

## **American Folklore Society Monthly News Bulletin**

**May 2010**

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

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### **Executive Board April 2010 Actions and Discussions**

At its Columbus, Ohio, meeting on April 16 and 17, the Society's Executive Board took the following actions:

- Approved the minutes of the October 2009 Board meeting
- Approved the Society's audit report for fiscal year 2009
- Approved the creation of a Sustainers' Fund annual fundraising campaign for the Society
- Approved the issuance of a request for proposals from Society members for AFS support of future folklore and public policy working groups
- Approved the recommendation of the review committee for the recipient of the 2010 AFS Lifetime Scholarly Achievement Award (who will be announced at the Nashville annual meeting in October)
- Approved a petition to create a Socialist and Post-Socialist Area Studies Section of AFS
- Approved the Executive Director's priorities for fiscal year 2011, including 1) the development of an online multimedia site to supplement the [Journal of American Folklore](#), 2) completing the development of the new AFS web site, 3) expanding our efforts to develop relationships with folklorists and folklore organizations in Mexico, including a program of modest Society financial support to bring folklorists from Mexico to future AFS annual meetings, and to enable US scholars of Mexican and Chicano/a cultures to participate as AFS ambassadors in conferences in Mexico, and 4) supporting Society participation in UNESCO activities as well as those of WIPO, assuming AFS receives final UNESCO accreditation as an official NGO participant
- Approved the Executive Director's budget proposal for fiscal year 2011, which includes funding for these priorities
- Approved a resolution indicating AFS support for a project being developed by the Surviving Katrina and Rita in Houston collective to mount a similar effort in Haiti

The Board also devoted lengthy discussions to the setting of priorities for future Society diversity-building and membership-development efforts, and to working with academic programs on two activities called for in the Society's long-range

plan: 1) a "benchmarking" project to design and communicate objective criteria for the review and evaluation of university-based folklore programs, and 2) a database that academic programs and the Society can use to track students' career trajectories.

## **Folklorists Receive Accolades**

### **1. Berger Promoted to Full Professor**

Harris M. Berger was recently promoted to the rank of full professor in the Department of Performance Studies at Texas A&M University (effective September 1, 2010). Late last year, Wesleyan University Press published his book Stance: Ideas about Emotion, Style, and Meaning for the Study of Expressive Culture. Grounded in music but exploring a variety of expressive forms, the book presents a wide-ranging new theory of meaning in performance. Berger and Giovanna P. Del Negro are now completing a five-year term as editors of the Journal of American Folklore. This fall, Berger will give the keynote address at the biennial conference of IASPM-UK/Ireland and will also speak at the Center for Language, Interaction, and Culture at the University of California, Los Angeles. In addition to teaching undergraduate courses in popular music and ethnomusicology, Berger will begin teaching classes in Texas A&M's new master's program in performance studies, which admits its first class of students in the fall of 2010.

### **2. Lawless Receives Visiting Professorship**

AFS Past President Elaine Lawless of the University of Missouri has been selected as the Nannerl Keohane Distinguished Visiting Professors at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Duke University. She will be in residence during the fall of 2011 and will teach graduate courses at both universities and work with UNC's folklore curriculum and the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke.

### **3. Shukla Receives Coomaraswamy Book Prize**

Indiana University folklore professor Pravina Shukla's book The Grace of Four Moons: Dress, Adornment, and the Art of the Body in Modern India (Indiana University Press, 2008) wins the illustrious Coomaraswamy Book Prize given by South Asia Council of the Association of Asian Studies (AAS), a scholarly professional association with approximately 7,000 members worldwide, representing all the regions and countries of Asia and all academic disciplines. The Coomaraswamy Book Prize was created to "honor the author of the best English-language work in South Asian studies," and is given to book whose

subject matter centers on South Asia (India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh), on any topic, in any discipline.

In The Grace of Four Moons, Shukla conceptualizes a model for the study of the art of the body by looking at the production, sale, consumption, and assembly and display of items of bodily adornment primarily in the sacred city of Banaras, in northeastern India. The prize selection committee, comprised of professors Richard H. Davis, Isabel Clark-Deces, and Barbara Rumusack, wrote the official citation, ending with the following paragraph: "As Shukla persuasively demonstrates, the female art of self-adornment does not begin with women getting dress in the morning. Through her analysis we are able to follow all the paths leading up to this. In the end, though, the process ends with women who retain their agency in the skillful purchase and creative assembly of the elements that will cover their bodies and display their personal identities to others who observe them. In its focused attention to a fundamental activity and in its investigative breadth, The Grace of Four Moons is truly an exemplary study of material culture in a modern South Asian setting."

The book also won the 2009 Milia Davenport Publication Award given by the Costume Society of America, and received an Honorable Mention for the Elli Köngäs-Maranda Prize of the AFS Women's Section.

