By David Bearinger

Domingo “Mingo” Saldivar is sixty-eight. His face reads like an atlas of the Mexican border, a chronicle of life on the road. He’s small, with legs like pieces of wire in hard blue-jeans, a National Heritage Fellow and two-time Grammy nominee from the San Antonio dance clubs who has played the Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall; July 4 on the Mall in Washington, the first Clinton inauguration. Tonight he’s wearing a narrow-brimmed cowboy hat and a red and black-patterned showman’s shirt, with a button accordion slung below his beltline, machismo to burn.

When Mingo plays, he bends toward the floor, moving back and forth across the stage, like a cat. His hands are quick, precise; his voice sharp and insistent. Energy pops and hisses around him, as if the man inside that shirt is turning and cooking on a spit. The accordion sound is bright, and he’s got a solid backup band—drums, harmonica, electric bass. They’re playing Ring of Fire (Rueda del Fuego), rocking The Palace Theatre on a rainy Friday night in Cape Charles, on Virginia’s Eastern Shore. The house is packed—400 people, standing room only—and at least one-third of the audience is speaking Spanish.

The Palace Theatre is a lovingly renovated 1940s movie house with 30-foot ceilings, pin-drop acoustics, a wide stage, and large silver-toned, art deco-style murals set high up on the walls. Performing tonight, below these elegant oil-on-linen paintenges—of heron, lotus flowers, willow trees, and graceful female figures seated by the water’s edge, nets full of fish—is the Masters of Mexican Music Tour, organized by the National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA).

Two Virginia communities, Cape Charles and Galax, are among the sites that have been chosen to host this national tour, which includes artists representing four distinctive Mexican and cross-border musical styles. The VFH awarded funds to Arts Enter Cape Charles and to the City of Galax, supporting bilingual publicity and the development of interpretive materials to accompany these two performance events.

Within the past several years, the Eastern Shore and southern Blue Ridge counties of Virginia have seen major increases in the numbers of Latino—especially Mexican—residents. In Grayson and Carroll counties (Galax sits on the border between them), immigrants from Latin America have come to work the Christmas tree farms that are a pillar of the region’s new economy. This year, more than 10 percent of the children in the Galax public schools are speaking Spanish as their first language.
Mingo Rocks The Palace

On the Eastern Shore, large numbers of Mexican and other Latino immigrants work in the poultry and seafood processing plants; others, migrants as well as permanent residents, work the clam beds and the vegetable farms, picking, grading, and packing produce. Mexican grocery stores are scattered along Route 13, the major north-south artery that runs like a backbone up the center of Northampton and Accomack Counties.

Otherwise, the strong Latino presence on the Shore is easy to miss unless you know where to look for it. Latinos mostly live apart from the Shore’s white and African American communities. And until now, the Latino audience at dozens of events hosted by The Palace Theatre has been small, barely visible. Something new is happening tonight along the border in Cape Charles. Inside The Palace, the border itself is starting to disappear.

The musical traditions represented in the Tour reflect an astounding variety of cultural influences—Spanish and Indian, primarily; but also Polish, West African, Afro-Caribbean, German, Czech. The traditions themselves include Marimba from Chiapas in southern Mexico; the Andalusian-sounding Musica Jarocha, from the lowlands of Veracrúz on the Gulf Coast; Mariachi from Jalisco, a marriage of string and brass that has become an international symbol of Mexican folk music; and Conjunto Tijano.

In some ways Conjunto, the music Mingo is playing, is the most hybridized of all—a fast-paced, cross-border, Central European-influenced mixture of dance tunes and Tex-Mex country. Close your eyes and the Marimba is an audio pipeline straight to Senegal or Barbados. Mingo’s Ring of Fire is played staccato, like a Cajun polka. It would sound at home in a Polish beer garden or a dance club in El Paso; on a front porch in the woods of Southwest Louisiana, or at Carnegie Hall. Stereotypes wither in the presence of this polyglot lingua musica.

The VFH has made a long-term commitment to the Eastern Shore, in part by establishing a Regional Council that serves both Accomack and Northampton Counties. Clelia Sheppard, the President of Arts Enter, who organized this event, is a member of the Council, and one of the goals of this organization has been to encourage greater understanding of the Shore’s rich—and diverse—cultural heritage.

