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# vfh **Views**

The Newsletter of the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities | Summer 2010

## The Humanities: Asking Ultimate Questions

BY ROBERTA CULBERTSON

**M**any of my favorite poets are soldiers. War distills life to its essence: there, the nature of ‘humanity’ is made clear in the language of ultimates: truth, right, duty, even beauty, and certainly love. Soldiers know this. To ask questions of or about the humanities, I always think it is well to start with war.

I have read Brian Turner’s “Curfew” many times (see p. 2). Turner has served in the current war in Iraq, the one not yet in the history books.

Before their histories there is always the poetry of wars. Each tells the same story differently. Poetry describes the *experience* of war. War poetry whipsaws between intense love and the most terrible gore, between aching beauty and the mundane made holy. “White birds rose from the Tigris:” we can see them, hear their wings above the ancient river. Only two lines before, we turned away from Sgt. Gutierrez comforting a grieving man who is likely crying as most never have. Poetry holds the heat and contradictions, and shows the way life crystallizes when death is close and somehow hungry.

Now I am reading the



*Aeneid*, which begins (in David West’s translation): “I sing of arms and of the man, fated to be an exile...” It is the story of Aeneas, a refugee from the final battle of Troy.

The *Aeneid* is largely a primer of war and its human consequences. Piece by anguished piece, Virgil constructs war: loyalty, family, death, suffering, betrayal, fate, the games of the gods and the gods’ limitations—intertwine and conflict to shape not only victory and loss but the fortunes of every soldier. Each soldier’s actions return to him in many ways—failure, loss, guilt, rage, regret, and confusion. Even so, despite the horror, Virgil says, there is also what must be done, often in blood, but what and why?

In Aeneas’s world, war is

Continued on page 2

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## The Humanities: Asking Ultimate Questions

Continued from cover

not only about will, and hardly about conflict: it is about destiny, obedience, great error, and duty. Unfortunately, it is generally put in service of the human emotions of jealousy, anger, and pride—a paradox that leads from trivialities to the highest callings and sacrifices. Aeneas carries his father from the burning city of Troy because of a beauty contest and a stolen bride. Many times the characters stop to ask why—and their best solution is to assume the gods are as venal as they.

Neither Virgil nor Turner gives us answers to war: they know the questions are more important, and likely answerable only by each of us alone. The study of poetry and other humanities disciplines draws us to an awed awareness of our own complexity, and our own paradoxical simplicity. Why are we like this? Why does horror come from such pettiness as jealousy—and how can it call forth heroism and loyalty? What is my responsibility as the gears of human perfidy and greatness grind together? There is the fundamental humanities question: why?

The humanities now, more than ever: in the realm of violence studies it is a most pressing truth. We need to see the patterns, to read Virgil and Turner and Sassoon and Heller and Homer together, weaving back and forth, to be sure we grasp our full humanity, and the inhumanity it bears within it. There are ques-

tions we must ask, and routes we must take when we forego the answers.

The humanities teach that there are no simple questions, no easy answers but many wrong ones, no convenient truths, no way to be human except by living with contradiction and incompleteness. This is not an easy truth, but it is one the VFH has embraced since its beginning.

The VFH Virginia Indian Heritage Program looks at questions raised during centuries of oppression by people who considered themselves “civilized.” VA Folklife programs raise questions about the simplistic lines drawn between rural and urban, past and present. Virginia Festival of the Book authors like Christopher Hedges present difficult realities in the controversially titled *War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning*. Over and over at the VFH, our grants, fellowships, radio programs, history books and more rediscover and report that nothing is easy though every people has tried to make it so. Perhaps the fall from grace is the discovery of chaos. Perhaps each generation faces the fall again, and then has to ask why.

Today, more than ever, always, the humanities. Pass it on. Pass out the books. Listen to the poets. Don't settle for less.

## Curfew

*The wrong is not in the religion;*

*The wrong is in us.*

—Saier T.

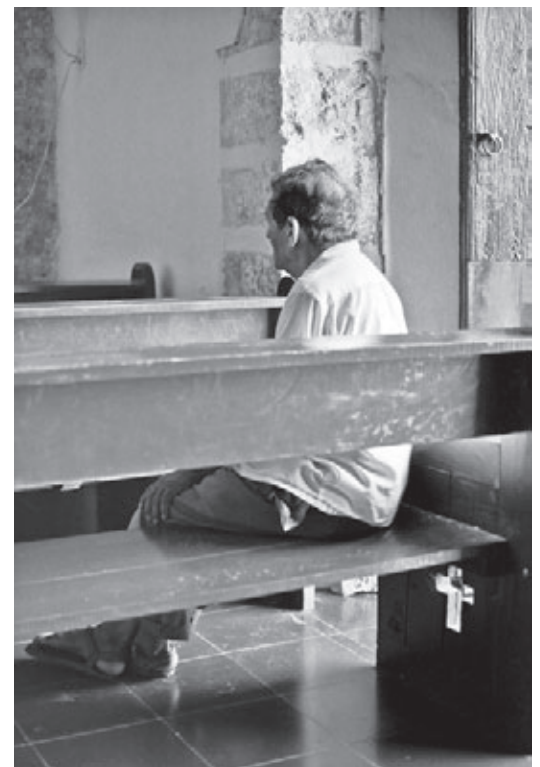
At dusk, bats fly out by the hundreds.  
Water snakes glide in the ponding basins  
behind the rubbled palaces. The mosques  
call their faithful in, welcoming  
the moonlight as prayer.

