and towns. NCCJ will help design and facilitate the screenings. Heritage Harbor Museum is also a partner in the project.

Some of the other projects funded by the ADI include a theater piece on school shootings and an art exhibit on the Human Genome Project. Browne's documentary, *Traces of the Trade*, will examine the role the North played in slavery. The filmmaker uses Bristol's DeWolf family as a vehicle to investigate larger historical forces. Browne, a descendent of the DeWolfs, has been working on *Traces of the Trade* for more than three years. The film explores both the history of Bristol's DeWolf family, the largest slave trading family in early America, and the legacy of their deeds.

In 1990 Browne graduated from Princeton University. She co-founded Public Allies, a nonprofit organization, in 1991, and received an M.A. in theology from the Pacific School of Religion in 1997.

Browne first became interested in making the film when she was in seminary school. She had learned about her family's role in the slave trade as a child, but forgot about it. She was in her late twenties when, once more, she learned about the family's past. "It was shocking to find out again that I was descended from slave traders and equally shocking, if not more so, to find out that I had completely repressed it," says Browne. "I talked to other relatives and cousins and found out that it was kind of similar for them."

Around the same time, Edward Ball's book *Slaves in the Family* and Macky Alston's film *Family Name* sparked Browne's interest in the history of the slave trade. The more Browne read, the more she discovered how invested the New England economy was in the slave



Katrina Browne in a sugar cane field in the Valle de los Ingenios - an area near Trinidad, Cuba in which many sugar plantations were located.

system. She sees *Traces* as a northern version of *Family Name*.

Browne was drawn to the medium of film: "I had always been attracted to documentary filmmaking, but never gave myself the permission to notice that it was something I wanted to pursue. This became an excuse to pursue it because there was a story I really wanted to tell. The story and the subject matter came first, but this gave me a reason to use that medium. I very much related to the idea of making a documentary film much more than writing a book or painting a painting or composing an opera."

In 1999, RICH awarded Browne a \$5,000 script development grant for *Traces of the Trade*. She used the money to consult with history scholars in Rhode Island, conduct primary and secondary source research, and meet with a writer to create a preliminary script. "RICH gave me my first break and I am so indebted to them supporting [the project] from day one, before there was any other financial support for the project. RICH believed in it from the first moment. It was a huge contribution to this thing even happening at all," says Browne. In December 1999, Browne received a \$10,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The ADI grant has strengthened the project.

Traces, a personal and historic documentary, illuminates the DeWolf family's role in the slave trade. Three individuals are at the center of Browne's story. One is Mark Anthony DeWolf, Browne's great-great-great-great-great-grandfather. Another is James DeWolf, one of Mark Anthony's three sons, who served as a U.S. Senator. When he died, he was the second-richest man in the United States.

The final family member is George DeWolf, who continued trading slaves for at least a decade after the 1808 federal prohibition.

In addition to investigating her family's history, the filmmaker also examines how DeWolf descendants feel today about their ancestors' role in the slave trade. She explains, "covering both history and personal reactions seems like the only way to really get a handle on (the issue's) complexity."

Browne recently traveled to Ghana and Cuba on film shoots for the documentary. A group of ten DeWolfe descendants, including Browne, visited each country for a week.

They were in Ghana at the same time as Panafest, a pan-African cultural festival dedicated to the ideals of Pan-Africanism. Shoots were done at locations such as the river where slaves were washed before being brought to slave forts and then shipped to the New World. Descendants of African slaves, who had traveled from the Caribbean, the U.S., and Latin America for the festival, were attending festival events at many of the same locations. "It was a really intense time to go there and be in the company of people who were doing a pilgrimage on the other side of the coin from our pilgrimage," says Browne. "People were thinking about their ancestors who were taken away by my ancestors."

In Cuba, the family members visited the locations of two plantations that had belonged to their ancestors. George DeWolf owned Noah's Ark, a sugar plantation in Cuba. He fled to Cuba in 1825 when one of his business schemes, in which most of the town of Bristol had invested, failed. Browne and her relatives found the site of one



Photo of Conrad Building, c. 1880, courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Society.

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

MAJOR GRANT AWARDS

The Humanities at Trinity Rep
Trinity Repertory Company,
Providence, \$5,000.
Post Performance discussions with Humanities Rep Moderator, Sam Coale, and guest speakers provide the catalyst for stimulating discussions with the public. Also the Native American Theatre Festival, a symposium examining Native American Theatre.

Living in America: The First Amendment Teaching Project
ACLU Foundation of Rhode Island, Providence, \$3,350.
A day-long teaching project that includes engaging workshops, presentations, and case study analysis through which students from ten schools will have an opportunity to gain a thorough understanding of the First Amendment.

