

American Folklore Society Monthly News Bulletin

May 2009

[A monthly e-mail update from AFS to fill the gap between the *AFS News* and the new AFS web site.]

AFS Receives Funding for Technical Assistance Program

The AFS has received a \$45,000 grant from the Folk and Traditional Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts to support the Next Steps Program, which will provide small (>\$3,000) technical assistance grants to non-profit folk arts organizations for consultancies, collaborative activities with other organizations, and strategic travel to visit model organizations and programs. Earlier this year, the Society took over responsibility for this project from the Fund for Folk Culture, whose executive director Betsy Peterson originally designed it.

Since the termination of the NEA's TAG (Traditional Arts Growth) program in 2008, the Next Steps Program will serve as the only national program that supports technical assistance and professional development for community-based organizations, folk arts non-profit organizations, and cultural specialists. The Next Step Program is for specialized short-term assistance through expense reimbursements and direct contracts; it will not support arts projects.

The Society's office is now preparing program guidelines for release in June. We will accept application letters beginning July 1, and funds will be available on a first-come, first-served basis until all funds are expended, or until May 31, 2010, whichever comes first. We plan to submit a proposal to the NEA later this year for continued funding of the Next Steps Project. Our thanks go to the NEA for this present support.

New AFS Folklore and Education Section *Newsletter* Available

Thanks to AFS members for good contributions to the newsletter of AFS's Folklore & Education Section. Rosemary Hathaway and Gregory Hansen co-edit it, and the 2009 edition is now available at www.afsnet.org/sections/education/Spring2009/.

This newsletter includes an essay about children's literature that incorporates folklore, a description of new resources, discussion of new children's books, reports from the section's activities at the AFS meeting, and a number of other

items and announcements of interest to the folklore and education world.

Academic Program News

The Department of Performance Studies at **Texas A&M University** announces a new Master of Arts degree in Performance Studies. This interdisciplinary program emphasizes the ethnographic study of vernacular culture. The Department of Performance Studies has strengths in Africana studies, dance and ritual studies, ethnomusicology, folklore, performance ethnography, popular music studies, religious studies, theatre and media studies, and women's studies. Application deadline for fall 2010 is January 15, 2010. Assistantships are available.

The Folklore Program at **Utah State University** is pleased to announce a fellowship for the graduate study of folklore, to be awarded to an incoming student for the first time in the fall of 2009. Working toward the completion of a thesis and master's degree in the USU English Department, the recipient of the fellowship will pursue research and study in one of the many, varied aspects of folklore. The value of the fellowship is \$14,000. The final deadline for applications this year has been extended to June 15, 2009.

Anyone interested in applying for the Folklore Fellowship should contact both Professor Steve Siporin, director of the Folklore Program (steve.siporin@usu.edu) and Professor Keith Grant-Davie, the English Department's director of Graduate Studies (keith.grantdavie@usu.edu). In addition, prospective students must submit an application through the School of Graduate Studies, specifying on the graduate school form that they are interested in the Folklore Program. This application form, plus three letters of recommendation, school transcripts, test scores, and a writing sample will complete the needed materials. To find School of Graduate Studies application forms, go to www.usu.edu/graduateschool.

The English Department Web site (<http://newenglish.usu.edu/newgraduates.aspx>) has specific information on the application process. For information about the Folklore Program, please visit <http://folklore.usu.edu>.

Folklore study at Utah State University has a distinguished history, beginning with the team of Austin and Alta Fife in the 1960s and continuing with the leadership of William A. Wilson and Barre Toelken from the 1970s to the 2000s. This inaugural fellowship adds another dimension of excellence to an important American center for the study of folklore.

2009 Smithsonian Folklife Festival Calls for Volunteers

The 43rd annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival will be held outdoors on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., Wednesday, June 24, through Sunday, June 28, and Wednesday, July 1, through Sunday, July 5, 2009. Produced by the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, the Festival is a living exhibition of traditional culture featuring outstanding musicians, craftspeople, storytellers, cooks, occupational specialists, and more.

