

American Folklore Society Monthly News Bulletin

June 2009

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

Letty Halpert, 1919-2009

Violetta (Letty) Maloney Halpert passed away at the end of May, two weeks after her 90th birthday, at her home in St. John's, Newfoundland. Letty, the widow of Herbert Halpert, was a scholar in her own right and was a life member of AFS. Only three weeks earlier, she was named the recipient of this year's Marius Barbeau Medal in recognition of her significant contribution to the field of Canadian folklore and ethnology. For a biography, and a discussion of her role in Canadian folklore study, please see www.celat.ulaval.ca/acef/m2009.htm.

AFS Economic Recovery Actions

During and since the Society's Executive Board meeting in early April, the Board and the AFS office have taken several actions in response to the current economic downturn:

1. The Board has established a new membership category with lower annual dues for those with household incomes below \$25,000. At the same time, we are strongly encouraging those who can afford to do so to make tax-deductible contributions to the Society over and above their annual dues to help support those other members and to help keep the Society financially healthy.
2. The Society has received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts that will allow us to 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.
3. We are planning on offering a greater-than-usual number of student travel stipends for the Boise annual meeting this October.
4. The Society has applied for a special grant program offered by the National Endowment for the Arts that, if we receive it, will allow us to provide travel stipends to public folklorists (including public folklorists in independent consulting practice) to participate in the Boise annual meeting this October.

Society Receives Teagle Foundation Grant

AFS has just received a two-year grant from the Teagle Foundation (based in New York and focused on higher education issues; www.teagle.org) as part of its "Big Questions and the Disciplines" initiative. This initiative is providing grants to about 10 recipients (of some 70 original applicants) to bring together groups of scholars from particular fields to discuss a Big Question of central importance to the humanities or social sciences and, based upon that Big Question, to develop and test curriculum materials to more deeply engage undergraduate student education.

The question we chose for our project is "What is the relationship between lay and expert knowledge in a complex society?". Over the next two years the Society will convene a group of nine folklorists to work on this project.

Michael Chiarappa, Department of History, Western Michigan University
(Kalamazoo)
Danille Elise Christensen, Department of Culture and Communication, Indiana University (Bloomington)
Jason Baird Jackson, Director, Folklore Institute, Indiana University
(Bloomington)
Sabina Magliocco, Chair, Department of Anthropology, California State University (Northridge)
Jay Mechling, Department of American Studies, University of California (Davis)
Tom Mould, Department of Anthropology, Elon University (Elon, North Carolina)
Dorry Noyes, Department of English, The Ohio State University (Columbus), co-coordinator for the project
Leonard Norman Primiano, Department of Religious Studies, Cabrini College (Radnor, Pennsylvania)
Howard Sacks, Interim Provost, Kenyon College (Gambier, Ohio)

Their academic homes—liberal arts colleges, urban commuter schools, small state schools, and large land-grant institutions—represent the diversity of institutions where folklorists teach today, of those institutions' student bodies, and of the knowledges those students are bringing to the classroom.

This project will also serve as a beginning for a long-term effort by AFS to strengthen undergraduate education in folklore—an effort in which we hope many of our members will take part—intended to deepen the contributions of our field to the academy, and to strengthen our field by attracting talented and

committed young scholars and public humanists to undergraduate and graduate study in folklore. As a means toward this end, we will create a permanent working group on folklore in undergraduate education at the conclusion of this Teagle Foundation-funded project.

Boise Plenary Speakers Announced

The Boise annual meeting program will include four plenary presentations:

Wednesday evening's opening ceremonies will be followed by an address from **Carlos Vélez-Ibáñez**, Motorola Presidential Professor of Neighborhood Revitalization and Professor of Transborder Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies at the University of California, Riverside. Sponsored by the 2009 Annual Meeting Committee, he will speak on "new ways to look at transnational and transborder spaces and relationships, and at the cultural markers that make them so."

Sponsored by the Society, farmer, folklorist, and writer **Roger Welsch** of Dannebrog, Nebraska, will deliver Thursday morning's address. He will talk about efforts of Native American tribal groups to re-acquire and return to their traditional lands.

The AFS Fellows have invited proverb scholar **Wolfgang Mieder** of the University of Vermont to deliver the Fellows plenary address on Friday morning. His address is titled "'It Takes a Village to Change the World': Proverbial Politics and the Ethics of Place."

Finally, AFS President **Elaine Lawless** of the University of Missouri will deliver her Presidential address on Saturday, entitled "Folklore as a Map of the World: Rejecting 'Home' as a Failure of the Imagination."

Chronicle Article

The May 22, 2009, issue of *The Chronicle Review* contains the article "From 'Once Upon a Time' to 'Happily Ever After': Fairy-Tale Scholars Explore the Nuanced History of the Genre," written by Jennifer Howard, who in the past has written about other topics in folklore studies. The article presents several folklorists' views on the origin of *märchen* and previews the upcoming issue of *JAF* on the matter.