#### 4. Klassen Receives AAUW Dissertation Fellowship

Teri Klassen of Indiana University's Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology has received a prestigious Dissertation Fellowship from the American Association of University Women for the 2010-2011 academic year. In the preceding year the AAUW offered 66 fellowships to 1,175 applicants. Teri will be completing work on her dissertation, a study of quilting and interracial social relations in rural western Tennessee.

### **New Directions in Folklore Returns**

The NewFolk@AFS Section is pleased to announce that the publication New Directions in Folklore (NDiF) is back as an online, peer-reviewed, open-access eJournal in partnership with IUScholarWorks! Our modest journal hopes to widen the boundaries of folkloristics by bringing attention to subject matters that are often neglected in the scholarly dialogue, such as the study of new media and the digital humanities, or other topical genres that go underexplored like military folklore and masculinity studies. As such, we are welcoming submissions for our first new issue in over five years, and we are excited to hear from the folklore community. We invite articles under 10,000 words on any topic of thematic interest to the journal. Prospective authors (or reviewers) and interested readers should visit us at our new journal home at

<http://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/ndif> or at our NewFolk organizational hub at <http://newfolk.net>. We look forward to working with you in forging an online community of scholarly discussion! If you have any questions, please contact Trevor J. Blank ([tjblank@psu.edu](mailto:tjblank@psu.edu)), NDiF editor.

### **New AFS Section: Socialist and Post-Socialist Area Studies**

Socialist and post-socialist countries have rich traditions of folklore in oral performance, literature, and material culture as well as long-standing local research traditions. At the same time, new nation-states, such as the former Soviet republics, struggle with issues of ethnic identity, nationalism, and post-colonialism. During the past two decades, there has also been an explosion of interest among external scholars in post-socialist vernacular cultures. Folklorists working in these societies could benefit from sharing their research and interacting with each other.

The Socialist and Post-Socialist Area Studies Section of the American Folklore Society aims at enhancing opportunities for sharing scholarship and carrying out projects among folklorists working in these areas. The group plans to convene annually at the AFS Conference, sponsor panels for the AFS Conference, promote publication in the area of specialization, maintain a directory of members on the AFS website, and coordinate efforts with the Central Eurasian Studies Society and Soyuz. None of these initially recommended activities would require paying dues. Additional activities could be considered at the first business meeting of the Socialist and Post-Socialist Area Studies Section at the 2010 AFS annual meeting in Nashville.

Please direct any questions or suggestions for the section to the two co-conveners: Erik Aasland, PhD candidate at Fuller Graduate School of Intercultural Studies ([erikkim@eamail.org](mailto:erikkim@eamail.org)) or Elo-Hanna Seljamaa, PhD candidate at The Ohio State University, Dept. of Comparative Studies; Dept. of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu ([seljamaa.1@buckeyemail.osu.edu](mailto:seljamaa.1@buckeyemail.osu.edu))

### **AFS African Section Convener Named**

Johnston Njoku of the Western Kentucky University folklore faculty has been appointed the new convener of the AFS African Section. To learn more about his plans to strengthen the Section, please contact him at [johnston.njoku@wku.edu](mailto:johnston.njoku@wku.edu).

### **International Society for Folk-Narrative Research (ISFNR) Announces Interim Conference**

The ISFNR is a scholarly and professional organization of international

specialists in the areas of folk narrative, popular literature, folklore, and related fields. According to its statutes, the Society's main goal is "to develop scholarly work in the field of folk narrative research and to stimulate contacts and the exchange of views among its members." Acknowledging developments in the field, this goal has broadened in recent years to covering all aspects of narrative as representing the pivotal category of human communication.

Call for Papers, Interim Conference in North-East India, February 22-25, 2011

Conference Venue: Multi-Purpose Convention Centre, North-Eastern Hill University, Mawkyntoh-Umshing, Shillong - 793 022, Meghalaya, India

The main topic of the conference will be: Telling Identities: Individuals and Communities in Folk Narratives. For details please see the ISFNR website: <http://isfnr.org/files/nextinterimconference.html>

### **Association for Jewish Studies Announces Book Prize**

The Association for Jewish Studies is pleased to announce the Call for Submissions for the 2010 Jordan Schnitzer Book Awards. This program, made possible by funding from the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation of Portland, Oregon, will award two annual prizes of \$5,000 to authors of outstanding works in Jewish studies. In 2010, the AJS will give Jordan Schnitzer Book Awards in the fields of Early Modern and Modern Jewish History and Social Science, Anthropology, and Folklore.

Any book by an AJS member published in English from 2006 - 2010 is eligible for consideration. The submission deadline is June 25, 2010. Further information, eligibility requirements, and submission procedures can be found on the AJS website at <http://www.ajsnet.org/schnitzer.html>. Please direct questions to Karen Terry, AJS Program and Membership Coordinator, at [ajs@ajs.cjh.org](mailto:ajs@ajs.cjh.org) or 917/606-8249.