



# RICH *views*

RHODE ISLAND COMMITTEE for the HUMANITIES

Fall 2002

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

## MARC LEVITT RECEIVES 1ST ANNUAL TOM ROBERTS AWARD



Tom Roberts Prize recipient Marc Levitt (c) with Ed and Linda Wood, former board members and trustees of the Brightman Hill Foundation.

On June 23, 2002, RICH celebrated the inaugural awarding of the Tom Roberts Prize for Creative Achievement in the Humanities. The award, made possible by an endowment from the Brightman Hill Charitable Foundation, is named in honor of RICH's founding director Tom Roberts. It

was presented to local humanist and activist Marc Joel Levitt and was created to recognize nontraditional, previously unrecognized Rhode Island humanists.

The afternoon event of fun and follies at the Avon Cinema featured a silent auction and vaudeville performances by several Rhode Island artists and humanists, including tap dancer Susan Boyce, mentalist (and RICH grantee) Rory Raven, and actors Gwyn Anderson and Tony Estrella. Even Tom Roberts was enticed onto the stage for an impromptu tap dance lesson! More than 150 current and past RICH friends, Board members, and staff were on hand to witness the event, which included speeches by Mayor Vicent Cianci and Board Chair Charles Sullivan as well as Porter Halyburton's presentation of the award.

The awardee, Marc Levitt, is a story teller, educator, writer, radio host, and activist. For the last twenty years, Marc has worked in schools, libraries, and theatres around the world as an inventive participant and actor on the stage of the public humanities. Between 1988 and 1993, Marc wrote and hosted the *New England Chowda Hour*, the only syndicated radio variety show in New England. Marc also helped create and continues to host the topical forum *Action Speaks* at AS220 in downtown Providence. He is deeply involved in the Museum Project at the Charles Fortes School, a program that uses local history as the basis of its curriculum.

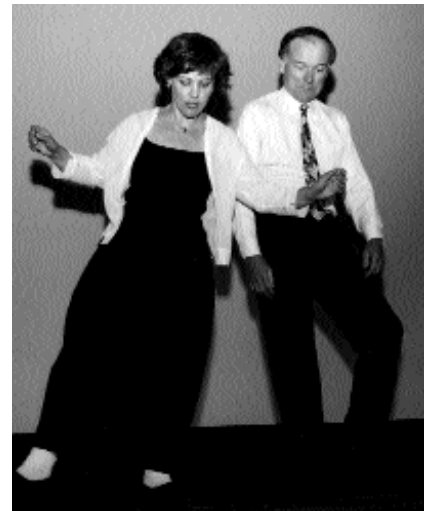
"Mr. Levitt has distinguished himself as a humanist in so many ways. His work in the community has been going on for many years, enriching the lives of all who have been lucky enough to see him create his own brand of magic," commented Charles Sullivan.

The Tom Roberts Prize is awarded to an individual or group whose work is vital to the humanities on several levels. First,

the recipient must do work that blends the wisdom and methods of the humanities in an inventive, original, and imaginative way with topics, disciplines, and formats not ordinarily associated with traditional humanities education. The honoree's work must also reflect the humanities' ability to inspire us to examine everything, searching for reasons, challenging established standards, and interpreting what we see and what lies beneath the surface. The work must also be distinguished by ingenuity, imagination and potential public appeal. While the recipient need not have accomplished work aimed at topics or audiences unique to Rhode Island, work addressing local concerns or designed for local consumption may receive preference.

As Board alum Judith Swift stated, "Tom Roberts' legacy as Executive Director was appropriately recognized by the inception of this award, and its first recipient, Mark Joel Levitt, was the perfect embodiment of the values espoused by Tom during his tenure – values which this award was intended to publicly celebrate. As the chair of the Tom Roberts Prize Event Committee, I was thrilled to generate a bit of interior heat on that summer day by – while not roasting – gently turning Tom on the spit of RICH memories."

"Winning the Tom Roberts award was extremely gratifying for me. From a strange and not quite fleshed out (to say the least) idea presented to RICH twenty years ago concerning the creation of a historical pageant along the Saugatucket River, I have looked to RICH as a way to braid my two professional interests, the arts and the humanities. RICH has given me the opportunity to do just that in the many projects they supported through funding and, just as importantly, through personal contact. It's not often that someone like myself, without letters after my name, can find ways to wrestle with historical and philosophical ideas and then to have a site to publicly display the results. It's to RICH's credit that it was started with, and perpetuated by, a spirit of true democracy in the ideas and people it supports and the audiences it seeks out. I thank the selection committee, RICH's past and present Board of Directors, Tom Roberts, Joe Finkhouse, Drake Patten, RICH's past and present staff, Ed and Linda Wood, and Judith Swift for the award and their support along the way.



