



AMERICAN STUDIES

Skidmore College

SPRING 2008



Our Department A Word from Gregory M. Pfitzer, Chair



Greetings American Studies folks:

The 2008-2009 academic year was very busy and very eventful from the perspective of the American Studies department. We began the year with a blue-ribbon event – a 50th birthday celebration for our department that commenced its operations with the first graduates in 1958. We had a weekend of festivities with plenty of alums of the program on hand. On Thursday evening, September 27, graduates of the program met in a "Living the Liberal Arts" series and advised seniors about links between liberal learning during college years and post-graduate professional opportunities, advanced education, and career development. Panelists included: Joanna Colangelo, '02, who just completed her Master's thesis in American Studies at Bowling Green State University; Lauren Doherty '04, historian and research associate; Kevin Grinwis, '96, stock portfolio analyst; Michael Quincy, '86, automotive content specialist; Andy Scopp, '06, a third grade assistant teacher; and Krista Senator, a reading teacher. On Friday, former president of the American Studies Association, Mary Helen Washington delivered a public talk on the topic of her forthcoming book, *African American Writers and the Cold War*. Later that evening the Black Faculty and Staff Group hosted a reception for Professor Washington and American Studies alums in the Palamountain Foyer followed by a birthday celebration dinner in the new Murray-Aikins Banquet Hall. The dinner provided Dave Marcell, first chair of the program, an opportunity to reminisce a bit about the early history of the Department and to reflect modestly on its present and future promise. As MC, I had the pleasure of sharing with attendees some rare photos of department members in less than typical scholarly garb, shall we say.

This celebration was also a fund raiser for the Joanna Schneider Zangrando Student Opportunity Funds. Kacey Schneider, a senior working on an honors thesis related to weight and body image, was the first recipient of these funds. She traveled to New York City to use the archives at the Paley Center associated with the Museum of Television and Radio. Thanks to all those current students and alums who contributed to this very worthwhile fund. It will help generations of future American Studies majors conduct primary research at archival collections.

The American Studies department spent part of the academic year restructuring the major, specifically the gateway courses. We have eliminated AM 101 and AM 102 in favor of a new AM 103: Introduction to American Studies. The purpose of the new course is to provide students with a more conspicuously interdisciplinary introductory experience. The specific content for AM 103 will vary with the instructor, but all sections will emphasize reading critically, thinking historically, practicing interdisciplinarity, acknowledging diversity, and making connections. Students will analyze and synthesize multiple kinds of texts (fiction, film, music, art, and other primary sources) and knowledge (sociology, economic, media criticism, etc.) in order to better appreciate the complexity of American life and culture. Professor Nathan will offer the first of these introductory courses in the fall centered on basketball as metaphor for American life. The course will use basketball as a way of addressing issues such as the tension between individualism and community, race, class, and gender relations, and the disparity between our ideals and our own social realities.

This year we welcomed several new faculty members to the department, including André Carrington, our New York University Minority Dissertation Fellow, and Winston Grady-Willis, the first Director of Intercultural Studies. Whether they realize it or not, Professors Carrington and Grady-Willis have joined an active department where faculty and students engage in end-of-the-semester contests in which heady intellectual ideas mix with feats of unusual athletic prowess to determine whether faculty or students have bragging rights for another term. Last semester's bowling match proved competitive and (given the outcome) fun. The students are looking forward to a small measure of revenge in the upcoming Spring wiffle-ball game. Enjoy the summer everyone!

Gregory M. Pfitzer
Chair, American Studies

Inside this issue:

Majors/Minors Abroad	2
Senior Honors Thesis Topics	2
American Studies Faculty Award	2
The Class of 2008	3
Our Faculty	4
Our Student Assistants	4
Living the Liberal Arts	6
Fiftieth Birthday Celebration	6
Time Warp	7
American Studies Club	9
Academic Festival	11
The Amazing American Bowl-off	11
Fall Course Preview	12
Notes . . . News . . . Notes	13



New Intercultural Studies Director Joins American Studies

In the Spring of 2007, Skidmore conducted a search for a Director of Intercultural Studies who would have an affiliation with a department on campus, teaching three courses throughout the year. After an extensive search, Winston Grady-Willis was selected and joined the American Studies faculty in January, 2008.

Professor Grady-Willis comes to us from Syracuse University where he was a member of the African American Studies Department for ten years. His wife Lisa has also joined the Skidmore faculty and teaches in the Theater Department. They have three children, Bakari, Emi, and Ajani.

Winston says he was "drawn to the daunting challenge of joining a committed group here at Skidmore in helping to make diversity a substantive lived reality." He grew up within the context of court-ordered desegregation of the public schools of Denver, Co., and has been fascinated by what really good teachers do in the classroom. "That fascination informed my experiences as a schoolteacher in the New York City public schools upon graduating from Columbia."

Prof. Grady-Willis believes that "whenever possible, students should participate in a process of critical thinking that stems in large part from a dynamic interaction with their classmates and their professor. My principal intellectual concern has been in attempting to understand African American experiences and their connections to and departures from larger global African experiences. Late-twentieth century Black freedom struggles have been of

(continued on pg. 5)

Bryn Varley Hollenbeck '00, Joins Skidmore AM Faculty

Former American Studies major, Bryn Varley Hollenbeck, Class of 2000, will be joining the American Studies Department in the Fall of 2008 as a one-year sabbatical replacement for Prof. Joshua Woodfork.

A summa cum laude Skidmore graduate, Bryn went on to earn a Certificate of Museum Studies and a MA in History at the University of Delaware. She has just completed her doctoral program in the History of American Civilization Program, Department of History (also U Delaware), with a dissertation titled, *The Material Culture of American Childhoods, 1890-1950*.

In the Fall, Professor Varley Hollenbeck will be teaching AM 201: American Identities Pre-1870s and AM260: Popular Culture. In the Spring she will likely offer a course on Mate-



rial Culture as well as one on American Childhood. She says "I couldn't be happier about returning to Skidmore, and I'm delighted to have the opportunity to give back to the department that I loved being part of as a student. I'm excited to work with such a great, creative group of students. I've always held Skidmore's faculty in high regard, and to join them as a colleague is an honor."



American Studies Majors/Minors Abroad

SPRING 2008

Charlee Bianchini '09, Tibet

I am writing from Sherabtsé College in Bhutan. This semester, I have



Taken at Sherab Gyatsel Ling College (got to know these guys as my brothers) during Losar, the Tibetan new year.

been fortunate to travel with the School of International Training on the Tibetan and Himalayan Culture program to Dharamsala, India, and all over Bhutan. We've lived with the Tibetan community in exile, met with His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, milked cows, eaten chilis and cheese, driven through the foothills of the Himalayas, and seen the tip of Mount Everest from an airplane. These are only a few of the extraordinary things we have witnessed. Here are some things that we have learned:

We began our excursion by discussing our ideas of Tibet and Bhutan.

tan. Most of these ideas have stemmed from a Shangri-La picture portrayed in movies, books and even historical accounts. Throughout the trip we have been learning the truth; everything is nuanced. All countries have kinks in their systems that need constant attention and work. Sometimes, in our criticism of America, we get caught up with looking towards other cultures as a "Shangri-La," a pure place in which we can find peace. Tibet and Bhutan have been subjects of this misconception. They too have their nuances, their points of conflict, bedbugs, terrible cuisine, strange smells. They aren't peaceful kingdoms in the clouds untouched by materialism. Neither is America paved with gold—something I have to keep telling people here. I've had countless conversations with both Tibetans and Bhutanese about America. Most look forward to a time when they can come



We all met the Dalai Lama.

to America, some think they can only succeed with an American visa, and some use adjectives like "advanced" to describe our country.

Is it luck or fate that we've been able to be in Dharamsala at such a crucial time for the Tibetan community, and in Bhutan during their first democratic elections? We are Americans abroad, witness to two crucial moments in history.

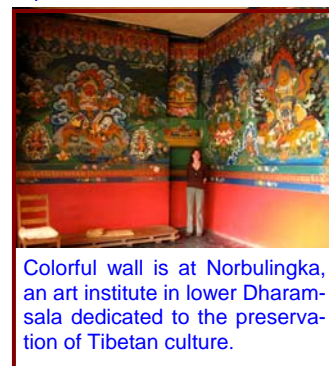


Tibetan Monk during purity rituals at the Namgyal Monastery in upper Dharamsala.