Volunteers are critical to the success of the Festival and work closely with Smithsonian staff, as well as with Festival participants of various backgrounds. Past volunteers say they keep coming back to the Festival year after year because it offers "great fun, great people, and lots to learn." Some volunteers have returned for as many as 33 years!

This year's programs are:

1) Giving Voice: The Power of Words in African American Culture

"Giving Voice" will present the deep, rich threads of the African American oral tradition. Through the power of words, African Americans have given voice to the needs, hopes, aspirations, and dreams of a people whose traditions are a major force in American culture. The program will showcase this living legacy by featuring exemplary bearers of oral traditions in the genres of theater, poetry, storytelling, radio, and humor.

2) Las Americas: Un Mundo Musical/ The Americas: A Musical World

"Las Americas" is the final and most extensive program of the Nuestra Musica: Music in Latino Culture "living exhibitions" series. It features outstanding artists from the United States and Latin America who represent a rich diversity of musical styles, including Puerto Rican bomba, plena, and jibaro music, Mexican mariachi music, corridos, and sones from various regions, Colombian vallenato, joropo, and currulao, Dominican merengue tipico, Venezuelan joropo oriental and Afro-Venezuelan drumming, Paraguayan polca, and Salvadoran chanchona music.

3) Wales Smithsonian Cymru

"Wales Smithsonian Cymru" highlights the creative culture of this dynamic country, which is one of the first in the world to promote sustainable development as a core principle. Tying old to new and heritage to innovation, the program will show how language, foodways, crafts, building skills, music, and literature have been retained, recycled, and reimagined in every region of

Wales and in Welsh communities around the globe.

As a volunteer you may be asked to assist Festival participants or stage managers, sell programs, help with the audiovisual recording of performances and presentations, or lend a hand with the many administrative duties essential to the success of the Festival. If you would like to volunteer your service, and if you have access to the Internet, please complete the Volunteer Questionnaire online at http://www.folklife.si.edu/join_us/volunteers.aspx and return it via email as soon as possible. Emailing your application will save time, paper, and resources! Otherwise, you may fax the questionnaire to us at 202/633-6476.

If you have questions or comments, please contact: Laura Jenkins, Volunteer Coordinator, Smithsonian Folklife Festival, PO Box 37012, MRC 520, Washington, DC 20013-7012; 202/633-6484; jenkinsl@si.edu.

Call for Papers

National Council on Public History/American Society for Environmental History
2010 Joint Annual Meeting: "Currents of Change"
March 10-14, 2010, Portland, Oregon

The program committees look forward to proposals that consider issues and ideas structured around the theme "Currents of Change." These could include the relationship of human settlement to environmental transformation, the impact of power/energy development on ecological systems, the adaptive reuse/recycling of older and historic buildings and the notion of sustainable development, the rethinking of authenticity as a historic value, and interdisciplinary and culturally pluralistic approaches to historical issues. The proposal deadline is June 30, 2009. For more information, including submission guidelines, visit www.ncph.org/Conferences/2010/tabid/553/Default.aspx#Calls.

***Soy Andina* Available**

Soy Andina is a 65-minute doc about Peru, dance and identity, telling the story of two New Yorkers who journey to Peru to reconnect with roots and dance. The film premiered at Lincoln Center; screened at dozens of film festivals, universities, conferences (including a 2008 urban folklore conference at OSU); and toured Peru with the US Embassy.

The DVD includes the film with subtitles in English or Spanish; trailer and extended scenes; and a bonus film, the 28-minute "Llamellin y su Fiesta Patronal," about the festival featured in "Soy Andina."

The DVD is \$295 for universities and private high schools, which includes public performance rights for unlimited screenings to non-paying audiences. To order, go to: <http://www.neoflix.com/store/LUC16/LUC1631SOY01-E>

For more information, including clips, press clips, and screenings, or to sign up for the mailing list, go to: www.soyandina.com.

Director Mitch Teplitsky and featured performers Nelida and Cynthia can also be booked for personal appearances. Neli and Cynthia are both inspiring speakers (fluent in English and Spanish) and dancers who perform and teach Peruvian dance.