Susan Boyce and Tom Roberts "cut the rug."

As to where the Humanities is going, or should go, that's harder than giving thanks. I think we as a nation are in danger of sacrificing the sites for discussion and debate on the altar of what educator Henry Giroux calls 'emergency time,' that time when we feel that we must act immediately in order to protect our security. It seems that the role the Humanities can play, in a time when dissent and divergent opinions are considered at variance with 'necessity,' is to keep discussion and debate going. Diversity of opinion, like eco or social diversity, is the best way to fortify a society against the limitations of 'political monoculturalism,' or the tendency to move forward in one unexamined direction. A monocultural environment is one where opportunistic predators are most likely to be successful since the immunity that comes from diversity is not present.

In some ways the Humanities is one of our culture's immune systems. When it's healthy, when prevailing ideas are challenged and debated, our 'body politic' is healthy. When we feel pressured to 'march to the same drummer,' without asking where or why we are going, we run the risk of marching off into a direction that could prove unhealthy. RICH and the Humanities in general, offer us an arena where diversity of opinion is not only acceptable but desirable. Given the intellectual and political climate of our country at the present time the Humanities can best serve us all by keeping the 'soapbox' free, open and available. Receiving the Tom Roberts Award is an indication that you want me to keep doing that as well. Again, thanks!" – Marc Levitt

### ONE-A-DAY-PLUS

In honor of Arts & Humanities Month, the RICH Board challenged the staff to schedule at least one humanities event a day during the month of October. We outdid ourselves; you have over 50 to choose from. For a complete calendar of events, visit our website at [www.uri.edu/rich](http://www.uri.edu/rich) or call the office at 273-2250.



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

RICH

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

S O M E T I M E S , A L I T T L E M O N E Y G O E S A L O N G W A Y . . . .

We would like to introduce a new regular feature in our newsletter: a page dedicated to reporting on our grantees, specifically those grantees who are awarded what seems to be a small sum of money to explore and develop an idea that touches on some aspect of the humanities. These mini-grants do not often get the public attention that the larger grant projects attract, but they are no less significant. The following three projects are very different but hopefully give our friends a new appreciation for the work that RICH helps to support across the state.



Roller-skating at Independence Monument, Mak Remissa, 2000



Self-portrait in Prison, Vann Nath, 1977



Shadow Puppet of Sita, Ieng Hoeun, 2002

### The Spirit of Cambodia: A Tribute

*The Spirit of Cambodia: A Tribute* is sponsored by Providence College. During the Fall of 2002, Providence and the greater Rhode Island community will have the opportunity to witness works of art that otherwise would remain in Cambodia and to observe performances and lectures about Cambodia not usually available in this area.

The RICH grant principally supports the appearance of two speakers, Dith Pran, whose story was told in the film *The Killing Fields*, and Vann Nath, artist, prison survivor, and social activist. Dith Pran works as a photojournalist for *The New York Times*, and through his Dith Pran Holocaust Awareness Project, he dedicates much time working for human rights for Cambodia. His book *Children of Cambodia's Killing Fields* presents eyewitness accounts by survivors like himself of that country's war and the subsequent Khmer Rouge regime.

While Vann Nath may be less well known here, he is a national hero to Cambodians and has just been given a Hellman/Hammett award for his work on human rights. For this exhibit he has made six oil paintings, and he is the only Cambodian artist Providence College is bringing to the United States. One of Vann Nath's goals while here is to help raise funds for an elderly housing project he designed for his native town of Bat-

tambang. During the Khmer Rouge years, about 90% of Cambodian artists were killed and a large number of children died, leaving many now-elderly parents with no home or care.

Both Dith Pran and Vann Nath are very special representatives of Cambodia's spirit. It is expected that their presentations will engender pride and hope among the Cambodians living in the United States and help non-Cambodians better understand a recent but often overlooked part of South East Asian history.