Since 1959, the Dalai Lama and Tibetan Refugees have been living in exile around the world, their main government located in Dharamsala, India. In 1989, the world stood by and watched while Tibetan protests were stifled violently by the Chinese government. On March 10th of this year, Tibetan monks joined together in another peaceful demonstration. This time, international eyes cried and voices started speaking out as the protests turned violent and spread around the world. Lhasa is burning, Dharamsala fights off Indian police, the third most powerful person in the US, Nancy Pelosi, has requested an international investigation on China.

However, the Tibetan community is conflicted. His Holiness asks for a policy he calls The Middle Way. This will grant autonomy to the Tibetan community, and the ability to return home. They will be able to practice their culture and

religion and govern themselves, while China will have international and military control of the area. In addition, China will cease the Han resettlement policy in Lhasa. But the activists of the community don't agree with this strategy. They want complete independence, and don't believe that Tibetans will stop fighting if and after the Middle Way is put into action. Their argument is that the Chinese government will not be invited to the table of discussions; there needs to be pressure. To the community, it is a disgrace that the world has recognized China as an international power by letting them host the Olympics while continuing to persecute Tibetans.



Colorful wall is at Norbulingka, an art institute in lower Dharamsala dedicated to the preservation of Tibetan culture.

Bhutan is entering an interesting and experimental stage of Constitutional Monarchy. After 200 years of political upheaval, and a century of compassionate monarchy, the 4th king, Jigme Senge Wangchuk, has requested that the country become democratic. But the people are conflicted. Why move into democ-

(Continued on page 5)

American Studies Faculty Award 2008

CARRIE von GLAHN is this year's recipient of the American Studies Faculty Award. Carrie has demonstrated both excellence and growth in the major, proving herself an extraordinarily versatile student in a wide array of American Studies courses on identity, religion, regional culture, cultural periods and, autobiography, as well as courses focused on the history of travel and tourism in Paris while abroad in Fall



2006 (a program led by the History Department—Carrie's minor).

Carrie's writing is impressive, as can be witnessed by his Senior Honors Thesis, *Interpreting Sin: The Public Sphere and the History of Slavery and Christian Conversion*.

As well as being a History minor, Carrie also double majors in English. She has been on ResLife staff and extremely active in Benef-Action all four years.

Carrie has just received news that she will be teaching English at Sun Yatsen University in Zhuhai, China starting in the fall.

Carrie's academic, as well as extra-curricular, life at Skidmore is a clear demonstration of growth and excellence and a wonderful example of the Skidmore credo — Creative Thought Matters.

Congratulations, Carrie!

Honors Thesis Topics

—Meredith Lu

Long Fight to Freedom: Two Struggles for Civil Rights and How Time Brought South African Apartheid into the American Consciousness

My seminar paper compared the Civil Rights Movement in America and the antiapartheid movement in South Africa by looking at their nonviolent and violent tactics and philosophies. My honors thesis explores how Americans viewed South Africa and their awareness of the apartheid situation by looking at *Time*, the most widely read weekly magazine in America, and its illustration of South African apartheid and the antiapartheid movement. By focusing mostly on the issues of *Time* in which South Africa appeared on the cover, I used those articles which are representative of *Time*'s overall take on apartheid. I thought that the magazine would have a tendency to be more conservative and objective in its

criticism or praise of South Africa but found that the magazine presented a fairly strong bias against apartheid. The various writers certainly tried to balance their articles but their opinions seep through and



Meredith hands in her completed thesis!

Time helped raise American consciousness of apartheid and the Black struggle, particularly in the eighties. In the earlier decades, the fifties and sixties, *Time* doesn't have as many covers on apartheid, but even just four years after the esta-

(Continued on page 5)



Our Seniors: The Class of 2008

Dario Abreu, Bronx, NY, Major



Dario double majors in Economics and has accepted a job with Morgan Stanley in New York City in their Investment Banking division. At Skidmore, Dario has been active in Raices (2004), intramural softball (05-07) and was the Economic Students Representative for 06-07. He enjoys playing baseball, listening to music, and an occasional long walk on the beach. Dario says he "had a huge passion for American History in high school and knew I wanted to learn more about the different aspects of American history. During my second semester here I enrolled in Prof. Zangrando's American Identities Post 1870s course. After that class I knew I wanted to take more American studies. It was not until Prof. Woodfork's Diversity in the United States class when I knew I wanted to become a major. The connection between American Studies and Economics is so strong because you learn how people of all races, identities, and background are affected by economic policies. Plus how could I say no to Prof. Lynn and Prof. Zangrando?" Dario advises junior and sophomore majors and minors to "Take every class you can in the American Studies Department, even if you have fulfilled your requirements. It is one of the departments at Skidmore where you really do leave the class wanting to know more."

Joshua Benjamin, New York, NY, Major



Josh loves American history and because of this he was drawn to the American Studies major. He wanted to study the subject more—beyond the textbook. Josh says "it runs in the family. Both my parents and my uncle were American Stud-

ies majors." Josh has spent his free time watching and participating in sports ("Go Yankees!"), playing guitar, and writing about sports. Josh was a member of the Skidmore Democrats all four years at Skidmore and for three was a DJ at WSPN. He would like to go to journalism school and would love to continue his radio show or become a broadcaster. Over the summer he plans to look for a job and write for his friend's website (www.dividendsthatyield.com). To the Junior and Sophomore American Studies majors, he advises, "Don't let Senior Seminar stress you out! At times it'll feel like torture, but I promise it's easier than it seems."

Margaret Farrell, Westport, CT – Major



It was quite by accident Margaret became an American Studies major when she incorrectly filled out her registration form for her first semester at Skidmore and was placed in AM 101. Not exactly a choice she would have made since she didn't like history all that much. But Prof. Pfitzer "worked his Pfitzer magic" and convinced Margaret to stay in the course. And the rest, as they say, "is history!" Margaret, who likes to sing classical soprano, ski, and play, was a member of the Sonneteers from Fall 04 to Fall 07; performed (SP 05) in the Vagina Monologues, and was also (SP 08) Assistant Director of the same play. After spending a few months at home this summer, Margaret plans to move to Brooklyn with friend, and American Studies alumnus, Sarah Mitchell '07. Currently, Margaret is applying for internships in NYC and hopes eventually to work in the non-profit sector, particularly in women's/LGBT rights, and then possibly she'll head off to law school. Her advice to younger classmates is to "get more sleep than I did or, failing that, try the pumpkin spice coffee at Burgess—it's delicious."

Margaret Farris, Chicago, IL Minor

Margaret's major is in Education and she says "as an Education major,

American Studies was a good complement to my future career as a teacher." Margaret hopes to teach in



the fall either in Chicago or New York City. She feels that "right now the grade level is not important, but I would like to teach middle or high school social studies in the future." Margaret will be searching for a job over the summer and working in Chicago at the Center for Research Libraries. She has been the President of the Education club this year and enjoys reading biographies, going to the movies, listening to music and musicals, and traveling. She suggests that underclassmates "take as many different types of classes as possible including in other departments. American Studies is one of the few departments to encourage you to take complimenting classes outside the major."

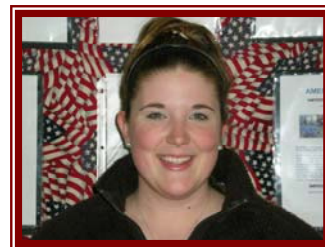
Jacob Freedman, Ambler, PA, Major



Jake double majors in Government and will be interning this summer at the New York State Assembly for Joan Millman (D-Brooklyn). Jake would like his future to include a job in politics, and a pilot's license. He has been active in the American Studies club this year as president and says taking AM 202L with Joanna Zangrando in his freshman year is what helped him to decide, by his junior year, to add American Studies as a second major. Jakes advises returning AM majors and minors to "buy A Pocket Guide to Writing History by Rampolla; don't wait until you have to buy it for Senior Seminar."