The Council is also working to promote a deeper understand-
BY TORI TALBOT

I was both curious and perplexed when Virginia Folklife Director Jon Lohman asked me to look at the “Snake Canes” he brought back to the VFH from a recent trip to southern Virginia. But once I saw the intricately carved walking sticks, I was mesmerized.

The delicate scales were whittled into vine-coiled branches with such elaborate detail that I thought at any moment a reptile would come alive and slither right off the walking stick.

Lohman borrowed the collection of over 40 snake sticks (known as “thigmotropic walking sticks”) from their creator, Norman Amos, a wood carver who has spent most of his life in the shadows of Turkeycock Mountain in Pittsylvania County. Amos, a retired farmer and rural mail carrier, has received no formal artistic training. While he has operated largely under the radar of many “folk art” collectors, his canes have graced the Corcoran Museum of Art in Washington, D.C., and numerous craft and folk art shows, including an annual appearance at the Blue Ridge Folk Festival in Ferrum. This summer, his work will be on display at the Virginia Discovery Museum in Charlottesville.

Amos uses precisely sharpened hand-made tools to carve the snake canes. One snake cane can take anywhere from 60-160 hours to carve and paint, depending on size. A snake like the canebrake rattler, one of two rattlesnake species found in Virginia, may have over 4,000 scales to be individually carved.

There is a long-standing rich tradition of snake cane carving in southern and southwest Virginia. Like many of Virginia’s cultural folkways, this carving arose as a creative and expressive human response to an everyday object or event. The process begins when a vine wraps itself around a tree branch and fuses to that branch, ultimately causing the branch to die and fall from the tree. The result is a wooden stick with a tightly coiled pattern on it, and the artist takes over from there.

While many Virginians have carved snake canes, few have embraced the art form as thoroughly as Amos. With the recent passing of 98-year-old carver Emory Robinson of Bonsack, Virginia, Amos now stands as the most prolific living snake cane carver. Recently, Amos achieved his lifelong goal of carving one cane for every species of snake indigenous to Virginia.

The Virginia Folklife Program will celebrate this unique collection and artist at a public reception on Thursday, July 8, at 6 p.m. at the Discovery Museum on the east end of Charlottesville’s Downtown Mall. The Virginia Discovery Museum will present snake-related activities for children in conjunction with this exhibit throughout the month of August. For more information about the Virginia Discovery Museum, please visit their website at www.vadm.org.

The “Crooked Road”: Virginia’s Heritage Music Trail

The Virginia Folklife Program has received a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts to conduct fieldwork along the “Crooked Road” Heritage Music Trail. The Crooked Road, a project of the Appalachian Regional Commission, is Virginia’s Heritage Music Trail, a driving route through the Appalachian Mountains from the western slopes of the Blue Ridge to the Coalfields region in the far southwestern corner of the state. The trail connects major heritage music venues in the Appalachian region such as the Blue Ridge Music Center, the Birthplace of Country Music Alliance, and the Carter Family Fold.

The traditional gospel, bluegrass, and mountain music heard today was passed down from generation to generation and lives on through a wealth of musicians and instrument makers along the trail. Annual festivals, weekly concerts, live radio shows, and informal jam sessions abound throughout the region. The Folklife Program’s research, however, will not only focus on musical traditions but on all aspects of community life and traditional culture along the trail. The Folklife Program intends to make extensive audio and video field recordings, as well as to photograph aspects of daily life along the trail, resulting in an archive, book, and public exhibition.
VABook! 2004 Tops Attendance Record Again

22,386 in Attendance at Events

BY KEVIN McFADDEN

The latest Virginia Festival of the Book, held March 24-28 in Charlottesville, is on the shelf. And while it will be archived in a row as the 10th of its kind, it would be difficult to compare it to any of its predecessors. Not only did the festival shatter its highest previous attendance record by 5,000, its roster of participants in 2004 included winners of nearly all major literary prizes alongside the best emerging talents, solidifying its reputation as one of the best book events in the Mid-Atlantic.


(To hear Chabon’s reading of an “apocryphal chapter” from The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay, visit the VFH website virginiafoundation.org.)

“There was so much excitement and energy during the week,” said VABook! Program Director Nancy Damon. “It was really gratifying to see people out and around talking about books.”