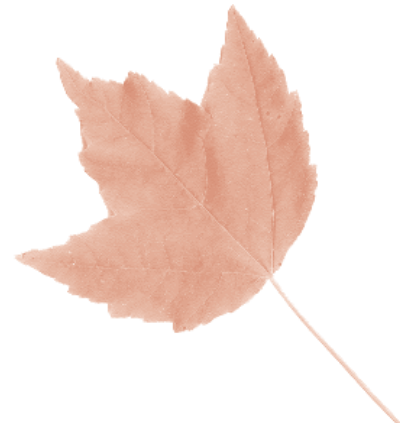
Bringing together the contemporary arts of Cambodia and the Cambodian Diaspora culture is a unique accomplishment. The Providence College exhibition includes works never shown outside of Cambodia, and the Cambodian Diaspora artists' works – the focus of a simultaneous exhibit at the Rhode Island Foundation Gallery in downtown Providence – have never been shown as a group. The two exhibits open on October 17 and run through mid-November.

A complete schedule of events for *The Spirit of Cambodia: A Tribute* is available on Providence College's website [www.providence.edu/art/cambodian](http://www.providence.edu/art/cambodian)

### The Life of William Brown

*The Life of William Brown of Providence, With Personal Recollections of Incidents in Rhode Island*, was first published in 1883 by Angell and Company of Providence. The text was later republished without commentary or index. Rosalind C. Wiggins, a scholar of Rhode Island history, received a grant of \$1,000 to conduct preliminary research to prepare a commentary for a second republishing of *The Life of William Brown*.

William Brown's father and grandfather had been slaves of Moses Brown, and his work recounts many of his own experiences as an African American man who came of age in pre-Civil War Providence. The book describes Dorr's Rebellion, the establishment of the Congdon Street Baptist Church, and William's life at sea from the point of view of one who lived with the difficulty of racism in antebellum America.



## Recent GRANT AWARDS

### *Conference on Israel and Palestine: Working Toward Justice and Peace*

Southern Rhode Island Islamic Society and its affiliate Muslim Heritage Council, \$1200

Bringing together speakers from across the country and around the globe, two panel discussions supported by RICH are part of this one-day conference that examines issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The first panel analyzes the history of the conflict and the history of attempts at peace, and the second describes current voices and prospects for peace.

### *Intersections*

International Gallery for Heritage and Culture, \$11,524

*Intersections*, a symposia series with accompanying exhibition, spotlights Mali's contemporary mudcloth. This newly revitalized though centuries old painting and textile practice involves earth-paint, plant-based dyes, and cotton cloth. The eight-part symposia series will address mudcloth as an evolving tradition, notions of "authenticity" in African art, Afro-modern aesthetics and contemporary West African art, and critical approaches to cross-cultural representation in the 21st century.

### *Connections: The Deborah McCrea Memorial Lecture Series – "African American Contributions to American Culture Through Literature"*

William S. Hopkins Historical Society of the Congdon Street Baptist Church, \$2,680

The Congdon Street Baptist Church sponsors this five-part lecture series, which investigates the intellectual and artistic contributions of African Americans throughout history despite the challenges and obstacles they faced.

### *Immigrant Heritage Film Series*

Progreso Latino, \$6,992

Forging a unique partnership between Progreso Latino and Slater Mill Historic Site, this series combines Spanish-language films with panel discussions. The series focus is on the immigrant experience in the United States and highlights the contributions of Latino immigrants in a labor and community context.

### *URI Honors Colloquium: Genetic Technology and Public Policy in the New Millennium*

University of Rhode Island, \$13,295.40  
The 2002 Honors Colloquium will focus on the ethical, social, and legal implications of the Human Genome Project through a series including lectures, performances, and exhibitions.

### *Humanities Integrated*

Perishable Theatre, \$4,000

Perishable Theatre will pilot a scholar-in-residence program to enhance its humanities programming in the 2002-2003 season. The scholar-in-residence will serve as both an audience advocate and as an in-house resource in efforts to animate public understanding of the humanities, provoke thoughtful conversation, and embrace untapped audiences.

### *Dr. Mette Moltesen on Museum Display as Interpretation of Classical Sculpture*

Rhode Island School of Design Museum, \$960

Dr. Mette Moltesen, Curator of Greek and Roman Sculpture at the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Denmark, will present slide lectures about the history of collecting and the changing approaches to exhibiting ancient sculpture.