Tangherlini Receives ACLS Fellowship

Our congratulations to Tim Tangherlini of UCLA, who has just received a digital humanities fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies.

Here's what he says about his work: "My project focuses on the Evald Tang Kristensen collection, the world's largest folklore collection produced by an individual. I provide a rich navigational interface that allows users to make use of advanced GIS, statistical learning and text corpus visualization tools. This enables a "thick" approach to archival materials through historical mapping, pattern discovery, network visualization and information navigation. A proof of concept, using five storytellers and sixteen collection trips as a test corpus, was recently completed. During the fellowship, I will expand on the pilot in two ways: incorporate more materials into the database, effectively covering the entire collection; and increase the number of study tools to include more advanced GIS functions; statistical learners; and text-corpus and network visualization. For further information, please go to <http://dev.cdh.ucla.edu/~newmedia/DFL2/index.html>."

ACLS Fellowships: An Untapped Resource for Folklorists

Tim Tangherlini (see story above) is the only folklorist to receive any ACLS fellowship in 2008-09. The fact is that few folklorists apply for fellowships from ACLS, one of the single largest supporters of humanities scholarship in the country. This hurts the entire field, since ACLS fellowships are allocated in part according to the number of applications from a given field. Application information for 2009-10 fellowships, the deadlines for which are between September 15, 2009, and January 29, 2010, will be available in July 2009 at www.acls.org/programs/comps.

Penn State Harrisburg Announces New American Studies Program and Seeks Faculty

The Pennsylvania State University, Harrisburg, has just created a BA-MA-PhD program in American Studies that includes a significant emphasis in folklore. The program emphasizes critical cultural inquiry and the application of American studies to public heritage, public policy, and cultural resource management, including governmental work, museums, cultural agencies, education, archives and records management, public policy, and communications. A foundation for this application is an understanding of the American experience developed within the intellectual legacy of American Studies.

The program offers bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in American Studies, and houses the Center for Pennsylvania Culture Studies and a regional

chapter of the American Studies Association. The program has designated subfields of culture, arts, and communication; interdisciplinary history and politics; ethnography and society; public heritage; and regional, environmental, and urban studies. With its location in a state capital and a prominent heritage region, the program maintains strong ties with state and regional governmental, historical, and cultural agencies. The program's website is <http://php.scripts.psu.edu/dept/iit/hbg/Programs/Graduate/AmericanStudiesPhD.php>.

The program is also seeking two new faculty members.

First, the program is seeking candidates for a newly created tenured position in the American Studies program. The successful candidate will join colleagues in leading core courses in American Studies theory and methods, issues in American studies, and a capstone research seminar. Areas of research and teaching are open, but the program is particularly interested in candidates with expertise in environmental and urban studies; religion and culture; technological and economic history; international perspectives in American Studies; and social science approaches to American Studies. Service expectations include assisting the management of different degree programs, involvement in program development and outreach initiatives, and representation of the program in American Studies organizations.

The PhD in American Studies or equivalent is required, as well as an established and significant record of scholarly achievement in research and teaching meritorious of tenure. Candidates of senior rank with experience in American Studies graduate programs and an active research agenda will be given preference.

The review of applications will begin on **September 28, 2009**, and will continue until the positions are filled. To be considered, please submit a cover letter detailing qualifications, a current CV and three letters of reference to: Mrs. Dorothy J. Guy, Director of Human Resources, Box AFSN-30216, Penn State Harrisburg, 777 West Harrisburg Pike, Middletown PA 17057-4898 USA. Penn State is committed to affirmative action, equal opportunity, and the diversity of its workforce.

Second, the program is seeking candidates for a newly created tenured or tenure-track position in the American Studies program with a specialization in Heritage Studies. The successful candidate will join colleagues in leading core courses in American Studies theory and methods, issues in American Studies, and a capstone research seminar. Areas of research and teaching in the Heritage Studies field may include museum and material culture studies; historic preservation and cultural conservation; public history, folk-life, and culture; oral

history; and digital humanities. Additional desirable fields are open, but areas of interest to the Heritage Studies program include history of technology and media; visual culture; popular music and culture studies; and religious and ethnic cultures. Service expectations include involvement in the program's development activities and outreach initiatives, including its internship program and Center for Pennsylvania Culture Studies.

The PhD in American Studies is preferred, but related degrees will be considered for candidates showing involvement in American Studies education. Candidates must have a conferred doctorate at time of application and demonstrated experience in collegiate teaching and heritage work.

The review of applications will begin on **September 28, 2009**, and will continue until the position is filled. To be considered, please submit a cover letter detailing qualifications, a current CV and three letters of reference to: Mrs. Dorothy J. Guy, Director of Human Resources, Box: AFSN-30207, Penn State Harrisburg, 777 West Harrisburg Pike, Middletown PA 17057-4898 USA. Penn State is committed to affirmative action, equal opportunity, and the diversity of its workforce.