Participant and Arlington resident Edward P. Jones came to the festival having recently won the National Book Critics Circle Award for The Known World. Days later, the book would also be recognized as the winner of the 2004 Pulitzer Prize in fiction. In April, participant and Charlottesville resident Henry Wiencek would go on to win the 2003 L.A. Times Book Prize in history for An Imperfect God, his exploration of George Washington’s complicated relationship to slavery.


The 11th annual Virginia Festival of the Book is scheduled for March 16-20, 2005. For more information on VABook!, visit the festival website www.vabook.org.

At the Opening Ceremony of the 2004 Virginia Festival of the Book, three Virginia students were honored for their winning entries in the Letters About Literature writing competition. Sponsored by the VFH Center for the Book, students across the Commonwealth were invited to select a book that had made a difference in their lives and to write to the book’s author.

This year awards went to Kelly Mulquin, a fifth grade student at Churchill Road Elementary School in McLean for her letter to Priscilla Cummings, author of Saving Grace; Lauren Costlow, an eighth grade student of the MBC Home School for her letter to L. M. Montgomery, author of Anne of Green Gables; and Alyssa Jenkins, an 11th grade student for her letter to Harper Lee, author of To Kill A Mockingbird.

Letters About Literature is an annual competition organized by the VFH Center for the Book in cooperation with the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, and with the national sponsorship of Target Stores. Guidelines for the 2004-05 competition will be available from the VFH after September 15.
Voices of Adult Learners: Sharing the Power of Stories

If you don’t know the trees, you will get lost in the forest, but if you don’t know the stories, you will get lost in life.
—SIBERIAN PROVERB

Stories were the focus of the evening when hundreds eagerly gathered March 25 at Burnley-Moran Elementary School in Charlottesville to celebrate Voices of Adult Learners, a program of the 2004 Virginia Festival of the Book. One after another, students enrolled in area basic education, literacy, GED, or ESL classes stepped to the podium to proudly read aloud their compositions. They included teens, parents, grandparents, native-born Americans, and those who have come here from abroad, all sharing a common desire to learn, to improve their lives, and to improve their families’ futures.

As one man contemplated on his present status, he also looked to future generations when he wrote, “I think that my going to school sets a good example for my grandchildren to stay in school.” Another writer from China reflected on events in China that caused him to “flee to America to get a new life!” Several paid tribute to their tutors and teachers, as did the woman who expressed her gratitude by writing that she now knows she “has the potential to go after education... thanks to a wonderful teacher.”

Sponsored by the Region 8 Literacy Coordinating Committee (RLCC), Voices of Adult Learners has become an annual event at the Festival and one of the most popular. Thanks to the assistance of the business and printing classes at Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women, each writer was presented with a printed edition of Voices of Adult Learners. In addition, each entry from 1997 to 2004 can be read on the Jefferson-Madison Regional Library website, http://avenue.org/adulted/voal.html.

As RLCC co-chair Susan Erno noted, these compelling stories “help us understand why adult education and literacy programs exist and should continue to exist” as vital components of a dynamic community with a strong economic base and a rich civic life.
VFH Symposium on the Brown Decision and Virginia’s Massive Resistance: A Hall of Fame for Virginia’s Civil Rights Activists

BY AMY TILLERSON

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Brown v. Board of Education U. S. Supreme Court decision, the VFH African American Heritage Program hosted a symposium, A Half Century After Brown v. Board of Education: To Remember and to Act, on May 21 & 22 at Monticello Event and Conference Center in Charlottesville.

Friday’s keynote address by Virginia Congressman Robert “Bobby” Scott, an impassioned historicizing of the Brown decision and a challenge to continue the fight for equal educational opportunities for all students, was followed by the recognition of 15 extraordinary “ordinary people” for their contributions to social justice.

In some cases, the widows of fallen civil rights activists accepted their husbands’ awards and made moving remarks remembering the era that created the necessity of civil rights work during Virginia’s massive resistance. Director of the Virginia Center for the Book Susan Coleman commented that while listening to the guests, she “...felt like I was among royalty.” The activism of these guests ranged from legislative to grassroots.