### *The Life of William Brown Project*

Rhode Island Historical Society, \$1,000

This research project prepares for the republication of the memoirs of William J. Brown, adding an introduction contextualizing the memoirs, editorial comments, and an index.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN AMERICA'S MOST **"ELECTRIC"** FOUNDING FATHER PREMIERES ON PBS



Benjamin Franklin was an American genius who revolutionized his times with the scope of his intellect, the charm of his wit and the passion of his belief that ordinary men, and women, could shape their world. Born in obscurity, Franklin became the most famous American of his day, helping to give birth to the modern age and to a whole new nation.

*Benjamin Franklin*, which premieres Tuesday, November 19 from 9-11 P.M. and concludes the following night from 9-10:30 P.M. (check local listings), features Tony Award-winning Broadway actor Richard Easton as Franklin, speaking directly and intimately to the viewer and scripted entirely with Franklin's own

words. The series follows Franklin's career from his humble origins in Boston to prosperity as a self-made businessman, publisher and civic citizen in Philadelphia, to international superstardom as a scientist and revolutionary, a founding father and America's first diplomat to France.

A companion web site for *Benjamin Franklin* at PBS.org ([www.pbs.org/ben-franklin](http://www.pbs.org/ben-franklin)) will provide a robust resource for additional information on Franklin's life and times, his wit and wisdom.



## Letter from the CHAIR

Uneasy democratic nations, at their best, face troubles straight on. Their political systems gear up to search for policies and solutions that are both wise and workable. And, simultaneously, individuals and civil society look inward at their nations' fundamentals. Whether the cause of disquiet is economic change or social disruption or the threat of armed conflict, such times call for – and albeit imperfectly sometimes do elicit – fresh assessments of national purpose and values.

The United States has been engaged in such an assessment over the past year. In Rhode Island, RICH's mandate is precisely to facilitate such searching of our collective soul in times like these, and to help keep us focused on the basics in more relaxed periods.

I am honored to have been asked to chair the organization in the 30th year of its history (which we kick-off in October, but begins officially in 2003) and, especially, in these days of disquiet.

With its partner organizations, its many grantees – non-profits and individuals – and above all with all the communities of Rhode Island, RICH is able to bring the complex and potent benefits of the humanities to the personal and public reassessments in the state and so to the lives of more and more of us.

Through all its 30 years, RICH has made it possible for organizations and scholars to dig into historical, philosophical, social, literary and other facets of the humanist dimension of life in a democratic society. Today, RICH remains on that path but is simultaneously breaking new ground. The Rhode Island Dialogues project, to mention one example, is working with each of the 39 communities in the state to identify in each place the issues that are the local preoccupation or concern or repository of hope – such questions of reconciliation of growth and economic evolution with town character and history.

Another example of RICH engagement in the national self-examination: During the 30th year, RICH will organize and host discussions around the state of the meaning of freedom. The word slips easily off the American tongue. But what do we mean by it? What are the benefits, the costs, the responsibilities of freedom as we exercise it here?

I look forward to a highly creative time for the state and for RICH in the coming months.

Eugene B. Mihaly

## SMALL PRESS & FINE PRINTING BOOK FAIR IN PROVIDENCE will showcase New England Artisans

The John Russell Bartlett Society's biennial Small Press & Fine Printing Book Fair will bring fine books and their makers from all over New England for an exhibition in Providence, R.I., on Sunday, October 6, 2002. Books and other works on paper from an eclectic group of 20 small presses and book artists will be exhibited in Brown University's Alumnae Hall at 194 Meeting Street.

The event begins at 12:00 noon, when Ann Kalmbach of Women's Studio Workshop (Rosendale, N.Y.) will speak on "Trends and Threads: Publishing Artists' Books Since 1979 at Women's Studio Workshop." Ann Kalmbach is co-founder and director of Women's Studio Workshop and coordinates the organization's artists' book program.

Following her lecture and slide show, printers, publishers and book artists will be on hand from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the exhibition hall. Work on display and for sale will include handmade books, woodblock prints, limited-edition poetry, and letterpress chapbooks and ephemera – items rarely available for public viewing in a large gathering.

A featured exhibitor is the reintroduced New Leaves Press. Founded in 1976 at the University of Rhode Island, New Leaves operated into the early 1980s but then ceased production. Now based at Special Collections in the University of Rhode Island Library, Kingston campus, New Leaves has come alive again under the direction of artist Dore Page, just appointed printer-in-residence at the press.