Amanda Gray, Thetford, VT, Major
Amanda is another one of our AM majors who has a second major in Education Studies. She chose American Studies because she took Professor Nathan's AM 102 class and enjoyed looking at American history

through many lenses. She knew then that American Studies was a good fit for her. Over the years, Amanda has participated in the Education Club and Benef-Action, the on-campus volunteer organization. Amanda has been applying and interviewing for elementary teaching positions throughout the northeast. Her parting words for underclassmates is to "make sure to take as many classes in the department as possible, all of the courses are important to your development as a



thinker since American Studies is such an interdisciplinary approach to history and culture.

Ashley Grossman, Rye Brook, NY, Minor



Ashley, who majors in English, plans on moving to Boston and attending a Montessori Teacher Education program. She has been working with Saratoga Reads!, has been a member of the Skidmore Chorus and is the treasurer of the American Studies Club. Her advice for underclassmates is "don't hesitate to take courses you think you find appealing. I waited too long and couldn't major in American Studies because of it. Try to get as much out of your courses as possible. Finally, get to know your professors because they are people too and you'll find they are pretty awesome!"

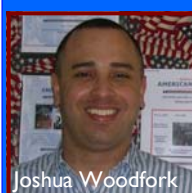
Tiffany Islar, Brooklyn, NY, Major



(Continued on page 8)



AM Faculty



Joshua Woodfork



andré carrington



Janet Casey



Mary C. Lynn



Daniel A. Nathan

Winston
Grady-Willis

Gregory M. Pfitzer

"Any genuine teaching will result, if successful, in someone's knowing how to bring about a better condition of things than existed earlier."

—John Dewey

A warm welcome greeted **andré carrington** in his first year as the NYU Minority Dissertation Fellow in American Studies. He lectured on science fiction, document reproduction, and amateur authors to share part of his dissertation in the fall, and he taught his first courses at Skidmore in the spring. Students in this year's Popular Culture course on Science Fiction did research with the John J. Cunningham Science-Fiction Collection at Scribner library and the Internet Speculative Fiction Database, and in our team-taught Methods and Approaches course with Professor Nathan, majors and minors contributed their diverse insights to our interdisciplinary curriculum. Writing has kept Professor carrington active; he has visited archives in California, presented at the American Studies Association annual meeting and the Performance Studies International, attended a Social Science Research Council dissertation workshop, and he will be contributing a chapter on black sexual politics and superhero comics to a forthcoming anthology titled *Sweet Christmas! Representations of Blackness in Comics and Sequential Art*. He had the pleasure of getting to know more students through the Hip Hop

Alliance and the Honors Forum this year. He plans a public talk on his ongoing research into blackness and science fiction next fall and a course on Gender and Sexuality studies, alongside Methods (and Professor Pfitzer), in spring 2009.

Professor **Janet Casey** has had a busy but rewarding year. On the American Studies front, she introduced a new 200-level course, "American Bestsellers and Popular Culture," in which students explored literary hits ranging from Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) to Mario Puzo's *The Godfather* (1969). She also hosted a distinguished American Studies guest, Professor Mary Helen Washington, in her course on Twentieth-Century American Literature, and arranged a photography exhibit and lecture by Professor Vivyan Adair of Hamilton College on the topic of poverty and higher education policy. She is especially delighted to be introducing honorary degree recipient Ruth Johnson Colvin—founder in 1962 of Literacy Volunteers of America, which has recently been reincorporated as ProLiteracy International—at Skidmore's 2008 Commencement.

Following Commencement, Professor Casey will begin a year's leave; one of her several planned projects will be funded by a Faculty Development Grant and is entitled "Commemorating the American Pioneer Woman: Cultural Debates and the Uses of Public Space." By the time she returns to campus, her newest book, *A New Heartland: Women, Modernity, and the Agrarian Ideal in America*, will have been published by Oxford University Press.

Still on a roll, **Dan Nathan** had another great year.

Last summer, as in the past, he worked on several projects (including co-hosting a small conference on campus, with Nancy's much appreciated help) and traveled with his family to Baltimore and Washington, DC. He also attended the Transnational American Studies Symposium at the University College Dublin, where he was a commentator on a session, participated on a panel, and had the pleasure of seeing Skidmore student Courtney DeStefano '09 give an excellent paper (which was originally written in his class on the 1920s).

(Continued on page 10)

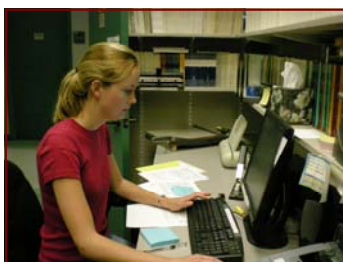
Our Student Assistants

This is a particularly difficult year for all of us in American Studies as we say goodbye to four very competent Student Assistants who will be graduating in May: **Margaret Farrell and Katie Morris,**



Margaret Farris,

and **Carrie von Glahn.**



All four are featured in the Senior Section (and Carrie is in a few other locations) in the Newsletter. So read about them there, after you check out our only Student Assistant who will return to us next year, Danny Tejada.

Danny Tejada '09

Danny, a junior American Studies Major from Brooklyn, New York, started working in the American Studies office in Fall 2007. He is

the founder and President of Hip Hop Alliance. This year, the Club organized Skidmore's first Hip Hop Culture Week with Chuck D (of Public Enemy) as the keynote speaker. They also organized a "Discussion Series" which was a



three part series aimed at challenging and engaging students, faculty, and staff on the subjects of racism, sexism, and homophobia in Hip Hop and America. Danny, and the club, look forward to another exciting year.

In his spare time, Danny loves to do his radio show (called *The Oh My God Show*), create mix-tapes, and interact with new Rap artists. Visit his website at [djdaddy-](http://djdaddy-mack.com)

mack.com for free music and more. He writes for his blog called *Hip Hop on My Mind* which is about various topics in Hip Hop Culture. Check it out at hiphoponmymind.blogspot.com.

Danny will start his summer by going to Orlando, Florida for the 21st annual National Conference on Race and Ethnicity (ncore.ou.edu). He hopes to have an internship at a Hip Hop/music magazine or music label. Next year, Danny has graciously taken on the responsibility of becoming President of the American Studies Club for the 2008-2009 academic year. He has great ideas for events such as a Fall semester lecture series with the department's professors.

Danny will return to work in the office again in the fall.

Carrie von Glahn having just received the American Studies Faculty Award





Majors/Minors Abroad

(Continued from page 2)

racy when the past century has been blessed with good leadership, where Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross National Product? Some believe this will bring more freedom to speak, others are adamantly against the change, most are skeptical, calling it an "experiment."

Being confronted with the realities of these different nations and different cultures, induces a curiosity of our own culture. This year seems to be a year of questioning; we must ask ourselves again what we want from our government, and how we want to present ourselves to the rest of the globe. This year is perfect for reform; for far too long we have been caught up in our dreams, now it is time to make them realities. Bhutan is making a dream of democracy come true, and the Tibetans are trying to make the dream of freedom a reality. It is an inspiration to take action at home. It is an honor to be a witness.

Sarah Magida '09, London

I took two American Studies classes at King's this semester. One on Women's Autobiography, and one on Mass Media. I thought that the Mass Media class was particularly interesting because we talked a lot about the differences in the British system



Sarah and Cait on the London Eye.

and the American system (mostly in regards to newspapers, radio, and television). Outside of London and American Studies related events I spent a day in Bilbao over spring break, and there saw an exhibit at the Guggenheim called "In Transit: 300 Years of Art in the USA." And I spent about 5 hours walking through the exhibit with the audio guide following the



Sarah and friends in front of Buckingham Palace.

history of America through its art and artists. Cheers!

Amy Proulx '09, Florence

Since I have traveled around parts of Europe before – this being my first visit to Italy – I decided before I left that I would try and get as much out of Italy as I possibly could.

With such childish excitement I tried so patiently to wait for the plane to land. I usually don't prefer window seats, but I am now grateful that I was able to just gaze out into the sweet clouds of ether. With a new day starting I had no idea



Amy in Venice

what was in store for me. It was about 7 o'clock in the morning and the sun was just rising, creating a breathtaking view of rosy pinks and oranges clashing with ruby reds. As I continued my journey closer to Florence the clouds began to thin and slowly disappear, leaving a magnificent panorama of the mountain tops and eventually a view of small red-like rectangular shapes that slowly transformed before my eyes into familiar villa tops: Welcome to Italy.

The first couple of nights I stayed in a hotel for an orientation program. I was not only utterly exhausted from the flight over, but also, I quickly found myself beginning to comprehend the fact that I truly was in a foreign country.