Inmates, Jailers & the Architecture of Confinement: A History of the Washington County Jail, 1792-1956
The Pettaquamscutt Historical Society, Kingston, \$4,000.
Lecture series based on the themes of crime and law enforcement in RI and production of a documentary history of the Washington County Jail with an exhibit.

Story, Stone, and Shore: The National Storytelling Conference comes to New England
The League for the Advancement of New England Storytelling (LANES), Westerly, \$6,875.
An innovative conference offering thoughtful and insightful ideas and cultural enrichment in the humanities through storytelling and its examination.

Action Speaks
AS220, Providence, \$11,182.
A six-part series of panel discussions on a wide variety of historically significant topics. The theme is "Significant yet Under-Appreciated Dates of the 20th Century."

Connections: The Deborah McCrea Memorial Lecture Series - "African-American Contributions through the Centuries"
William S. Hopkins Historical Society of the Congdon Street Baptist Church, Providence, \$2,400.
A series of five lectures on the African American Experience. Topics include: slavery, religion, literature, Revolutionary War soldiers, and migration during Reconstruction.

URI 2001 Honors Colloquium: "A Just and Sustainable Future: Overcoming Barriers to Action"
University of Rhode Island, Kingston, \$10,155.

A colloquium on sustainability that focuses on the vital questions of how humanity can continue to thrive on Earth given current human behaviors that are not infinitely sustainable.

Toy Boat, Toy Boat, Toy Boat...: Native American Model Watercraft from the North Pacific
Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, Brown University, \$12,540.
Haffenreffer Museum will present an exhibit of late nineteenth-century model watercraft and accessories made by native people of Alaska's Bering Sea and Pacific coasts and the west coast of Canada. A festival will be held in October 2002 to celebrate the opening of the exhibit.

Stories in Stone
Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation, Kenyon, \$5,000
A script for a 30-minute documentary film about Native-American stone wall builders of Southern Rhode Island.

On Frozen Pond
Rhode Island Interscholastic League, A 501(C)(3) Organization, Providence, \$5,000.

A script for a documentary film that examines the culture and history of Rhode Island communities, viewed primarily through the lens of interscholastic hockey, its student athletes, and their mentors.

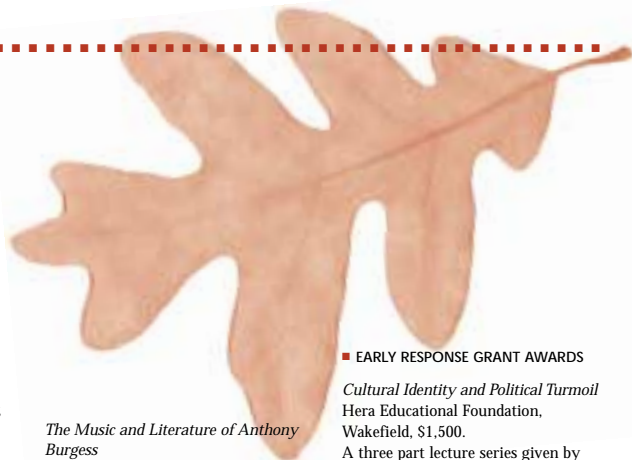
The Benefit Street Project
The Episcopal Cathedral of St. John, Providence, \$5,000.
A documentation of oral histories of the residents of north Benefit Street and Lippitt Hill from the 1940s to the 1970s, the period prior to urban renewal and historic preservation.

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH GRANT AWARDS: The following awards support individual research projects and require a public presentation of the research.

Rhode Island's David Plante: A Writer Who is Always Worth Reading
Susan Aylward, North Kingston, \$1,600.
Examination of David Plante's importance in the cultural life and history of RI, as well as in the field of contemporary literature.

Bringing the Stone Home
John Harkey, Providence, \$1,000.
Examination of how a churinga stone object became a center piece of cultural revitalization for the Aborigines in the Central Deserts of Australia.

Frances Harriet Whipple, A Biography
Sarah O'Dowd, Barrington, \$500.
Examination of the life of a 19th-century Rhode Island writer, Frances Harriet Whipple, well-known in the mid-nineteenth century as a reformer, editor, poet, and fiction writer.



EARLY RESPONSE GRANT AWARDS

The Music and Literature of Anthony Burgess
Paul Schuyler Phillips, Cranston, \$2,000.

Research to produce the first comprehensive examination of Anthony Burgess' work treating his musical and literary sides as two complimentary halves of one creative whole.