### About the Bartlett Society

Based in Providence, the John Russell Bartlett Society is an association of people from Rhode Island and the surrounding region who meet periodically for the purpose of engaging in good talk about books as objects. The Society's interests extend to the entire history of books in every country and period. The membership includes academics, designers, students, librarians, collectors, craftspeople, and bibliophiles in general, all of whom enjoy informal lectures and discussions concerning the arts of the book.

With this year's book fair, the Bartlett Society continues a 16-year tradition of bringing the fruits of small press innovation and tradition to Providence. Admission to all events is free. The public is warmly invited. The book fair is partially funded by a grant from RICH.

## Updates on the Rhode Island Dialogues and Fund for Community Engagement Activities

Submitted by Jane M. Joyce

The *Dialogue* program completed its spring schedule with visits to Woonsocket, hosted by the Museum of Work and Culture, and West Greenwich, held at the Loutitt Library. In a very rapid turnaround from its *Dialogue* meeting, West Greenwich requested that its *Fund for Community Engagement* (FCE) grant be used in partial support for a publication relating to the town's September 28-29, 2002 "Walk and Ride on the Rural Side" project. The "Walk and Ride" weekend showcased West Greenwich's history through numerous events and self-guided tours around the town.

In early June, Drake Patten, Jane Joyce, and Ramona Bass attended the Rhode Island Library Association's Annual Conference at the Newport Public Library to share the outcomes to date of the *Dialogue* program and *Fund for Community Engagement* grants. Alexander "Sandy"

Scott of Warren's FCE Committee; Lisa Walling, Director of Tiverton's Public Library, and Marjory O'Toole of Little Compton's Community Center – the sites for those towns' FCE activities – joined the discussion and spoke candidly about their FCE experiences. RICH's videotape of the RILA presentation is available for viewing in our library.

During the summer, staff entered data from evaluation forms used at various *Dialogues* in a custom-designed software database, part of our continuing program evaluation. W. Bradley Crowther Consultants of Narragansett, Rhode Island, has now provided its Preliminary Report about the *Dialogue* project. A summary of the findings indicates that the *Dialogues* have met the program's stated goals.

Mark your calendars for the upcoming *Dialogues*:

**Block Island**  
October 19  
Island Free Library

**Warwick**  
November 12  
Warwick Public Library

**Cranston**  
December 3  
Sockanosset Cross Road Public Library

## BRUCE COLE the new chair of the NEH . . . . .

Bruce Cole has written fourteen books, many of them about the Renaissance. They include *The Renaissance Artist at Work*; *Sieneese Painting in the Age of the Renaissance: Italian Art, 1250-1550*, *The Relation of Art to Life and Society*; *Titian and Venetian Art, 1450-1590*; and *Art of the Western World: From Ancient Greece to Post-Modernism*. His most recent book is *The Informed Eye: Understanding Masterpieces of Western Art*.

Cole was born in Ohio and attended Case Western Reserve University. He earned his masters degree from Oberlin College and his doctorate in 1969 from Bryn Mawr College. For two years, he was the William E. Suida Fellow at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence. He has held fellowships and grants from the Guggenheim Foundation, American Council of Learned Societies, the Kress Foundation, the American Philosophical Society, the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

His relationship with the Endowment dates from 1971, when he was awarded a fellowship to do research on "The

Origins and Development of Early Florentine Painting." He has served as a panelist in NEH's peer review system and in 1992 was named by President George H. W. Bush to the National Council on the Humanities, the Endowment's 26-member advisory board. He served for seven years.

At Indiana, Cole was Distinguished Professor of Fine Arts, professor of Comparative Literature, and chairman of the Department of the History of Art at the Hope School of Fine Arts. He is a corresponding member of the Accademia Senese degli Intronati, the oldest learned society in Europe, and a founder and former co-president of the Association for Art History.

For more information on the NEH, visit the website at [www.neh.gov](http://www.neh.gov)

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October is National Arts & Humanities Month

## DONOR LIST

The following people made donations to the endowment fund for the Tom Roberts Prize for Creative Achievement in the Humanities before August 30, 2002.

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Brightman Hill Charitable Foundation

The RICH Newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities.

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## Israel and Palestine: Working Towards Justice and Peace

Submitted by Nan Sumner-Mack, a friend of RICH who attended the conference.