There is so much to see I can't even begin to tell you everything. Florence alone is gorgeous and full of many beau-

(continued on pg. 10)

Honors Theses

(Continued from page 2)

blishment of the government, *Time* presents a comparison of the South African Prime Minister as another Hitler. While *Time's* writers refrain from saying outright that apartheid is close to Nazism, they introduce the idea into American rhetoric and naturally must have changed readers' images of South Africa. The magazine raised awareness about apartheid which was particularly important when Americans were struggling for Civil Rights in the fifties and sixties. It widened the American perspective and expanded the international idea of Civil Rights. Because of its journalistic style, including its ability to write longer, history-ridden pieces, *Time* is able to provide more background and create a fuller understanding than a daily newspaper might. By truly fulfilling creator Henry Luce's dream, *Time* brought more news to the American people in a manner its readers could understand, comprehend, and act upon.

—Kacey Schneider

America as a Culture of Health Extremes and the Lost Middle: A Look at Obesity in Children, Eating Disorders in Adolescents, and a Lost Middle Ground
Childhood obesity and adolescent eating disorders are two highly publicized and critiqued health topics in current American society. However,



Kacey with her finished thesis!

obesity and eating disorders are opposite extremes in the total health spectrum. While many Americans actually fall in the middle of these two extremes, a sense of the middle ground is lost because of the emphasis the media places on obesity and eating disorders. A culture of extremes is further promoted by television commercials specifically related to food. In this Honors Thesis, I ask the following questions: How do food commercials on television influence the way Amer-

(continued on pg. 7)



Majors & Minors

Majors

2009: Luna Bajak
Charlee Bianchini
Rose Finn
LaChrisha LaSane
Samantha Levine
Sarah Magida
Jennifer Piepenbrink
Amy Proulx
Gemma Striker
Daniel Tejada
2010: Elizabeth Arzt
Emily Bresnick
Rachel Cohen
Krista Glencross
Andrew LaSane
Elena Milius
Emma Newcombe
Claire Solomon
Lauren Waters

Minors

2009: Courtney-Anne DeStefano
Alison Wiggins
2010: Jordan Klein
Courtney-Anne DeStefano
Leah Werner, Evans
Alison Wiggins

Winston Grady-Willis

(Continued from page 1)

particular interest to me, as well as the need for providing an intersectional analysis of those struggles."

Winston's master thesis (Cornell) is a study of leadership issues of the Black Panther Party; his dissertation (Emory) makes sense of the transition from nonviolent direct action to Black Power activism and politics in Atlanta. Professor Grady-Willis has written scholarly essays treating Black Power activism and politics in Atlanta and state repression. His book *Challenging U.S. Apartheid: Atlanta and Black Struggles for Human Rights, 1960-1977* (Duke University Press, 2006), seeks to provide a gendered study of the contemporary Black freedom movement.

Winston teaches courses that seek to illuminate and complicate African American Experiences, Black feminisms, civil/human rights, and the U.S. South.



SKIDMORE COLLEGE
LIVING THE LIBERAL ARTS

LIFE DURING AND AFTER A MAJOR IN:

AMERICAN STUDIES



Left to right: **Joanna Colangelo '02**, (MA candidate, American Studies, Bowling Green University); **Lauren Doherty '04** (Historian & Research Associate, Municipal Historian, Curtin Archaeological Consulting, Inc., Town of Day); **Kevin Grinwis '96** (Project Manager, Omni Housing Development Corp.); **Andrew Scopp '06** (3rd Grade Assistant Teacher, 6th Grade Soccer Coach, The Rippowam Cisca School); **Krista Senator '99** (Reading Teacher, Schuylerville Elementary School); and, **Michael Quincy '86** (Automotive Content Specialist, Consumer Reports)

"The largely interdisciplinary nature of American Studies has allowed me to continue to explore my changing personal and professional interests."

—Joanna Colangelo '02

On September 27, 2007, the American Studies major was the focus of a panel on "Living the Liberal Arts: Life During and After Majoring in American Studies." "Living the Liberal Arts" is an ongoing effort by the Office of Career Services (originally funded by the Mellon Foundation) to enlighten students and help them with the process of making a decision about which major they might choose.

After opening comments by Career Services Assistant Director Penny Loretto, the audience was treated to an alumni perspective of the American Studies degree. Each panelist

answered a series of questions regarding how their major related to the path they've followed, how they got their job, what graduate education was required, what might be some of the next career steps for someone in their job, what talents, personality traits and specific skills help people in this field, what they like and dislike about their job, the biggest misconception about their job, and what they know now that they wish they had known when they were at Skidmore. After the panel presentation, an opportunity was offered for questions and comments from the students in attendance.

The brochure given to the audience included panelists' answers to selected questions, a listing of American Studies alumni who are career advisors, majors or careers which relate

to American Studies graduates, professional associations, grants, awards and scholarships, American Studies programs on the web, a list of what employers want from college graduates, a chart of some available internships, online employment listings, networking and prospective resources for American Studies majors.

We were happy to see some of our alumni and pleased to hear their perspectives on their American Studies degrees and how these degrees relate to their jobs and their lives.

"American Studies focuses on making connections between primary sources of information and disciplines such as art, literature, government, and history. It's about inquiry, developing theories, seeking information and revising and refining ideas."

—Krista Senator '99

AMERICAN STUDIES AT SKIDMORE — FIFTY YEARS STRONG!

(some pictures from our September 28, 2007 celebration)



Keynote Speaker, Mary Helen Washinton





TIME WARP ~ TIME WARP ~ TIME WARP ~ TIME WARP ~ TIME WARP

Mary Lynn's 1920s Class Learns to do the Charleston
(taught by Kacey Schneider)



WHO'S THAT FLAPPER????



Greg Pfitzer's 1960s Class Goes Back to the 60s



WHO'S THAT HIPPIE????



Honors Theses

(continued from pg. 5)

icans form health ideals and view their bodies? What part do these commercials play in shaping social roles, and how do those messages contribute to beliefs about health? What is the status quo for health in America, and what is the contribution of television food advertisements to that status quo? This thesis is divided into two parts: Part I focuses on childhood obesity and is titled "One Nation, Under Apple Pie, Overweight and Obese, With Big Macs and Doughnuts for All: A Look Back at America's Relationship with Food, The Food Industry, and Childhood Obesity," and Part II examines adolescent eating disorders and is titled "One Nation, Under Apple Pie, Always on Diets, with Distorted Health Notions for All: America as a Culture of Extremes and the Lost Middle." Ultimately, the study argues that in order for Americans to establish conditions for a truly healthy future, the media needs to return to a sense of moderation and middle ground rather than focusing almost exclusively on extreme health conditions.

—Carrie von Glahn

Interpreting Sin: The Public Sphere and the History of Slavery and Christian Conversion

Last fall I completed my Senior Seminar paper, entitled *In the Face of Sin: Slavery and Christian Conversion in Eighteenth-Century Virginia*. After finishing that project I became interested in how the controversial subject of slavery, and especially the Christian conversion of slaves, was conveyed



Carrie gives her completed thesis to Professor Lynn.

to the public. I realized that while I knew quite a bit about slavery and its relationship to religion, most of my peers did not. I decided that I wanted my thesis to explore and evaluate the popular methods that public historians used when educating individuals on slavery and its relationship to Christianity. For my thesis, I interviewed public historians, explored online mediums for historical tourism, and analyzed texts about public history. I used this research to assess the progress of public history over time in how it deals with slavery and Christian conversion. I focused throughout the paper on eighteenth-century Virginia because my seminar paper was centered on that period. My thesis argues that public history is one of the most important methods of educating the public on slavery; therefore, there needs to be more emphasis on honest and fully candid explanations of slavery and Christianity's relationship to the institution.

**Class of 2008 continued***(Continued from page 3)*

Tiffany double majors in Psychology and will attend Saint Rose College for graduate studies in the School of Psychology. Over the summer, she will be working and preparing for graduate school. Tiffany became an American Studies major because "I wanted to learn more about this country and how it became what it is today." She has been involved in Resident Life (05-08), President of Ujima (06-08) and a member of Raices (04-08) and enjoys reading about foreign countries and shopping. Tiffany suggests to underclassmates that they "take as many American Studies classes in various topics as they can because they are all interesting and the professors truly love what they teach, which helps the students love learning. Take advantage of everything and it will all work out in the end."