Providence Ghost Walk
Rory Raven, Providence, \$500.
Research to further develop the Providence Ghost Walk, a walking tour through the haunted history of Providence, RI. The walk tells ghost stories handed down through the years which recount ghostly events said to have occurred in Providence.

The Hessian Occupation of Newport and Rhode Island, 1776-1779
Walter K. Schroder, Jamestown, \$1,960.

Research into who the Hessians were, why they came to America during the Revolutionary War, and their role in the battle of Rhode Island.

The Uses and Misuses of Scientific Metaphors
Tom Sgouros, Wickford, \$500
Research focusing on the influence of metaphors used both by the public and scientists on the history and conduct of the neural sciences.

Reverend Samuel Maxwell's Contribution to Colonial Church History
Louise Sparrow, Bristol, \$1,000.
Research to produce a booklet on Rev. Maxwell's life, which will reflect the contribution he made to early church history.

Critical Study of Rudolph Fisher
Nan McCowan Sumner-Mack, Cumberland, \$2,000.
An in-depth study of the literary and medical achievements of Rudolph Fisher, Providence-educated star of the Harlem Renaissance.

Cultural Identity and Political Turmoil
Hera Educational Foundation, Wakefield, \$1,500.

A three part lecture series given by scholars on a broad range of art historical and cultural topics. Speakers will address the formation of national or cultural identity and its impact on the arts.

Victorian Westerly Remembers the Civil War
Westerly Public Library, Westerly, \$1,730.

A series of events designed to recreate the historical context of the Civil War and the cultural context in which the library was chosen as a Civil War memorial.

2001 Annual R.I. Indian Council Pow Wow
RI Indian Council, Providence, \$1,100.
Presentations by humanities and community scholars intending to illuminate aspects of Native-American culture.

Dr. Bates Sanitarium: Exhibit
Jamestown Philomenian Library, Jamestown, \$1,000.
A travelling exhibit, scheduled to be at the URI library and the State Archives.

Illuminating the Mirror: Reflections on WaterFire
WaterFire Providence, Providence, \$1,500.
Humanities essay supplement in the WaterFire Program, on the occasion of the 100th lighting of WaterFire.

Grant DEADLINES

- February, 2002
Independent Research Grants
- May 1, 2002
Letter of Intent: March 1, 2002
Humanities Resource, Public Project and Script Development

Applications for Early Response Grants may be submitted at any time but no later than six weeks prior to the event in need of funding. For more information or to receive a copy of RICH's Guidelines and Application Procedures, call RICH at 273-2250 or check our website at www.uri.edu/rich



It is hard to limit my enthusiasm for the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities. Three things energize and motivate me.

First, there's the staff. Executive Director Drake Patten and her crew do not let the dust settle at 385 Westminster Street, our new headquarters in Providence's Arts & Cultural District. Stop in for a visit. RICH's staff is there to welcome you.

Secondly, there is the RICH Board. Five very capable members, who gave generously of their time, talent and resources, will rotate off the board and be sorely missed. They are John Biasuzzi, our former treasurer; Patricia Gagnon, former vice-chair; Onésimo Almeida, Donna J. Dufault, and R. Daniel Prentiss. We say goodbye for now, but the ties are not severed with RICH alumni. We wish them the best.

RICH also has a new Executive Committee, which I am heading up as Chair. Eugene B. Mihaly serves as Vice Chair; Colin McCullough, Treasurer; and Julius Sokenu, Secretary. We have been working through the summer so that RICH will be ready for the fall season. John J. Monaghan Jr., the retired managing editor of The Providence Journal and our newest board member, has been busy doing publicity

work for RICH. The rest of the board members have participated on sub-committees or monitored projects over the summer.

The third, and perhaps most important group, is you: our audience. The Rhode Island Dialogues, a series of meetings and public forums in all of Rhode Island's 39 cities and towns, is one of the programs we are running to help us make sure we are meeting your needs. After the "town meeting," each community will be offered a small grant for a community project inspired by the issues raised during the dialogue. We need you to go to your town meetings to voice your opinions about your community. Please call us at 273-2250 to find out more about the Rhode Island Dialogues or any other program that interests you. It's all about us as a team, and how we perceive our place in our community.