*Israel and Palestine Working toward Justice and Peace:* Phase I of a two-phase peace conference took place at the University of Rhode Island in Kingston on Sunday, August 4, 2002. Sponsored in part by RICH, which helped to provide honoraria for two scholarly panels, the conference provided an opportunity for 200-300 participants to learn about aspects of the history and religion of the Middle East seldom mentioned in news commentaries about the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Primary organizer of the day-long conference, Dr. Mohammed Sharif, orchestrated a series of presentations and discussions that illuminated the historical background of the current conflict. What

might have been a series of flash points for strife and vituperation remained, under the gentle guidance of moderators and with the audience's polite respect for divergent views, a peaceful opportunity to learn.

**Session I** of the conference focused on the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This penetrating and challenging panel included Dr. Lev Grinberg, who presented the Exodus-Holocaust perspective on why the world community owes Jews a kind of "reparation" homeland in accord with agreements with Britain during World War I. Dr. Mazin Qumsiyeh made a case for sharing the land now denominated "Israel" with descendants of Palestinians. Dr. Assam Tamimi predicted that the nation of Israel was doomed to failure and dissolution, and that the principle of right of return by Palestinians and/or their descendants to specific homes and lands claimed prior to 1949 was not negotiable. Dr. Tamimi presented statistical tables showing the relative numbers of Palestinian refugees currently housed in

refugee camps in neighboring countries like Jordan, Syria, and Saudi Arabia, and those currently living outside camps in the same countries. I was struck both by the fact that nearly half of the Palestinians in these countries were *not* in camps, and that the nearly half who *were* in camps, were described as living in appalling conditions.

In response to a question regarding what barriers existed that blocked "assimilation of Palestinians" into surrounding Islamic countries, Dr. Tamimi responded with an impassioned affirmation of the brotherhood among Islamic adherents and a complete, unfettered, extant assimilation of Palestinians into neighboring territories. That left me wanting to know more about the camps.

**Session II** began with an excellent background piece presented by Dr. Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban about the Western European and American tendency to dehumanize or distrust people from the Orient or Middle East. This was followed by presentations by an outstanding journalist, Mrs. Lamis Andoni, who warned of the censorship of news emanating from Palestine, and by Rabbi Joyce Galaski, who represents an organization that opposes dogmatic assertions of Zionism. Dr. Fluehr-Lobban's contribution was of special value for its examples of how bias and prejudice in historiography can affect popular opinion and State Department policies.

**Session III** dealt with forecasts and ideas for moving forward to resolving the Palestinian conflict. It featured Yair Bustan, whose courage to refuse to serve under land-based occupation of Palestinian enclaves within Israel drew what was perhaps the most emotional response from the audience. Bustan explained that he did not favor "incursion" or the building of a fence between Israel and Palestinian

areas; he hoped for recognition of Palestinian citizens, similar to those eventually granted ANC members in South Africa.

Other speakers also compared South African Apartheid with Israel's demarcation of Palestinian zones of residency. The plight of Palestinians trapped in camps for a half-century, and of those who depend on employment in Israel while being excluded from jobs in neighboring countries, was made very vivid. Two speakers mentioned that the treatment of Palestinian refugees varied tremendously from country to country in the Middle East – better in Jordan, for example, than in Syria.

Those who put together this conference deserve credit for diplomacy and for skill in bringing about a "miracle of the loaves and fishes" to educate a diverse audience in a constructive way on a minuscule budget.

The commitment of RICH to high-quality, reasoned discourse, with a maximum of input from various disciplines in the humanities, especially history, literature, and philosophy, was underscored by the variety of material presented at this conference. Although the range of perspectives leaned more toward sympathy for Palestinian perspectives, a variety of views was presented. Handouts of useful bibliographies would have been an encouragement to sustained further reading about these issues.

### Grant DEADLINES

The major grant deadlines for Public Project, Humanities Resource and Script Development are as follows:

May 1, 2003	
Letter of Intent	March 1
Final Draft	April 17

November 1, 2003	
Letter of Intent	September 1
Final Draft	October 18

For deadlines that fall on a weekend, the due date is the following Monday. For all deadlines, major grant proposals must be preceded by a letter of intent 2 months prior and final draft 2 weeks prior as reflected in the deadlines above. RICH offers Media Production at the fall deadline only.