Joel La Puma, Mohawk, NY, Minor

Joel transferred to Skidmore from NYU after his freshman year, and double majors in English. In his senior year, Joel was active in Folio (a yearly literary publication of poetry, prose, art, and photography by Skidmore students). He is "looking at grad school MFA programs in Creative Writing at the moment, and planning to get a place with my best friend when he graduates next year." For the summer, Joel says he will be "working at the dreaded Wal-Mart, writing stories, and probably buying a Nintendo Wii to celebrate my graduation." In his spare time, Joel likes to read, write short stories and comic books, listen to music and watch movies. He became an AM minor because he "wanted to have a more complete sense of my country's history and culture, which I felt would give my fiction writing a broader sense of scope." Advice he would give to underclassmates is to "never settle for the knowledge you already have — boredom and repetition kill the soul. Also, listen to The Raincoats."

Kelsey Lewis, Concord, MA, Minor

Kelsey, with the exception of her first semester in London, has been at Skidmore all four years. Kelsey's major is Geoscience. She plans to move to Raleigh, NC to look for jobs in a geology related field and hopes to attend graduate school in a few years.

Meredith Lu, Kirkland, WA, Major

Meredith hails from Kirkland, WA, a suburb of Seattle, in the beautiful Pacific Northwest. She is graduating one year early, and is a History minor. After graduation, Meredith plans to spend the summer both on the East and West coast, but mostly in Saratoga, playing with children she will baby-sit and, hopefully, through Camp Northwoods here on campus. Beginning in December, Meredith will serve for two years in the Peace Corps in French-speaking Africa, working in Public Health. She intends to live in Africa for a time after graduate school, in early childhood teaching and African Studies. Meredith says "Africa fascinates me and I want to be there long enough so it is no longer 'being abroad.'" Meredith worked at the Early Childhood Center here at Skidmore and says "I loved working there and since I started freshman year, I was able to see many children for all three years." She was a peer mentor in her sophomore year for Sheldon Solomon's Human Dilemmas course. Meredith says she loves working with kids and baby-sits a lot. Her favorite things include reading, walking, biking, eating, being in the sun, and playing with kids. Meredith became a major in her freshman year because "I already knew I wanted to do American History and Professor Pfitzer's 102 class sealed

the deal—it was that good!" To those majors and minors not graduating this spring, Meredith offers this advice: "This department certainly felt like an academic home to me (and I know it did for others) which can often be hard to come by. The professors are all amazing and the personal level at which they work with you makes being a major worth it even if you weren't interested in America. Indeed, my true passion now lies in Africa and its past, present and future, and this awesome department allowed me to pursue both my American and my African interests."

Mike Matias, Groton, CT, Major

Mike double majors in English and also has a minor in History. He plans to stick around here to experience a Saratoga summer. Mike says "I don't have any plans for next year; hopefully I will figure that out soon. Eventually, I would like to go to school for journalism." In addition to playing baseball, Mike enjoys fishing and reading. He became a major in American Studies because "the subject matter interested me and I found the faculty to be the nicest and most approachable in the school." His advice to AM students "is to enjoy your AM classes and your AM professors."

Katie Morris, Lansdowne, PA, Major

Katie, who is also a Dance minor, was led to the American Studies major after taking African American Experience in her freshman year. She felt it was a positive learning experience and after realizing that American Studies is an interdisciplinary major, "allowing you to shape your courses based on personal interests," she knew it was the major for her. Katie loves to dance and has been doing so since she was five. She appreciates the oppor-

tunity of getting to know all the talented faculty and students in the Dance department, as well as the American Studies department. While summer plans are still up in the air, Katie will be teaching second grade at Friend's Select School in Philadelphia and hopes in a year or two to work on a Masters in Education. She sees herself eventually teaching in elementary education. Katie's interest in education brought her to the Saratoga Mentoring Program which she says is "a really rewarding and great experience I would recommend to anyone who has some free time and likes kids." Katie advises her younger peers to "take advantage of as many lectures and events as possible, they can be really eye-opening experiences and might spark an interest in something you knew little about before."

Emily Rossi, Wellesley, MA, Major

Emily adds to her AM major with a minor in Sociology. Over the summer she plans to do some traveling and start looking for a job. Although she has no firm plans, she might go to law school or get a job in Public Relations in the fall. Emily's favorite things to do are listen to music and travel. She became an AM major when she "realized that I like the kind of classes that were offered in the department—the interdisciplinary nature of the major is great. Also, I had taken a couple of classes and really liked the professors, which was a selling point for me." She says to future AM majors and minors "we are really lucky to have such a small department and with such great professors and fellow AM majors/minors."

**Graduation is not
the end; it's the
beginning.**

(Continued on page 9)



Class of 2008

(continued from previous page)

Kacey Schneider, Littleton, MA,
Major



Kacey's passion is not just for American Studies but for Dance, as well, which is her minor. She became a majors because it was so interdisciplinary and let her combine all her interests (history, English, writing, cultural studies, etc.) into one major. She says she "loved how small and intimate the department is -- and all the faculty are so great, accessible, and approachable." During her four years at Skidmore, Kacey has been involved with the Vagina Monologues, including directing it in her senior year. She also performed in many dance workshops and performances, including Terpsichore, the student-run dance/choreography club, Cab Troupe and Theater Department workshops. She is an avid runner and dancer and loves traveling. Kacey plans to move to Costa Rica for a year in September where she will get her TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language), teach English, and scuba dive. After Costa Rica, she plans to come back and work as a magazine editor with the long-term goal of starting her own health and fitness magazine in either Boston or New Zealand. Kacey advises under classmates to "1) Listen to Pfitzer—he knows the meaning of life (at least for an AM student); 2) Take a class with each AM professor – it's worth it; and, 3) Thank Nancy because without her the department wouldn't run!" (Thanks, Kacey—nancy.)

Abigail Whitaker, Lebanon, NH,
Minor



Abigail's major is English. She is a member of the Periclean Honor Society as well as the Honor's Forum. Abigail has tutored in the Writing Center and worked as Assistant in the Office of the Dean of Studies. She is applying to Teach for America to work in either the New York City or Boston area. After completing two years with TFA, she plans to return to graduate school. Abigail says "Enjoy your time at Skidmore because once you are a senior you will realize rather rapidly how intimidating the real world can be." She points out that you should start early putting together your applications for jobs, graduate school, internships and whatever you plan on doing after you graduate. "Senior year is busy enough without having to stress about deadlines."

Carrie von Glahn, Ringwood, NJ,
Major



Carrie double majors in English (and minors in History), but came to American Studies in her freshman year when she took AM 201 with Professor Lynn. After that she decided that American Studies was for her. She has been active in Benef-Action all four years at Skidmore and was also a ResLife staff member. This summer, Carrie plans to "take a break from the busy life I have led at Skidmore. I'll either go home to NJ or to MI to visit family and look for jobs." Her favorite things to do are Pilates, drink coffee, read and volunteer. Carrie has been accepted to teach English Sun Yatsen University in Zhuhai, China. Eventually she would like to "move to a city where I have never lived and get a job in the non-profit sector. I would like to find a way to use the skills I developed at Skidmore to help make the world a better place to live in! I'd also like to continue to learn and travel." Advising under classmates, Carrie says "Enjoy everything! It will fly be. Be involved. Go to lectures, concerts, performances. Talk to your professors and listen to what they

have to say. Study abroad if you can. Take as many classes as possible. Get enough sleep."

James White, Hamilton, NY,
Major



Jim transferred to Skidmore from Hobart after his freshman year and says he "could not have been happier" with his decision. Before coming to Skidmore Jim was a Music/English major, but switched to American Studies because it accommodated all of his interests. This summer, Jim says, he "will be living in downtown Saratoga, working on houses and taking some classes to complete his education." After graduation, he would like to "get into the creative side of advertising, perhaps writing commercials," or something similar. Jim says he would also "like to win the lottery." During his Skidmore years, he played baseball for two years and was a member of the Cabaret acting Troupe. Jim says he watches "way too many old movies," and enjoys "taking pictures, walking around, and cooking." Jim says he doesn't want to give advice to those majors and minors who return in the fall, "other than to enjoy it. You're at a great place."