Charles Sullivan

Charles Sullivan



NEW STAFF MEMBERS JOIN RICH



Program Officer

One of the new additions to RICH's staff is Program Officer Ingrid Ahlgren. Ingrid was born in Singapore and has also lived in South Africa, New Zealand, Thailand, Venezuela, and Sweden. She attended high school in Newport and Middletown, Rhode Island, and, in 1998, graduated from Brown University with a degree in Comparative Literature. Following graduation she served as an AmeriCorps volunteer in Pawtucket and Central Falls. She then

spent two years at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, where she received a Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) in Fiction Writing. Last summer she interned at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy. During her free time, Ingrid enjoys hiking, reading, and writing. She coordinates the EnRICHment Opportunities program and can be reached by e-mail at programs@etal.uri.edu



Fiscal Officer

Carol Drowne is a native Rhode Islander, originally from Smithfield, now living in Providence with her two dogs, Angus (a scottie) and Miki (a terrier/ lhasa apso mix). She brings to RICH many years of experience in the not-for-profit sector, most recently as Office/Financial Manager with The Providence Plan and formerly as Assistant to the Managing Director at Trinity Rep and Office Manager with the Providence Family Learning Center.

Rhode Island Legacy

Another school year has begun and *Rhode Island Legacy* is once again bringing history alive in the classrooms of secondary school children across our state. During the months of September and October, "The Legacy of Roger Williams" will be performed highlighting a discussion by Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson about church and state issues. In November and December, "From Field to Factory", the story of Samuel Slater, will be performed. This unique RICH program offers students an opportunity to step back in time as they are stimulated to think, criticize and arrive at their own conclusions about historical events. For more information about *Legacy*, please contact Ray Masse, Education Coordinator at 273-2250.



Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities

■ URI Honors Colloquium: "A Just and Sustainable Future: Overcoming Barriers to Action"

This colloquium examines the issue of sustainability as it focuses on the vital questions of how humanity can continue to thrive on Earth, when human behaviors as we currently know them are not infinitely sustainable. The concept of sustainability has emerged as an urgent response to the need of reconciling rapid growth in industrialized societies and their use of the resources of a living and finite planet. This series of lectures will take place on Tuesday evenings during the month of October.

"*Creating the Next Industrial Revolution*", talk by William McDonough, Professor of Business Administration, University of Virginia October 2, 7:00 p.m. at the Paff Auditorium, Shepard Building, Providence Campus.

"*Nature and the Marketplace – How we can protect the environment and still earn a living?*", lecture by Geoffrey Heal, Paul Garrett Professor of Public Policy and Corporate Responsibility, Columbia University School of Business. October 9, 7:00 p.m. at the URI, Kingston Campus, Room 271, Chafee Social Science Center.

"*Living with Brownouts and Blackouts, or Creating a Sustainable Energy Policy*", talk by Amory Lovins, Co-founder and CEO, The Rocky Mountain Institute October 16, 7:00 p.m., Chafee Social Science Center, Kingston Campus

"*The Photography of Sustainability: How does the photographer's lens capture our interactions with the environment?*" The speakers will be Cheryl Foster, URI Department of Photography, Annu Palakunnathu Matthew, URI Department of Art, and Ronald Onorato, URI Dept. of Art. October 18, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m., Public Forum and Reception at the URI Recital Hall, Fine Arts Center.

"*Green Design and Sustainable Cities: Does the city hold the key to sustainability?*", lecture by Timothy Beatley, Professor Urban and Environmental Planning, University of Virginia. October 23, 7:00 p.m., Shepard Building, Providence Campus

"*Noises in My Backyard*" A video by Geoff Adams will be shown with a discussion to follow. In playful riffs, Adams confronts the history, business and practice of personal land management. October 25, 7:00 p.m. The event will be held at the Chafee Social Science Center, URI.

"*Education, Environment, and the Human Prospect*", lecture by David Orr, Chair of the Environmental Studies Program, Oberlin College. October 29, 7:00 p.m., Chafee Social Science Center, Kingston Campus

For more information, please visit the website at www.uri.edu/sustainability

■ Cultural Identity and Political Turmoil: Artistic Perspectives

This lecture series will be given by scholars on a broad range of art historical and cultural topics. Each speaker will address the formation of national or cultural identity and its impact on the arts. All lectures will be held at the Hera Gallery, 327 Main Street, Wakefield. For more information, please contact the Gallery at 401-780-1488 or visit the website at www.heragallery.org

"*How Indian is Photography by Asian Indians Living in the Diaspora*", talk given by Annu Palakunnathu Matthew, Professor, URI. October 11, 7:00 p.m.

"*Towards a New Construction: Breton's Break with Dada and the Formation of Surrealism*", talk given by Dr. Theresa Papanikolas, Associate Editor of the Publications Department, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

"*Women in Irish Film*", talk given by Dr. Megan Sullivan, Professor, Boston University November 8, 7:00 p.m.