Honored guests included Delegate Viola Baskerville, whose activism has focused on urban revitalization, economic empowerment for women and small and minority businesses, and women and children's health issues. Mary Ann Elwood is the widow of Dr. Bill Elwood, who wrote and produced the documentary film The Road to Brown. Elwood, a professor of Renaissance English and the Associate Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at UVa, recruited African American scholars for graduate school. Mrs. Elwood worked with Penny Weiss to start the Church Woman’s Preschool for African American children who would not otherwise be able to attend what were then private kindergartens. Dr. Paul Gaston is a noted southern historian and professor emeritus at UVa, and lifelong activist for civil rights. He was assaulted in the Memorial Day stand-in at Buddy’s Restaurant on Emmet Street in 1963, and supported anti-racist activities at the University throughout the 1960s.

Adelaide Griffin is the widow of Rev. L. Francis Griffin, who played a crucial role in creating a fair, open school system not only in Prince Edward County, but in the nation. As president of the local NAACP and chairman of the Moton High School PTA, Griffin supported the two-week strike by more than 400 Moton students in 1951, which led to the Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County case, a lawsuit later incorporated into Brown v. Board of Education. Flossie Hudson, a native of Prospect and life-long community servant, used the basement in her home to teach nearly 50 school-aged students when public schools in Prince Edward County closed rather than integrate. Joan Johns-Cobbs is the sister of Barbara Rose Johns-Powell (deceased), who in 1951 was a 16-year-old junior at the segregated Robert Russa Moton High School in Farmville when she organized a student strike over conditions in her school, which was designed to hold 180 students and had 450. The Farmville case became one of the five cases reviewed in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka.

Katherine Kilby is the widow of James Wilson Kilby, who fought relentlessly for quality education for black children. In 1958, he and other parents, with the backing of the NAACP, won a lawsuit against the Warren County School Board that led to the admission of 22 black students to the previously all-white Warren County High School, one of the early cracks in Virginia’s state-mandated wall of massive resistance to public school desegregation. Senator Henry L. Marsh, III was a partner in the law firm Hill, Tucker & Marsh in the 1960s and joined the fight against massive resistance. After having served on the Richmond City Council since 1966, Marsh won the mayor’s seat in 1977, becoming the first black mayor in the city’s history. In 1991, Marsh was elected Virginia State Senator from the 16th Senate District and is now serving...
his third term. Dr. Edward Peebles, sociologist, public health educator, civil rights activist, and documenter of the Prince Edward story for 44 years, participated in the February 1960 sit-ins at the Richmond Thalhimer’s department store and later led activism that resulted in reforms to eliminate discrimination in the federal disaster relief programs.

Dr. Milton A. Reid, a retired minister and civil rights leader, is current chair of the board of the Virginia Unit of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference that he helped to organize in 1960. Reid led a Prayer Pilgrimage to Prince Edward County and three other pilgrimages to the nation’s capital and was incarcerated 12 times for civil disobedience during his participation in the Civil Rights movement.

Dr. William Ferguson Reid, the first African American to serve on the Board of Education in the 1950s, is a retired minister and principal of Baltimore City Public Schools, and one of the leaders of the 1951 student strike at the R. R. Moton High School in Prince Edward County. He is now working on the Brown decision.

Among the Brown symposium’s honored guests were (front row, left to right) Dr. A. Johnson, Senator Henry Marsh, Mrs. Ida Lewis, Delegate Viola Baskerville, Congressman Bobby Scott, Dr. Paul Gaston, Dr. Milton Reid, John Stokes, and Dr. R. A. Johnson. Moderated this panel.

Other discussions and workshops focused on the backlash to and legacies of the Brown decision, considering the questions, “What still needs to be done in our nation’s quest for civil rights?” and “What problems did the Brown decision create or fail to address?” Dr. Stefan Bradley, from Southern Illinois University, moderated this panel, and presenters included Mrs. Brenda Edwards, senior research associate for the division of legislative services, Dr. Peter Wallenstein, associate professor of history, Virginia Tech, and Norman Neoverson, a Prince Edward County native. Concurrent workshops for both sessions were designed for high- and middle-school-aged participants from the Virginia counties and cities where desegregation was resisted with the closing of public schools. Awele Makeba, Fred Motley, and Jasper Hendricks facilitated these workshops.

Visit the VFH website to listen to comments and discussions from the symposium.

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Elaine Carter has been a member of the VFH Board of Directors since 2000, but her association with the Foundation began at the time of our first grant to Christiansburg Institute, Inc., in November 1999.