Pictures from HIP HOP CULTURE COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENT

—April 25, 08

LaCrisha LaSane '09
and Tiffany Islar '08



Dancing on the Patio

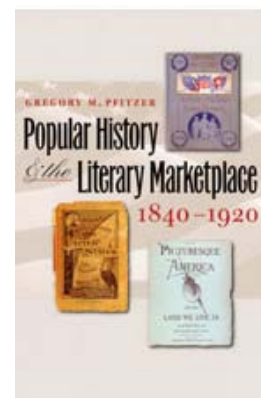
American Studies Club, 2007-2008

This academic year the American Studies Club hosted the annual bowling outing. Behind the scenes much more was going on. The executive board of the club came up with a comprehensive plan for the future. This includes a sizable budget increase for the club and a more robust lineup of programming in the future. I would like to thank the clubs officers Danny and Ashley for their hard work this year.

For the next academic year, Danny Tejada will step into the Presidential position of the Club. Danny could use a few volunteers to fill in as VP and Treasurer. Please contact Danny (dtejada@skidmore.edu) or the American Studies office (nosberg@skidmore.edu).

-Jake Freedman, Club President

Pfitzer's Latest Book



Available at:
http://www.umass.edu/umpress/fall_07/pfitzer.htm



Our Faculty

(Continued from page 4)

In the fall, he taught a new course, Global Perspectives of the U.S., which had been on the drawing board for several years; it went well and he's going to offer it again. One of its highlights was the teleconference with Slovakian students that Skidmore alum and Fulbright Fellow Sam McHale '07 helped organize; for more on this, see http://cms.skidmore.edu/american_studies/making-connections.cfm.

In October, Nathan gave a lecture at Indiana University and in November he presented some of his work on Paavo Nurmi at the Chicago Seminar on Sport and Culture at the Newberry Library.

Of course, the biggest news of the semester was that Skidmore's Committee on Appointments, Promotions, and Tenure recommend Nathan for tenure. That was a happy day, and a long time coming. In February, the Board of Trustees made it official.

This spring, at long last, Nathan's essay on the 1929 Baltimore Black Sox, a forgotten Negro league team, was published in *Baseball In America & America In Baseball* (Texas A & M University Press). And in May, he published an essay in *The International Journal of the History of Sport* titled "Travelling: Notes on Basketball and Globalization; or, Why the San Antonio Spurs are the Future." Later this spring, Nathan is giving a paper the North American Society for Sport History conference in Lake Placid.

His summer plans include reading, writing, and relaxing.

It has been a busy year for **Greg Pfitzer**. His greatest love is spending time in the classroom with students, and this year he has particularly enjoyed working with the wonderful group of seniors who made it through the AM 374: Senior Seminar. They produced some very fine seminar papers and honors theses. Pfitzer also enjoyed meeting four times a week with students from the introductory sequence AM 101 and AM 102, taught for the final time this year. His students in the Sixties seminar helped welcome Professor Maurice Isserman, whose *America Divided* they read in class.

Apart from classroom work, Pfitzer has been engaged in the regular duties of chair, most of which involve organizing events such as the 50th anniversary party for the department, bowling outings, and special gatherings for outside speakers and job candidates. He also did a fair amount of traveling this year: attending the national American Studies Association conference in

Philadelphia (where he participated in a panel discussion on the gateway courses in the American Studies major; traveling to Boston to visit his son (a junior Music and History double major at Tufts University) and daughter (a sophomore Psychology major and English minor at Boston University). Occasionally Pfitzer managed to catch a Red Sox game or visit the Museum of Fine Arts. Last fall, he managed to do both on the same day. Pfitzer also published a book this year, *Popular History and the Literary Marketplace, 1840-1920* through the University of Massachusetts Press. It is an examination of the dramatic rise and fall of mass-marketed popular histories of nineteenth-century America. This summer Pfitzer will be working on another book tentatively titled *History Repeating Itself: Continuity and Consensus in Popular Historical Literature for Children*. It deals with the current practice among homeschoolers of reissuing and assigning nineteenth-century popular histories to their children for teaching American history in the twenty-first century. Pfitzer will attempt to answer questions such as: What kinds of books are these recycled texts, and why do they occupy such an important niche in the homeschool market? What are the implications of using such texts that were written at a time when history was not yet a discipline governed by explicit rules of inquiry but a branch of literature characterized by artistic license? Professor Pfitzer says, "I continue to plug along doing what I love to do and enjoying the students who make it such a rewarding experience. I passed a major birthday milestone this year, and, although I have managed to avoid a full-blown middle life crisis, I do have a shiny new red car."

Professor **Joshua Woodfork** had a busy third year at Skidmore. During this year, his classes included his usual *African American Experience*, *Diversity in the US*, and *Critical Whiteness in the US*, but also two new courses: a Scribner Seminar, *Blacks in Film*, co-taught with Professor Kristie Ford from Sociology, and *Hip Hop Culture* co-taught with Professor Lei Bryant from Music. The *Hip Hop Culture* class included a community outreach (pictures, pg. 9) component where students worked in groups to educate the community about hip hop culture on such topics as DJs, MCs, graffiti, breakdancing, and the relationship between hip hop and gender and globalization. Held at the end of April, the event drew an eclectic crowd of students, faculty, staff, and community members.

Last August, Professor Woodfork contributed to the panel "Building, Strengthening, (and Repairing) Institutional Support for Students of Color on Predominantly White (College) Campuses," at the Association of Black Sociologists conference in New York City. This year, he also participated in two important workshops, "The Summer Program at the Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture" at Boston College and "The New Danger: Black and Latino Men Facing Evolving Challenges to their Scholarship and Community" at Swarthmore College. The latter conference led to Professor Woodfork's collaborative work with student affairs to initiate a two-semester Skidmore effort entitled, "I, Too, Am Education: Black and Latino Males Achieving Excellence" that included a December dinner, meetings, and a successful day-long Workshop with a campus-wide reception and dinner at the end of March.

Through his work co-leading the Black Faculty and Staff Group, Professor Woodfork coordinated two campus-wide film screenings: *Akeelah and the Bee* in December and *The Boys of Baraka* in March; co-led a Pedagogy Session entitled "Race and Pedagogy" in January; and coordinated the visit of Dr. Priscilla R. Ramsey of Howard University who delivered a lecture on the Harlem Renaissance in April. Professor Woodfork's work co-leading the Black Faculty and Staff Group with Professor Ford was recognized with a "Community Service Award" from the Saratoga County NAACP in February and with a President's Award in May.

Professor Woodfork is looking forward to attending a New York University's Faculty Resource Network's week-long summer seminar in June entitled, "Dynamics of Social Diversity in College Classrooms: New Topics in Teaching for Social Justice," and he is excited about his '08-'09 pre-tenure sabbatical when he will dedicate himself to research and publication.

Mary C. Lynn — Hi! Remember me? It's that time of year again—graduation, alumni reunion, summer vacation. And one of the challenges faculty face is the number of former students who are visiting Saratoga and wander by faculty offices to say hello to their old professors. Some of those alumni send an e-mail, a note, or make a phone call in advance to warn us of their descent onto campus, but most people don't—seeing one's former teachers is usually a spur of the moment decision, not a major focus of a trip to Saratoga.

And here's the challenge: I'm in my office (quiet, air-conditioned, a quick walk away from the library and the archives, featuring higher speed internet

(continued on pg. 12)

Majors/Minors Abroad

(continued from pg. 5)

tiful places, and the views are truly breathtaking especially from the top of



Ponte Vecchio

the Duomo and Piazzale Michelangelo, both offering you an unforgettable panoramic view of Florence and the Arno valley.

Equal in its spectacle is the Ponte Vecchio, literally meaning "Old Bridge" in Italian, Florence's first bridge. It was rebuilt many times over the centuries from the Arno floods, but what makes it so special is that it is the only bridge that was not destroyed by the bombings during WWII. Why it attracts so many tourists is simply its beauty. Originally, the shops that line the bridge were used as butcher and grocery shops, now they are famous for their jewelry. It's absolutely gorgeous at the time when the sun sets because inside each jewelry shop there is a single window that overlooks the river (which you can see from the street) and from the light of the setting sun, the gold and silver from the jewelry just shimmers ever so perfectly.