NEW ENGLAND CELEBRATES

Connecticut Humanities Council

■ Twenty Years in Connecticut: A Photographic Retrospective

A description tour of the state through the lens of poet, journalist and photographer Jo-Ann Iannotti. Through October 14. Mon-Fri 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Sat 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Wisdom House 229 East Litchfield Road

■ The Spirit of Volunteerism: Home and Heritage

Learn about the volunteer organizations and institutions that helped shape Litchfield 100 years ago. Through Nov 25. Tues-Sat 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Sun 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Admission \$5 (adults), \$3 (seniors). Free (members, law students, children) Litchfield History Museum 7 South Street

■ Stone-Otis House Tour

This 1830s house is restored to reflect the lives of two families that occupied it from 1830-1897. Tour includes a general store, blacksmith shop and herb garden. Through October 28. Sponsored by Orange Historical Society. Sun 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. Stone-Otis House 615 Orange Center Road

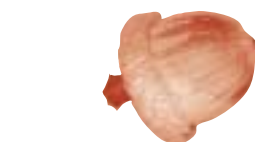
■ Providence Brigade Band

A presentation by the RI Brasswork, "The Town Brass Band as a Popular Movement of Mid-19th Century American Society". This event will be held on October 16, at the Harmony Library, Chepachet, from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.

■ Connections: The Deborah McCrea Memorial Lecture Series – "African-American Contributions Through The Centuries"

"Rhode Island Black regiment, Part 2" with Dr. Louis Wilson. The focus of the lecture will be on the genealogical information from military records of Black and Native-American Soldiers in the Revolutionary War from Rhode Island. October 27, 2:00, 2:00 p.m. The lecture will be held at the Congdon Street Baptist Church, Providence.

For more information please check out our website at www.uri.edu/rich



Maine Humanities Council

■ Letters About Literature

The Maine Humanities Council is the Maine sponsor for a national student essay contest, *Letters About Literature*. The contest is open to students from grades 4-12, and invites participants to write a short letter to an author—living or dead—explaining how that author's book changed their way of viewing the world and themselves. The deadline for entries is December 1st.

The letters offer a chance for young readers to reflect on the work of their favorite authors, and think about why reading their work was such an engaging experience.

The contest is structured in two divisions: Level I, for students in Grades 4-7; and Level II, for students in grades 8-12. Maine winners will receive cash awards of \$100, as well as gift certificates for book purchases. A panel of distinguished Maine citizens will review Maine finalists and select the winners in the spring. There are cash awards of \$500 for national winners at both levels.

The contest is free and open to all young readers. Entries can be made through schools or as individuals, and the postmark deadline for entries is December 1st. For applications, samples of winning letters, and a sheet of tips, contact the Maine Humanities Council, at 207-773-5051. The contest is sponsored by the Weekly Reader Corporation, the Library of Congress, and in Maine by the Maine Humanities Council's Maine Center for the Book.

For more information, please visit the council at www.mainehumanities.org



Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities

■ **Ends of Civilization: Taking Stock on the Eve of the Millennium**
A reading and discussion series developed for the millennium by the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities. Each of the five books offers a critical assessment of a major area of human inquiry, endeavor, or concern and asks:

"Where do we go from here?" The status of politics and government, science, education, the environment, and social relations in America are examined by journalists, scholars, and cultural critics, and fundamental questions are raised about the nature and possibility of further progress in these critically important areas.

Discussions will be held on alternate Thursdays, September 20-November 15, 2001, 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the Sandwich Public Library, Sandwich, 508-888-0625. For more information, please visit the foundation at www.mfh.org

For information on National Arts & Humanities Month, please check out the website at www.artsusa.org

ARTS & HUMANITIES MONTH

Vermont Council on the Humanities

■ AHA! James Naismith, Creator of Basketball

He has influenced millions, but few recognize his name. He lived between the Civil War and World War II. Despite humble and tragic beginnings, he became minister, professor, and M.D. Meet James Naismith, portrayed by Robert Cheney, and hear his life story, including how he invented basketball at Springfield College. Sponsored by Vermont Council on the Humanities and Orange East Senior Center. Bradford, Congregational Church, Wednesday, October 10, 11:00 a.m. Call Victoria Chaffee, 802-222-4782.

■ The Assassination of President Lincoln

The Assassination of President Lincoln. A more precise title of this slide show might be "John Wilkes Booth and Gang, a Motley Crew Indeed." Tony O'Connor shows slides of each of the convicted and punished conspirators, shows Booth's escape route until his death twelve days later. He answers modern questions about Lincoln's assassination, such as: was Dr. Samuel A. Mudd really guilty? Did the government hang an innocent woman? Did John Wilkes Booth really escape and where is he really buried? Sponsored by Vermont Council on the Humanities, Dorset Historical Society and United Church of Dorset and East Rupert. United Church of Dorset and East Rupert, Thursday, October 18, 7:30 p.m. Call Jean Kington, 802-867-4013.