Sections Offer Boise Travel Stipend for an Independent Folklorist

The Public Programs Section and the Independent Folklorists Section of AFS are once again pleased to offer a travel award of \$500 for an independent public folklorist to attend the annual meeting in Boise, Idaho. Applicants must be a member of the AFS Independent Folklorists Section, make at least half of their income from independent work, and participate as a presenter at the annual meeting. The application requires a letter of interest, a budget, and a resume. The application deadline is **July 1, 2009**, and the recipient will be notified by August 1. For more information and a complete description of the award process, contact Andrea Graham at andymeg@earthlink.net or 208/241-9200.

The Dorothy Howard Folklore and Education Prize

The AFS Folklore and Education Section is pleased to announce the call for submissions for the 2009 Dorothy Howard Folklore and Education Prize. The \$100 prize will be awarded to the individual(s) or organization whose work most effectively encourages K-12 educators or students to use or study folklore and folkloristic approaches in all school environments.

Such work includes, but is not limited to: curriculum materials, publications, exhibits, World Wide Web sites, videos, audio recordings, CD- or DVD-ROMs, or

articles. Work produced in the two calendar years prior to the annual AFS meeting will be eligible for consideration.

Nominations should identify the author(s) or creators(s), publisher, date of publication, and describe why the nomination deserves consideration.

Statements should not exceed three double-spaced pages. Anyone may nominate work by submitting three copies of materials, or in the case of unpublished work, three copies of detailed descriptions and any relevant supporting materials to the Chair of the Prize Committee. Electronic submissions are highly encouraged. The Deadline for submissions is **August 30, 2009**.

Please send submissions to Gwen Meister, Chair, Dorothy Howard Folklore and Education Prize Committee at gmeister@windstream.net. Please direct your questions to her at Nebraska Folklife Network, 5620 Hunts Drive, Lincoln NE 68512-1190 USA; phone and fax 402/420-5442.

Call for Submissions, 2009 Richard Reuss Prize

The Folklore Historian, in association with the Folklore and History Section of the American Folklore Society, solicits entries for the endowed Richard Reuss Prize. The biennial prize honors Richard Reuss (1940-1986), founding editor of *The Folklore Historian* and a leading chronicler of folklore studies. The prize of 100 dollars will be awarded to a student paper on a subject dealing with the history of folklore studies.

The winner of the prize will have his or her paper submitted for publication in *The Folklore Historian*. Submit papers by **August 1, 2009**, to Nancy C. McEntire, Department of English, Indiana State University, Terre Haute, IN 47809 USA. Electronic submissions (Word or WordPerfect) may be sent to Nancy McEntire at nmcentire@indstate.edu.

Black Brooklyn Renaissance Conference

Conference co-directors Ray Allen and Kay Turner are seeking scholars, journalists, community cultural workers, and artists to participant in our "Black Brooklyn Renaissance: Black Culture/Black Performance, 1960-2010" Conference scheduled for October of 2010 at Brooklyn College. We envision a series of paper presentations, panels, and group discussions that will examine the myriad artistic forms that have emerged from Black Brooklyn over the past half a century, including West Indian steel pan and calypso, Afro-Caribbean ceremonial music and dance, West African drumming, West African traditional and

contemporary dance, southern African-American gospel music and preaching, hip hop and free-style poetry, and jazz. The conference will examine how migration, immigration, and political movements have galvanized these cultural expressions while drawing attention to the evolving interplay between Afro-Caribbean, southern African American, and African traditions.

Individuals interested in participating in the conference should visit <http://depthome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/isam/> or contact: Ray Allen, W. Wiley Hitchcock Institute for Studies in American Music, Brooklyn College, CUNY (rayallen@brooklyn.cuny.edu); or Kay Turner, Folk Arts Director, Brooklyn Arts Council (kturner@brooklynartscouncil.org).

Hoosier Folklore Society Annual Meeting

The Hoosier Folklore Society will hold its Annual Meeting on Saturday, November 7, 2009, at the Brown County Public Library, 205 Locust Lane, Nashville, Indiana.

The theme of this year's annual meeting is "Alternative Perspectives on Place: The Intersection of Folklore and History." The planning committee invites proposals for papers or presentations that consider local and global traditions and their role in folklore and/or history. As always, topics outside of this theme are welcome.

Each proposal should include the title and a 100-word abstract of the paper or presentation, as well as the full name and hometown or institutional affiliation of the presenter.

Most papers presented at Hoosier Folklore Society meetings are 30 minutes in length, but shorter presentations are also accommodated. Presenters at the meeting must be members in good standing of the Hoosier Folklore Society.

Submit your proposal by **August 1, 2009**, to the Conference Committee (Jodine Perkins, Suzanne Ingalsbe, and Jon Kay) at HoosierFolklore@gmail.com.