Christiansburg Institute (CI) was founded in 1866 in a log cabin, as a federal Freedmen’s Bureau initiative. It grew to include 14 primary buildings on a 185-acre campus in Christiansburg, becoming one of the most distinguished African American educational institutions in Virginia and the nation. The school closed in 1966.

Elaine grew up in Elliston, in rural Montgomery County, and graduated from CI at age 14. She went on to become an Assistant Commissioner with the New York Human Resource Administration; Assistant Dean of the Columbia University School of Architecture and Planning; President of a successful human resource consulting firm, Elaine Carter Associates; and the Executive Director of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, before returning to Virginia in 1996.

Working first as a volunteer, then as Executive Director, Elaine Carter has led a renaissance at CI, recapturing a history that was in danger of disappearing; developing an array of educational initiatives and programs that preserve and explore the school’s remarkable legacy; re-envisioning and defining a new mission for CI based on the values the school embodied; and steering the institution toward a future of renewed leadership.

It’s an inspiring story—as inspiring in its own way as the history of the school itself.

Here, in the first of an occasional series of interviews with distinguished friends and associates of the VFH, Sean Tubbs talks with Elaine about her personal history and the importance of CI.

— DAVID BEARINGER

Elaine Carter: Has Led a Renaissance at Christiansburg Institute

Elaine Carter: The only other high school that I knew of until I was a junior was the Lucy Addison High School in Roanoke. In Wytheville, the entire high school curriculum was taught in one room by one teacher until the early 1950s. There was no secondary school for African Americans in Pulaski County. They only offered subjects until ninth grade.

ST: You graduated at 14 and went to a suburb of Chicago to attend Rosary College. You transferred to Howard to finish your bachelor’s, and eventually went to Boston College to get a Master’s in Sociology. What prepared you to seek out a full education, and how was your initial transition into the working world?

EC: I was reared in my home to expect to go to college. My mother had gone to Fisk University. My father had finished at Virginia State, but there were no jobs for an African American male except teaching. When you live in an apartheid society, the broader opportunities that a society offers are unknown to you. At that time, most of the women who graduated from Howard University went to work for the government, and the men went to work for the post office. That was the world of opportunity.

ST: But, you were part of the generation that began to change all of that. Some of the things you went on to do from there, from managerial jobs in New York City government to starting your own firm, indicated you were either able to create your own experiences, or the world was changing. Can you explain?

EC: The world was changing. I was in Washington when it was desegregated in 1953, and I was beginning to see the world differently. New York was where I had a mercurial rise. The opportunity structure was broader, deeper, and when the anti-poverty program came along in the 1960s, it was a major

Sean Tubbs: You were born in Roanoke, but can you tell me where you grew up?

EC: My father was a hotel bellman at the Patrick Henry in Roanoke. My mother was a schoolteacher who read to us a lot. I began to go to school in Elliston in a two-room school. I read all the books in the small school library.

ST: Can you tell me what CI was like in the mid 1940s, when you were enrolled?

EC: For me, it was a touch of paradise to go from a two-room school to a campus with brick buildings, and marble stairs, and mahogany woodwork, and a large auditorium. It just opened me to worlds I had no knowledge of. The teachers were educated, they were attentive and respectful, and that made me feel very grown up and very responsible.

ST: Would that have contrasted with other African American schools in the region at that time?

EC: You were born in Roanoke, but can you tell me where you grew up?

Elaine Carter: I grew up in Elliston, my father’s hometown, a small village between Roanoke and Christiansburg. Elliston had a typical Southern pattern. The more well-to-do whites lived on the highway, and right behind them lived the African American community.

ST: What did your mother and father do?

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Demolition of the Christiansburg Institute campus
In the early 90s, you came back to Southwest Virginia to attend a Ph.D. program at Virginia Tech. How did you get involved with the Christiansburg Institute again?

EC: I had left very young and memories that I had were always very active in my mind, and I wanted to know more. I had been very cynical about the history of the school. When I was told its buildings were being demolished, I just said, “What do you think? We’re in the apartheid south!” So, I really brushed it off as symptomatic of an era I despised. But, to see these people who had lived here all of their lives and had vowed not to let the Institute die—–I fell in love with them and the project and became more and more involved.

ST: What have some of the obstacles been to getting the new CI off the ground?