■ **A Time Forgotten: Mount Independence During the American Revolution, 1776, 1777**
Belmont, loof Hall, Sunday, October 21, 1:00 p.m. Call Elaine Purdy, 802-775-2006.

Mount Independence in Orwell is one of the best-preserved sites of the American Revolution in the United States. It is also one of the least understood. Both American and British troops garrisoned this vital post on Lake Champlain, suffering greatly from disease, supply shortages, severe weather and the threat of attack. Through the use of slides and firsthand source material, the story of Mount Independence will be told by Historian Donald Wickman. Sponsored by Vermont Council on the Humanities and Crown Point Road Association.

■ **Vermont's Covered Bridges: A Reassessment**
Cavendish Historical Society, Monday, October 22, 6:00 p.m. Call Foster Johnson, 802-226-7273.

This slide talk given by Ed Barna will discuss the significance of Vermont's covered bridges as connections with the state's primeval forests, participants in America's rush to settlement, exemplars of 19th-century New England's practical ingenuity. Sponsored by Vermont Council on the Humanities and Cavendish Historical Society.

■ **Salem Witchcraft, Belief and Unbelief**
Colchester, Burnham Memorial Library, Thursday, October 25, 7:00 p.m. Call Eve Duff, 802-879-7576.

During the witch hunt in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692, Deodat Lawson believed he saw the effects of witchcraft, but John Proctor saw no witches, he saw girls acting up, good Christians being arrested, and deluded magistrates sentencing innocent people to death. Lori Lee Wilson, author of *The Salem Witch Trials, How History is Invented*, explores this in her talk. Sponsored by Vermont Council on the Humanities, Burnham Memorial Library and Colchester Historical Society.

■ **Benedict Arnold on Lake Champlain**
Burlington, Champlain College, Alumni Auditorium, Friday, October 26, 8:00 p.m. Call David Pinkham, 802-229-0893.

For two summers in the American Revolution, Benedict Arnold, long before his infamous treason, was a patriot and the hero of surprise attacks on the British. A one-hour talk by Willard Randall recreates his two brilliant summers on Lake Champlain and helps explain why he later threw it all away. Sponsored by Vermont Council on the Humanities and Mount Independence Coalition.

■ **Conversations with Emily Dickinson**
Newport Country Club, Wednesday, November 7, 6:00 p.m. Call Tony O'Connor, 802-776-4747.

New England's own Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) secretly penned hundreds of poems, but she lived to see less than 20 published. Belinda West's portrayal of the poet offers a luxurious dose of classic verse and inspiration for participants to read and write themselves. Sponsored by Vermont Council on the Humanities and Northeast Kingdom Civil War Roundtable.

For more information, please visit the council at www.vermonthumanities.org

Summer Book Club AT RICH

By Gloria-Jean Masciarotte

During the dog days of Summer 2001, RICH sponsored a New England Book Bag Reading Series in its new home in the historic Conrad building in Downcity Providence. The diverse group included members from all walks of life such as a librarian from the main branch of Providence Library, a wife and mother from Newport, a retiree, a Downcity office worker, and a professor of English from CCRI. The series' discussions ranged from reflections on literary styles and genres to debates on the well-lived life. The Summer Reading Series was the first of several "Book Clubs" that RICH has planned for the 2001-2002 season.

On June 27, series facilitator Gloria-Jean Masciarotte kicked things off with a talk on "The Social History of Leisure Reading". The talk introduced the general theme of "vacation" pointing out that leisure reading functions as a holiday from our busy lives, a respite from our work-a-day concerns of getting and spending, and, even, a vacation during our action packed vacations. Masciarotte informed the group that leisure reading developed from the 19th-century concept of liberal arts study that embraced the idea of a pre-professional idyll of general humanistic learning to investigate what makes a human being a better and more perfect whole. Leisure reading continues to this day as a busman's holiday into our better selves and out of our limited selves.

The group first discussed Edith Wharton's 1907 novel, *Summer*, set in a

small, provincial town in the Berkshires and the fateful relationship of a big city tourist on an art vacation and a local beauty longing for a larger life. Wharton's novel created a heated exchange about the emotional necessities of happiness: Is it possible in the acceptance of limited circumstance? Can passion exist among our prosaic responsibilities? Does the 'vacation' from everyday reality engender true or illusory experience? The conversation continued as the group departed for their afternoon chores.