Unfortunately – more often than I would like – I have to remind myself that I am here to study and not simply



view of Florence from
Piazzale Michelangelo

on an extended vacation, even though I would like to pretend I am. Every Wednesday night I go to a wine tasting class, but there are also many various kinds of cultural events to enjoy such as: concerts, operas, intramural sports and soccer games. I have been fortunate enough to be able to see a few soccer games here in Florence. Dressed in

(Continued on page 13)



ACADEMIC FESTIVAL—30 April 2008

Students at Skidmore strive for excellence. While in class and during much of their free time, they write thoughtful papers, perform music, conduct scientific experiments and mathematical research, and create provocative works of art. The quality of independent thinking that characterizes the Academic Festival lies at the very heart of the definition of academic excellence.

One of the great joys of life at Skidmore is the diversity and range of academic and co-curricular activities. Frequently, though, students have too little time to enjoy the successes of one project before moving on to another or to find time for sharing their work with others. Academic Festival is a time for that sharing and for the entire Skidmore community to reflect upon our students' achievement.

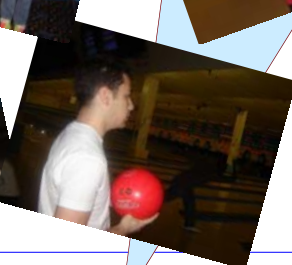
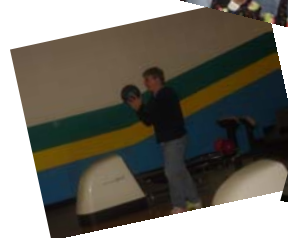
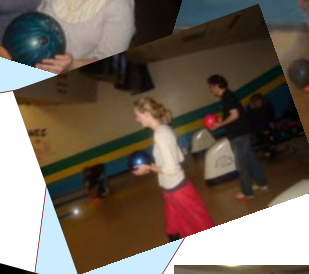
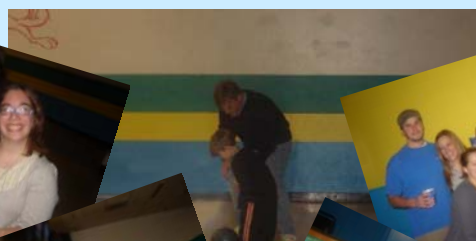
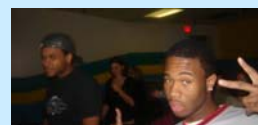
—Taken from 2006 Academic Festival Brochure

Below are pictures from the American Studies portion of Academic Festival. Students presenting (Meredith Lu '08, Kacey Schneider '08 and Carrie von Glahn '08) commented on the challenges of doing historical research and preserving cultural memory in the context of honors thesis work. Presenting in three widely different areas of historical investigation, Meredith (*Long Fight to Freedom: Two Struggles for Civil Rights and How Time Brought South African Apartheid into the American Consciousness*), Kacey (*One Nation, Under Apple Pie, Always on Diets, With Distorted Health Notions for All: American as a Culture of Health Extremes and the Lost Middle*), and Carrie (*Forgive Us Our Sins: Public Historians, American Memory, and the Conversion of the Slave*) discussed the common methodological challenges they faced in researching the past and analyzed the consistent patterns of interpretation they employed in investigating the place of historical memory in the American consciousness.



THE AMAZING FACULTY—STUDENT BOWL-OFF

12/12/07



Pictures by Danny Tejada



Fall, 2008, Course Offering Preview

AM 103: Intro to American Culture, MW, 2:30-3:50, Nathan

Introduction to the interdisciplinary study of American culture, past and present. Emphasizes reading critically, thinking historically, practicing interdisciplinarity, and acknowledging diversity. Students will analyze and synthesize multiple kinds of primary sources (such as fiction, film, music, art) and disciplinary perspectives (sociology, economics, media criticism) to appreciate better the complexity of American life and culture.

AM 201: American Identities, TuTh, 11:10-12:30, Varley Hollenbeck

A study of the changing ways Americans have defined themselves, from colonization to the mid-nineteenth century. Relying heavily on primary sources, the course examines critical issues and periods including race, ethnicity, gender, class, culture contact, revolution, reform, and war, as well as men and women whose lives and work reveal the cultural temper of their time.

AM 232H: Hon: New England Begins, TuTh, 2:10-3:30, Lynn

A critical examination of the evolution of culture and society in New England during the seventeenth century. After considering the origins of the Puritan community, the course will explore the ways in which that society changed over the course of the first seventy-five years of settlement, using the resources and methods of a variety of disciplines. By a culminating investigation of the events of the Salem witchcraft crisis of 1692, questions will be raised as to the impact of those changes and some of the ways in which New Englanders responded to them. Finally, by studying several historical and literary treatments of the witch trials, we will gain a greater understanding of the interconnections between the past and the present.

AM 233: American Past in Film, TuTh, 9:40-11:00, Nathan

An examination of how Hollywood filmmakers have represented the American past with special attention to the implications of movies for the construction of American cultural identity. Students will analyze films as historical documents that reflect (and sometimes reproduce) the ethos or cultural politics of the period in which they were made and first viewed. Through the use of popular culture theories, students will consider the ways in which films inform (and sometimes obfuscate and subvert) historical understanding.

AM 260-001: Law & American Society, TuTh, 6:30-7:50, Mulligan

This seminar considers the historical influence of the law on, and examines the role of law in, modern American society in order to understand why and how we use law, courts, and the language of "rights." The law will be studied on an issue and case basis, and from the perspective of our lives in an American legal culture: how does the law influence and shape modern American culture, and how does modern American culture influence the development of the law? What is the role of modern society in the legal system and vice-versa? What do the important legal cases of this generation tell us about society?

In this course, we will examine the foundations of law in American society, including historical and contemporary uses of law, and the conflict between individual freedom and government power. We will explore the nature of law and rules, to what extent their application compromises the legal system, the relation of law and morality, the role of courts and legislatures in the shaping of public policy and opinion, the jury system, and the use of law to control human behavior. We will draw on a variety of sources including film and literature, court cases, newspaper and current media, and social science materials. In this discussion-based seminar, students will develop advocacy skills in classroom debate, while individual in-class presentations and final research papers will allow students to explore particular topics in greater depth.

AM 260A: Civil Rights: 20th Century U.S., TuTh, 12:40-2:00, Grady-Willis

An examination of the interactions of individuals, groups, institutions and agencies seeking to achieve, enforce, or dismiss those civil rights guarantees contained primarily in the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the Constitution of the United States and in subsequent twentieth century legislation. Although a major focus of the course is on the attempts of women and African-Americans to secure full civil rights protections, students are encouraged to investigate civil rights issues that range beyond these two groups. The course uses a variety of materials including legislative histories, autobiographies, executive orders, judicial decisions, biographies, histories of specific aspects of the civil rights struggle, journalistic accounts, documentary films, works of fiction, and oral histories.

AM 260I: Popular Culture, WF, 8:40-10:00, Varley Hollenbeck

A topical examination of the cultural-historical process of the creation, dissemination, and consumption of mass or popular

culture and analysis of popular culture as a defining characteristic of Americans. Specific focus will be upon the evolution of modern electronic forms of communication in the twentieth century, and the interrelationships between the popular and elite and folk culture will be explored. Illustrative topics include: popular genre literature, mass movements, celebrities and heroes, and film, radio, and television.

AM 260J: Diversity in the U.S., WF, 12:20-1:40, Grady-Willis

An examination of the ways in which people in the United States try to reconcile the realities of cultural difference with preconceived notions of a unified America and American identity. Students will learn about the United States as a complex, heterogeneous society that has been profoundly shaped by both the connections and conflict implicit in its multicultural heritage. Students will also address interrelationships and tensions that characterize a culturally diverse democracy by examining how accepted cultural traditions intersect with contested themes such as race the family, adoption, gender, sexuality, and education.

AM 360B: The 1950s, WF, 10:10-11:30, Lynn

An examination of the ways in which people in the United States try to reconcile the realities of cultural difference with preconceived notions of a unified America and American identity. Students will learn about the United States as a complex, heterogeneous society that has been profoundly shaped by both the connections and conflict implicit in its multicultural heritage. Students will also address interrelationships and tensions that characterize a culturally diverse democracy by examining how accepted cultural traditions intersect with contested themes such as race the family, adoption, gender, sexuality, and education.