EC: Well, remember, the school was destroyed. There was only one building left on its original foundations that was available. The wrecking ball had taken the rest down, buried them under. There was no historic commemoration on the part of the control board that had operated the school since 1934. The alumni decided the one thing they could do was to preserve its history through the collection of photographs, documents and artifacts. Right now, we have over 4,000 items. [There is a] kind of faith that makes things live and keeps things going. My cynicism had not been in the right direction.

ST: CI is now recognized as a historical landmark in on both the Virginia and national lists. Can you talk a little about where the restoration is now?

EC: We’ve had, a $300,000 predevelopment grant. We are well into development to restore the Edgar Long building and we are also going to build a new building, which is going to be a trades building. We have gotten quite a few partnerships with local community colleges and universities. We have rolled all of the restoration and construction into one project that has escalated the cost from $2.1 million to $4.5 million.

ST: What will be happening at the new CI when it is complete? What are some of the programs and in what spirit will they be taking place?

EC: The spirit is the legacy of CI, a legacy that held with deep conviction that every human being given the right opportunities could optimize their capabilities and with discipline and trust people could in fact grow. The whole notion of diversity, opportunity and trust in human capability, bringing those to bear again in ways that engage the community again through collaborative efforts… We want to tear down some of the walls that separate people, and we want to apply the experiential learning philosophy that was so much part of the Christiansburg Institute.

ST: What role did the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities play in helping contribute to the rebirth of the school?

EC: The VFH had the confidence to give this very young, embryonic organization (CI Incorporated) a grant. We were very new and we submitted a proposal for a traveling exhibit. And that exhibit is still showing. At the same time, the African American Heritage Program was emerging, and CI was in the first group of grant recipients. Being on the board has been a tremendous resource to me personally. I learned a great deal about what other organizations are doing, and it gave me a lot of clarity about how to pursue the course we were on.

ST: You spent most of your adult life outside of Virginia. What was returning to Virginia like?

EC: It’s been one of the most troublesome and the most expanding opportunities I’ve ever had. The mark of oppression is very much stamped into the hearts and minds of large numbers of African Americans. Their relationships with whites are by and large very traditional. Say what white people want you to say, do what they want you to do, and hurry home and close your door so that you can be away from them. That isn’t characteristic of everyone, but that’s a pronounced pattern.

ST: What can be done to help to bridge some of the gaps?

EC: One of the most positive ways is not to let African American institutions like the Christiansburg Institute die.

ST: What matters most in education?

EC: Just because your material building is bad it doesn’t necessarily mean your education is, because education is more than what goes on in the classroom. Education is a relationship between a person who knows more and who trusts your ability to grasp and to seize everything they have, and are willing to steer you beyond them to other places. And that was the educational process during the emancipation period, 100 years of apartheid in the southern United States. The torch carriers of the African American experience in America are Southern. And it’s because of the environments and the culture in which the education took place, meager though the resources were. It was the culture of the African American community that protected the talent and gave people the drive to push through the obstacles and the barriers.

The complete interview with Elaine Carter may be heard on the VFH website, virginiafoundation.org.
VFH Supports Furious Flower Poetry Center’s Conference on Black Poetic Expression

With the help of a VFH grant, the Furious Flower Poetry Center at James Madison University is organizing a public conference September 22-25 devoted to African American poetry and criticism entitled *Furious Flower: Regenerating the Black Poetic Tradition.*

Like the first nationally acclaimed Furious Flower conference held in Harrisonburg in 1994—which was also VFH-funded and regarded as a tremendous success—the upcoming conference will examine the significance and development of black poetic expression over the last century and explore its future trajectories.

Led by Dr. Joanne Gabbin of James Madison University, the conference promises to attract scholars, poets, and critics worldwide to introduce original work and explore innovative critical approaches for the general public. Poets who are confirmed to attend include Elizabeth Alexander, Amiri Baraka, Lucille Clifton, Toi Dericotte, Cornelius Eady, Nikki Giovanni, E. Ethelbert Miller, Sonia Sanchez, Natasha Trethewey, and Kevin Young.

The decision to wait 10 years before calling together another Furious Flower was a calculated one (some suggested that a conference of such magnitude should not be attempted more than once in a decade). The main themes of the upcoming conference were cultivated on the idea of carefully observed growth: “Roots and First Fruits” (examining folk traditions at the heart of major 20th century poets), “Cross-Pollination in the Diaspora” (assessing international impact of African American poetry in Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, Asia, and Europe), and “Blooming in the Whirlwind” (exploring the emergence of younger poets and the implications of poetry in the 21st century).