A Gift from the Sea, Anne Morrow Lindbergh's 1955 memoir of a vacation apart from her home, husband, and children, led the second discussion around to broad questions about the interior and exterior balance of women's lives as well as the commodification of both men and women's basic needs and desires. The now comfortable and friendly group left a little overwhelmed by the questions they raised for each other.

Rounding up the series, the group tackled John Casey's *Spartina*, a 1989 novel set right here in South County. This story of the mid-life crises of a local commercial fisherman and the changing relations among the new and old guard in a beach community focused on issues such as the definition of privilege, both of money and knowledge; the responsibilities of personal choice toward oneself and one's community; and, finally, the demands one's environment makes on the simple facts of one's life.

Though they may have debated the particular pro's and con's of *A Gift from the Sea*, when they were leaving the last discussion all participants agreed with Lindbergh's observation about summer reading: "...the mind wakes, comes to life again. Not in a city sense-no-but a beach-wise. It

begins to drift, to play, to turn over in gentle careless rolls like those lazy waves on the beach. One never knows what chance treasures these easy unconscious rollers may toss up, on the smooth white sand of the conscious mind."

Literature & Medicine: Humanities at the Heart of Health Care

Literature & Medicine: Humanities at the Heart of Health Care is a very successful humanities reading and discussion program for health care providers that encourages them to connect the world of medicine with the world of lived experience. It is a model public humanities program that takes the humanities into the heart of the workplace, directly affecting the way in which work is performed, and quite literally integrating the humanities with health care. The project was piloted in Maine in 1997.

RICH is pleased to announce that we have received a grant to join our other New England colleagues in taking the Maine Humanities Council's program out to the rest of the country. The grant, totaling approximately \$10,000 a year for two years, will also partner RICH with the Swearer Center at Brown University.

A central part of the expansion of the Maine program will be a five-day summer 2002 institute for scholars. The institute will address issues of pedagogy and choice of seminar materials, and will offer opportunities for experiencing the *Literature & Medicine* seminar model as a participant, and working with it as a facilitator. In addition, the institute will provide an introduction to the health care and hospital context in which the institute participants will be working when they serve as facilitators in their own state's *Literature & Medicine* projects. Most importantly, the institute will support the creation of a community of scholars committed to *Literature & Medicine*. Rhode Island will be joining other New England state humanities councils in assembling a team of five scholars for the project.

RHODE ISLAND QUILT DOCUMENTATION PROJECT RECEIVES AWARD



In June, 2001, the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) announced that the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island Historical Society, and Slater Mill Historic Site received an AASLH Award of Merit for the Rhode Island Quilt Documentation Project. The AASLH Annual Awards Program, now in its 56th year, is the most prestigious recognition for achievement in the preservation and interpretation of local, state and regional history. Awards for 2001 represent 91 organizations and individuals from the United States.

The Rhode Island Quilt Documentation Project was begun over a decade ago, and was spearheaded by faculty and staff at the University of Rhode Island. The project director was Linda Welters, Professor of Fashion Merchandising & Design, Department of Textiles at URI. The project is a highly successful example of a collaboration between numerous

organizations, bringing state and local history from academia to the public.

The project consisted of three phases: documentation, exhibition and publication. The project connects history, culture and technology to quilts, and incorporates issues of immigration, gender, race and aesthetic expression. RICH supported all three phases of the work.

Phase I documented almost 900 Rhode Island quilts in private and public collections to form an archive housed in the URI Library's Special Collections. Phase II resulted in seven public displays of quilts in historical context. Phase III, publication, commenced in 1995 with the proceedings of the Smithsonian conference "What's American About American Quilts?" and reached a high point with the May, 2000 publication of *Down By the Old Mill Stream: Quilts in Rhode Island* (Kent State University Press).

Medallion quilt, ca.1840. Cotton top, back, and batting, 97 x 95 in. Hand-pieced and hand-quilted, 10 stitches per inch in border, 4 stitches per inch in pieced section. Possibly made by Elizabeth Bailey Stanhope (1800-1888). Private collection.

This quilt for a four poster bed descended through a family with many old Rhode Island names such as Almy, Babcock, Potter, Watson, Weeden, Bailey, and Stanhope. The quilter used the medallion format, an early form of patchwork with blocks of varying sizes and patterns. An Eight-Pointed Star is visible as well as small blocks of triangles known as Yankee Puzzle or Broken Dishes.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES Awards Grant to RICH for Online State Encyclopedia

RICH, in partnership with Heritage Harbor Museum (HHM) is the recipient of a \$50,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The monies will be used to examine the resources available and needed to create an online cultural encyclopedia for Rhode Island. Rhode Island received one of only 17 encyclopedia planning grants awarded nationally.