## RICH Celebrates Arts + Humanities Month

Designated by then President Bill Clinton, the month of October celebrates the unique and indispensable role that the arts and humanities play in shaping our nation, and opening our eyes to the richness and diversity of the human experience.

President Clinton stated: "Today we are blessed to be living in an era of breathtaking change and unlimited possibility. But we know that change always brings new challenges and often brings to light old, unresolved difficulties. Now, more than ever, therefore, we need our artists and musicians, our writers and historians, our poets and philosophers to help us make sense of the world in which we live, to remind us about what really matters in

life, and to embody the values we Americans hold most dear: freedom of expression, tolerance, and respect for diversity.

For more than 200 years, through word and song, in paint or on paper, Americans have expressed their individuality and their common humanity. This tradition of our shared culture is one we must nurture and take with us into the new millennium. I encourage all Americans to join in our national effort to "honor the past, imagine the future," and to nurture the arts and humanities in every home, school, and community across our nation. By building on a rich past, we can look forward to a bright future."

This year, as RICH prepares to celebrate 30 years of bringing the humanities to all Rhode Islanders, we have worked very hard to pack the calendar with a humanities event a day during the month of October, 2002. The calendar, which can be viewed at [www.uri.edu/rich](http://www.uri.edu/rich), details events across the state. They are as diverse as a *Rhode Island Dialogue* discussion on Block Island to the Providence Ghost Walk presentation at the Providence Athenaeum. *Action Speaks* gets under way at AS220 on Tuesdays during the month of October as does the URI Honors Colloquium on Genetic Technology at the main campus in Kingston.

# PROGRAM NOTES

Submitted by Ingrid Ahlgren

## CALL FOR SPEAKERS!

The Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities invites applications from humanities scholars who would like to be included in our revised *EnRICHment Opportunities* program catalogue.

*EnRICHment Opportunities* links distinguished scholars with diverse audiences through the presentation of lectures on a broad range of topics. Each year, dozens of cultural and educational organizations make use of this program, which brings the best in humanities scholarship to thousands of citizens in virtually every corner of the Ocean State. These programs take place at museums, libraries, universities, historical societies, and other educational and cultural organizations.

Humanities scholars who reside or work in Rhode Island are eligible to apply. Applicants should hold an advanced degree in one of the following humanities disciplines: literature, history, philosophy, ethics, comparative religion, linguistics, jurisprudence, archaeology, history, and criticism of the arts, and certain aspects of the social sciences that employ a qualitative approach. Affiliation with a college or university is usual but not necessary. RICH also recognizes that scholarship and knowledge gathering are defined differently in different cultures, and respects such diversity of training and preparation as consistent with our understanding of

the humanities as fields and methods of inquiry. Scholars need not be employed, may be retired, or may be on temporary leave from a professional position. Applicants must be genuinely interested in addressing public audiences and be available during the 2003-2005 term. We are especially interested in hearing from humanists who can develop and present programs to public audiences in diverse communities throughout the state.

To apply to participate in *EnRICHment Opportunities*, please send a CV or resume along with short descriptions of any presentations you would like to give. Please e-mail your application to [programs@etal.uri.edu](mailto:programs@etal.uri.edu) or mail your application to: Ingrid Ahlgren, Program Officer, Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities, 385 Westminster St., #2, Providence, RI 02903.

For additional details about the program and the application process, please visit RICH's website [www.uri.edu/rich](http://www.uri.edu/rich) or contact Ingrid at 401-273-2250.

## LITERATURE AND MEDICINE PROGRAM

RICH's newest program, *Literature and Medicine: Humanities at the Heart of Health Care*, is moving forward. In June, the scholars for the program attended a five-day Summer Institute at the University of New England campus in Portland, Maine. There, they learned more about the program from staff and scholars who have participated in the Maine Humanities Council's *Literature and Medicine* program. RICH is starting to match scholars with health care sites that are interested in hosting the pilot program. For more information, please contact Program Officer Ingrid Ahlgren at 273-2250.

## SECOND BOOK CLUB A SUCCESS

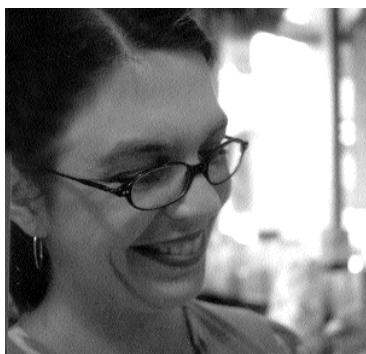
In July and August, RICH hosted the second Summer Book Club, this time focusing on detective fiction.