Sets of collectible poetry broadsides from the first Furious Flower are available from the VFH. For more information on the conference, visit [www.jmu.edu/furiousflower/](http://www.jmu.edu/furiousflower/).

Three Performances by the Paschall Brothers in Washington, D.C., During June

Virginia Folklife master artists The Paschall Brothers are performing at three national venues in June showcasing their unique Tidewater Gospel tradition. On June 15, the Paschalls were featured on the Neptune Plaza of the Library of Congress in the Library’s free public performance series of traditional music and dance that draws from communities across the United States and revives the Library’s tradition of folk music presentations dating back to the 1940s.

Later that same day, the Paschalls appeared on the Millennium Stage in the Grand Foyer of the Kennedy Center as part of the Kennedy Center’s Performing Arts for Everyone, an initiative launched in 1997 to expand and increase access to the performing arts for local Washington residents and visitors by offering free public performances 365 days a year.

The Paschalls will return to Washington, D.C., on June 25 to participate in a gospel showcase on the National Mall. This event is the signature concert of the first weekend of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival and highlights one of the Festival’s three themes: “Water Ways: The Past, Present, and Future of Maritime Communities in the Mid-Atlantic.”

The Paschall Brothers stand firmly in the tradition of unaccompanied religious singing in Tidewater Virginia. The black gospel quartet tradition can be traced back to plantation life in the South. The style blossomed in the region and by the 1920s found a national following with groups such as the Heavenly Gospel Singers and, notably, the Golden Gate Quartet of Norfolk. Formed in 1981 by the late Rev. Frank Paschall, Sr., the Paschall Brothers carry on this remarkable tradition and bring new life and energy to this venerable style. The Paschall Brothers CD entitled *Songs for Our Father* was released in 2003 by Virginia Folklife Recordings, a project of the Virginia Folklife Program and the VFH. Copies can be obtained by contacting the VFH, 434-924-3296, or by emailing folklife@virginia.edu.
VFH Establishes Planned Giving Advisory Council

As the VFH reaches its 30th Anniversary, we are looking to the future and what can be done to endow the work of the Foundation against the volatility of fluctuating markets and the uncertainty of private and government funding.

We are pleased to announce the establishment of a planned giving program at the VFH. The Foundation has assembled a group of advisors who have expertise and experience in various aspects of estate and gift planning—attorneys, financial planners, stockbrokers, and others. This Planned Giving Advisory Council will advise the VFH board and staff on marketing and implementing gifts that will serve as the basis for long-term stability for the VFH.

Additionally, the University of Virginia’s Office of Planned Giving has agreed to provide investment management for our planned gifts, gift structuring, and the administration of payments to our patrons. This support means that planned gifts made to the VFH will benefit from the strength and stability of one of the nation’s best performing investment portfolios.

Council members include Ron Feinman, estate planning attorney from Lynchburg; Jorgen Vik, financial planner with Merrill Lynch in Charlottesville; Mark Smith, Director of Planned Giving at the University of Virginia; Mary Ellen Stumpf, VFH Board member and President, Stumpf and Associates of Richmond; and Richard T. (Dick) Wilson, VFH Board member and Senior Managing Director, RBC Dain Rauscher, Richmond.

Not only does a planned gift help to ensure the future of an organization that you care about, it can also solve problems for the donor. Properly structured planned gifts can help to reduce income and estate taxes, or provide a stream of income to the donor or a designated beneficiary.

Over the next several months, we will be holding events and sending publications telling our friends about how to take advantage of this “win-win” situation. We hope you will become our partner by attending events, by telling a friend, and by considering a planned gift.
Let us know...

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Images from
VABook! 2004

Pulitzer Prize winning novelist Michael Chabon signs books for a line of eager fans after a reading from an “apocryphal chapter” from The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay.

VABook! 2004 featured three panels on the legacy of Brown v. Board of Education. Participants in the Prince Edward County story are (from left to right) Dorothy Holcomb, moderator Amy Tillerson, and Drs. Vonita White Foster and Gerald Foster.

Robin and Linda Williams, frequent guests on NPR’s Prairie Home Companion, join novelist and radio host Garrison Keillor for traveling music before the end of a VABook! 2004 headline event.