"RICH is delighted to have this chance to talk to Rhode Islanders about their ideas for the content of an online cultural encyclopedia because we believe that the state's residents should have a major voice in the design of this resource," said Drake Patten, RICH Executive Director. "Despite the wealth of research and knowledge out there, Rhode Island has no truly central, widely accessible resource that allows people to track down the information they want, without having a lot of prior knowledge about organizations and individual researchers. Most importantly, is that we will need to bring Rhode Islanders together to help design something they need, want, and will use."



Rhode Island e:Encyclopedia will be structurally organized around the cultural geography of Rhode Island's 39 cities and towns with ideas and topics that concern its citizens. It will provide access throughout the world to Rhode Island's cultural heritage while raising

"Partnering with RICH was a natural fit for Heritage Harbor," said Albert T. Klyberg, Heritage Harbor Director of Museum and Programs. "Just as Heritage Harbor seeks to fill the void of Rhode Island not having a state history museum or state history textbook, RICH encourages Rhode Islanders to explore their history and culture through grant projects and public programs in the humanities. Both organizations bring tremendous experience and resources to this endeavor."

awareness of the importance of geological roots and fostering pride of place here in the Ocean State. Additionally, the encyclopedia will provide materials for teachers to incorporate into their lesson plans, a vast amount of information for students, and an abundance of cultural information for residents and visitors alike, including local history and current events.

Do you have any ideas or topics that you would like to see covered in an online encyclopedia? If so, please contact RICH at 273-2250 or Heritage Harbor Museum at 751-7979. Or send your ideas to programs@etal.uri.edu



NATIONAL PRESERVATION CONFERENCE IN PROVIDENCE

More than 2500 preservationists from across the nation will convene October 16-21, 2001, in Providence for the National Preservation Conference, the premier preservation educational gathering in the United States. Participants will include community and neighborhood leaders, public officials, affordable housing practitioners, architects, planners, historic site managers, developers, downtown revitalization specialists and other grassroots activists. This is the first time the conference has returned to Rhode Island in 48 years since Newport hosted the seventh annual conference in 1953.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is the principal organizer of the conference, working closely with the Providence Preservation Society, Preserve Rhode Island, and a broad range of Rhode Island leaders. The principal benefactor of the conference is the Champlin Foundations.

This year's theme, Preserving the Spirit of Place, was inspired by the last speech delivered by Senator John Chafee before his untimely death. At the opening of the 2000 National Preservation Conference in Washington, Senator Chafee invoked the words of D. H. Lawrence: "Different places on the

face of the earth have different vital effluence, different vibration, different chemical exhalation, different polarity with different stars: call it what you like. But the spirit of place is a great reality."

Rhode Island beautifully illustrates the importance of Preserving the Spirit of Place. From the revitalization of Providence's urban neighborhoods to the magnificent mansions of Newport, from vigorous smart growth and land conservation initiatives to Main Street communities, the state offers dozens of opportunities to see how preservation builds better communities. The conference uses its opening and closing plenary sessions, more than 50 educational sessions, and more than 30 field sessions to explore the spirit of place, with the host communities providing living laboratories of preservation challenges and successes.

On Wednesday, October 17 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., a session entitled "State Humanities Councils as Preservation Partners" will be held. This session will investigate the link between past and present and reveal important clues and keys to understanding place. Several state humanities council directors will discuss case

studies featuring collaborations between preservation groups and state councils in local programming and in securing state funding. Presenters for this session are:

Bruce Fraser
Executive Director
Connecticut Humanities Council

Gail Leftwich
President
Federation of State Humanities Councils

Elizabeth Delude-Dix
RICH Board Member
Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities

Emerson W. Baker
Past Chair
Maine Humanities Council
and *Chair*
Maine Cultural Affairs Council

For more information on the conference, please call the National Trust for Historic Preservation at 800-944-6847 or visit the website at www.nationaltrust.org

DONOR LIST

RICH is pleased to acknowledge the following donations received from February 14, 2001 to August 17, 2001. If we have made any omissions or errors in your listing, please contact Heather Brigham, Development Assistant at 273-2250 or by e-mail at heather@etal.uri.edu to correct the matter.

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Edward J. Ahearn
and Michele M. Respaut
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Rhode Island Economic Policy Council, in support of the Rhode Island Dialogues

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■ We refreshed our minds all summer thanks to OOP's generous donation of OOP's Juice to our Summer Book Club. Thank you for making the hot months so much more pleasant!

■ Our deepest gratitude to all of you who "gave the tax back" through our special appeal this summer. Thanks to you, we can continue to ensure the humanities will stay in Rhode Island's headlines!