AM 374: Senior Seminar, MW, 4:00-5:30, Pfitzer

Exploration of primary and secondary sources in the interdisciplinary examination of a particular topic in American culture. Students will pursue a major research project or prepare an honors thesis proposal. Required of all senior majors. Open to majors only; normally taken in fall semester of the senior year.

(continued from pg. 10)

access than my house in the country) and suddenly a familiar figure appears at my door: "Hi! Remember me?" I've got a reasonably good memory, and most folks don't change all that dramatically over time, so I usually do recognize the visitor as a former student—even when it is a former student from the 1970s, my first decade at Skidmore. What I can't reliably do is recall that familiar figure's name!

Sometimes, as I frantically search my memory to connect a name to a face, a little miracle happens—from some unknown place my brain makes a connection and the student's name leaps to my lips—and I am, I think, even more amazed than the student that I know her original name. One of my visitors this year was a student I had only taught in one class, and that in 1972—she'd changed her surname twice, but I remembered her original name, which surprised us both. The memory miracle doesn't seem to have much relationship with how closely I worked with that person, or the quality of his work. There are plenty of times when the student waits, expectant (after all, I directed her thesis, or taught him in four different courses, or spent long hours helping her with a graduate school application). And I'm forced to confess: "You look awfully familiar but I'm afraid I don't remember your name."

Seeing and hearing from former students is one of the great joys of being a professor at Skidmore. Unlike big research universities, Skidmore is a place where students and faculty really can get to know each other. And one of the rewards of my job is reconnecting with alumni. I have one student who calls me whenever he's in the Albany airport to tell me what he's been reading lately (and he's told me about some wonderful books). Another called one day from her office in New York to tell me that a documentary she'd watched on PBS the previous evening had reminded her of my class, and thanked me for teaching her about Harriet Jacobs and her escape from slavery. And others write from graduate school to catch me up on their excitement about their research and their plans for the future. I've been here long enough that several alumni have returned with their own children who are about to start their careers at Skidmore—and I've never yet confused the generations!

But now, as the Green is truly that color, as the daffodils on Broadway are in full bloom, as the wildflowers in the North Woods are at their peak, the alumni are about to return. I encourage you all to keep in touch with the faculty. And if you do come to Saratoga, please do come visit the third floor of Tisch—and add one more line to that greeting: "Hi! Remember me? I'm insert your name here!"

"What sculpture is to a block of marble, education is to the soul."
—John Addison



Notes News Notes News Notes

**TENURE APPROVED
BY BOARD**



In December, 2007, Daniel A. Nathan, learned that Dean Poston recommended to President Glotzbach Dan Nathan's tenure. When the Board of Trustees convened in Spring 2008, they approved the decision and American Studies celebrated its newest tenured member. Congratulations, Dan!

**WOODFORK & FORD
RECOGNIZED**



At its Annual Freedom Fund Education Celebration (Feb. 2, 08), the Saratoga Branch of the NAACP honored and

awarded Joshua Woodfork and Kristie Ford (Sociology) with their Community Service Award.

Joshua and Kristie will also be honored as a team at the Skidmore Employee Recognition and Retirement Luncheon on May 20, 08 with the President's award. The President's awards are presented each year to Skidmore community members who have embraced the educational mission and cooperative spirit of the College through their exemplary commitment to personal excellence, campus pride, and community service. The awards are intended to celebrate and symbolize the wide range of contributions by individuals and groups to the quality of campus life.

Claire Solomon '09, spearheaded the "Not on Our Campus," a proactive response to reduce bias incidents and an opportunity to foster an inclusive, pluralistic community. For the event a pledge card and logo campaign were started, a film screening of Not In Our Town and discussion led by the filmmaker took place on January 28 with Community follow-through starting January 29.

Kevin Grinwis '96 recently moved from Florida to Albany for his new position as Project Manager for Omni Housing Development Corporation. Kevin will oversee the renovation or construction of housing for low-to-moderate income residents starting with the \$22 million South End Project. As Project Manager, Kevin will hire consultants, facilitate local approvals, monitor the development process, identify

Nancy Osberg-
Otrebiak, Editor

Majors/Minors Abroad

(Continued from page 10)

viola (purple), our soccer team "Fiorentina" is currently ranked 4th. I love soccer, but a soccer game in Italy is more than watching the game and your favorite player; it's entertaining in its own way to simply watch the crowd and people around you. Since soccer games have become more and more violent over the years it is forbidden in the stadium and in many supermarkets in the city to sell alcohol on game days. It's rather humorous to watch American students walking around the stadium with



Vernazza, one of the villages in Cinque Terre.

sites and find financing. The first phase is for 44 units and includes both rehabilitations and new structures. Kevin is pleased to be moving closer to the Adirondacks where his family has a cabin. He enjoys spending time outdoors skiing and mountain biking. Kevin was also one of the panelists on the "Living the Liberal Arts: Life During and After a Major in American Studies" last September.

Former American Studies majors **Craig Millard '98** and wife, **Catherine Hill '98**, (living in Colorado) welcomed a new arrival, their son, Samuel Craig, born on July 26, 2007 at 9:54 a.m., weighing in at 7 lbs., 8 oz., and measuring 20.75 inches. Congratulations Craig and Catherine!

GOT NEWS! Contact Nnacy at nosberg@skidmore.edu! We would love to hear from you.

two – little do they know – non-alcoholic beers in each hand. Especially as an American Studies major, from an American perspective, it's fascinating to not only learn, but also to experience life in Italy.

Besides going to soccer games, visiting the many museums and Renaissance art exhibitions that Florence has to offer, on the weekends I am most likely traveling outside of Florence to places like Venice, Rome, Milan, Siena, Perugia, Parma, Cinque Terre and Bologna. I spent my spring break in Venice and Cinque Terre. Known for its Murano glass and its romantic gondola rides, my dream came true when I finally met some gondoliers in Venice. Cinque Terre, located in Liguria and part of the Italian Riviera, literally meaning "five lands," is a backpackers and hikers heaven. There are trails that bring you through each village right along the seacoast offering refreshing and breathtaking views of the quaint towns and seacoast. More than half way through my semester I can hardly believe, not only how fast it has flown by, but moreover how much I have seen, learned and experienced. Curiously, I have not felt one bit of homesickness, I'm not sure if that's a good or a bad thing yet.

It is truly a different, but life-altering experience and I urge any of you who are thinking about studying or even traveling abroad to do so. My only regret is that I am only studying abroad for a semester. Buona fortuna! (Good luck!)



On Friday, November 2, 2007, members of Professor Daniel A. Nathan's Global Perspectives of U.S. (AM 332) made connections in a very dramatic way. At 9:20 a.m. class members Margaret Farrell '08, Andrew Dash '09, Juliet Kaye '10, Jake Freedman '08, and Katherine Morton '09, joined Prof. Nathan in Skidmore's computer center to participate in a three-way video conference class session with members of Sam McHale (Skidmore Alum, Class of 2007) and Professor Jaroslav Marcin's "Intro to American Studies" class at Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, Slovakia and with Susan Ball, Political Section Chief, at the US Embassy in Bratislava.

The idea came together because of Sam McHale's desire to find a way to open communications between students on an international level about the role and image of the U.S. in the post-9/11 world. Sam says he hopes it will "set some sort of precedent whereby students throughout the world will be able to talk to, and learn from, each other with greater ease than before. A few years ago this would have been impossible without purchasing plane tickets, but with new technology, it was quite easy to set up."

Professor Nathan said that the teleconference was "an interesting, unique experience" and was grateful that Sam initiated the conversation and that IT was able to

facilitate it. "It's not everyday one can have a conversation in real time with students, faculty, and foreign service officers half way around the world. Hopefully we'll be able to do this kind of thing again sometime soon. It certainly enriched those of us who were able to participate."

Margaret Farrell, Class of 2008, said of the experience, "It was a wonderful way to connect with another part of the world without leaving our campus. We were reminded that our world is becoming increasingly small, which, of course, makes the question of our international reputation all the more critical."



Skidmore College

American Studies
Skidmore College
815 North Broadway
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

Phone: 518-580-5021
Fax: 518-580-5258
Email: nosberg@skidmore.edu