Gloria-Jean Masciarotte, Ph.D., kicked off the series with a lecture on "The Detective Novel and Social Issues" on Wednesday July 10 at 5:30 p.m. Masciarotte, a writer and independent scholar, also led the lunchtime "brown bag" discussions on three detective novels.

On Wednesday July 31, more than twenty people crowded into the RICH library for discussion of Dashiell Hammett's 1928 classic *Red Harvest*. Two weeks later, the group talked about P.D. James' 1972 novel *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman*. The series concluded on Wednesday August 28 with discussion of Peter Hoeg's 1993 novel *Smilla's Sense of Snow*. The diverse group of participants had lively conversations about all three books.

"Time for Ideas in Libraries," a program of the Connecticut Humanities Council and the Southern Connecticut Library Council, loaned the books for the series to RICH, and **Oop!** donated a case of refreshing **Oop!** juice.

What's next? RICH hopes to continue to organize book discussion programs. We are looking at either continuing the lunchtime Summer Book Club or starting evening discussions during the year, and Dr. Masciarotte is interested in exploring spy novels for the next RICH book club.



## SOMETHING ABOUT SARA

RICH recently sat down with Ms. Sara Archambault, one of our new staff members. Here are some of her thoughts:

**PF:** *You are a Rhode Island native. Although you went away to school, you are back in little Rhody!*

**SA:** It's my feeling that the rest of the country is on a slow incline from Providence, and every single time I have tried to leave I have slowly been dragged back in! Though I am essentially kidding, it's true! I have lived away several times. I spent my undergrad years in upstate New York, lived in San Francisco for a few years and then headed to the midwest for grad school. I spent a year or two in Providence in between each of these journeys, just to get my bearings! My brother Michael lives in Rhode Island, as do many close friends and family, so I was inspired to move back to Providence to be near him and to be closer to my community. I am very happy to be back here. I had always planned on returning to Rhode Island because I think it is a good place to start a family and, with regards to Providence, I have to say I've always been attracted to cities that have the feel of a town. Providence has grown in so

many new and exciting ways over the last two decades. This city has always had a soul but now it has a new spirit. Several people I know are returning to Rhode Island and they are doing so for the quality of life they can have here. They want to have a community, and in Rhode Island it's easy to find.

**PF:** *You have a background in filmmaking. What sparked this interest?*

**SA:** I always knew I was interested in films. I remember going to see *Star Wars* when I was seven years old and I remember thinking, "I want to know how to do that." I began my undergraduate study in illustration but found that all of the illustration and photography work that I was doing were really stories, in narrative form. A professor of mine encouraged me to change my major and that's where it began. In addition to filmmaking, I am also interested in exhibition. With my colleagues, I have been coordinating the Picture Start Film Series for several years now. This series brings alternative independent films to the public, securing both a venue and an audience for independent media. Film festivals have so many films that play at the same time,

there is a lot of competition for audiences and festival prices can be prohibitive at times, particularly for those who feel they are taking an "entertainment risk." At Picture Start, we operate in a non-competitive atmosphere. We run the films for six weeks (six consecutive Wednesdays) in the late summer and early fall and keep the prices low. We focus on documentary, animation, and short narrative film formats that do not have the screening opportunities that narrative features do, but, if our attendance numbers are any indication, do have a large potential audience.

In terms of my academic interests, I am interested in how cinema and the film industry intersect with culture. My M.A. is in cultural studies and though I focused much of my work on documentary and alternative music culture, my interests span far beyond that. Look at the popular reception for films like *Armageddon*. Some of the science fiction films that found popularity in the 1950's were popular again in the 1990's, some even mimicking scripts from the 1950's... why is that? What does this tell us about ourselves? What do we fear and why? How do we imagine who "we" are?

Somewhere in there we can learn more about how we understand ourselves and each other. That vein of investigating culture interests me to no end!

**PF:** *With your strong background in film, where do you see yourself working in the grant areas at RICH?*

**SA:** Tom Roberts was always interested in developing the script and media granting at RICH further and this is certainly an area where I feel I can contribute to RICH because of my expertise. In terms of the granting structure right now, I will be managing the script development grants and the media production grants. What I hope is that I can reach out to mediamakers and organizations in different ways and help to grow that side of our granting.