Today, policemen sunbathed on traffic islands  
and children helped their mothers  
string clothes to the line, a slight breeze  
filling them with heat.

There were no bombs, no panic in the streets.  
Sgt. Gutierrez didn't comfort an injured man  
who cupped pieces of his friend's brain  
in his hands; instead, today,  
white birds rose from the Tigris.

**Brian Turner**

(from *Here, Bullet*, Alice James Books, 2005)



Photograph by Hernán Lautaro Navarrete © *Tough Times Companion III*



Photograph by US Army Spc. Charles W. Gill, *Surviving War*

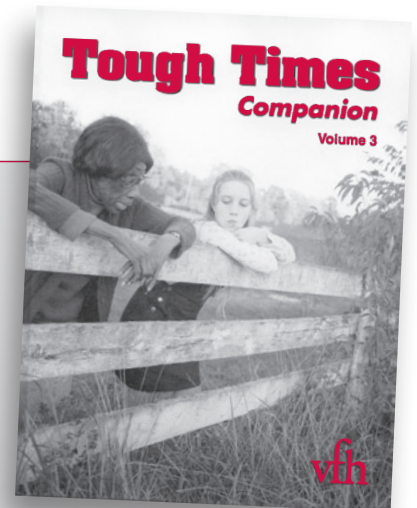
Ring the bells  
that still can ring

Forget your  
perfect offering

There is a crack  
in everything

That's how the  
light gets in.

Leonard Cohen  
excerpt from *Anthem*



***Tough Times Companion III* is a compendium of poems, photographs, essays, and fiction by the famous and the unknown. *Tough Times* offers those in difficult straits—illness, unemployment, abuse, grief—a humanities-based source of comfort: the words of others reaching across time and space to stand in witness.**

## Working Together: Civil Discourse

BY THE HONORABLE ROBERT BRINK  
(VFH Board, House of Delegates – 48<sup>th</sup> District)

Convening in Virginia's Capitol building, designed by Thomas Jefferson, seems to inspire a sense of civic responsibility in the members of the General Assembly. The chambers themselves, steeped in tradition, send a message of common purpose: regardless of ideological or regional differences, we are there to work together. And, by and large, we do. As a rule, the members of the House and Senate show an attitude of mutual respect despite differing opinions—the essence of civility.

But in Richmond and in legislative bodies across the nation, the civility that fosters cooperative effort is threatened by powerful forces that inject acrimony and mistrust into public discourse and deepen partisan divides. One such force is the modern legislative redistricting process, which creates gerrymandered, polarized districts. Too often legislators elected from such districts find themselves pulled away from the center, where the give-and-take of consensus-building encourages respect for opposing viewpoints. Instead, they become isolated at their own end of the ideological spectrum, and their opposite numbers far across the divide are transformed into archenemies rather than worthy opponents.

Equally harmful is the scorched-earth nature of contemporary political campaigns. Campaign consultants are paid handsomely for their advice, and more often than not their advice is to go negative on an opponent—because it “works.” Everything about the opponent is fair game: not just the public (policy positions) but the personal (motives and personal lives) as well. The scars of a brutal campaign often heal slowly: the successful politician who survives a months-long ordeal in which his integrity and character are impugned may understandably find the transition to working with his opponents in an atmosphere of mutual regard a difficult one.

Finally, the erosion of civility may be traceable in part to the narrowcasting of political discourse. With the advent of 24-hour cable news, Americans increasingly seek information and hear political discussion from sources that reinforce rather than challenge their existing beliefs. The more strident and less nuanced the presentation of those beliefs, the more successful their proponents are likely to be.

In his graduation speech at the University of Michigan on May 1, President Obama had some advice on how to break out of that

narrow information channel:

“If you're someone who only reads the editorial page of *The New York Times*, try glancing at the page of *The Wall Street Journal* once in awhile. If you're a fan of Glenn Beck or Rush Limbaugh, try reading a few columns on the Huffington Post website. It may make your blood boil; your mind may not often be changed. But the practice of listening to opposing views is essential for effective citizenship. So too is the practice of engaging in different experiences with different kinds of people.”

Exposure to differing viewpoints is the first step toward accepting their validity. Such acceptance in turn is a prerequisite to civil discourse on public issues. The alternative is the gridlock that is so corrosive to confidence in our public institutions.

As Chair of the VFH Board, I am grateful that a commitment to civil discourse and respect for opposing viewpoints are trademarks of our organization's programs. It keeps our many necessary public policy discussions positive and poised to improve our lives.





VIRGINIA  
FESTIVAL  
OF THE  
BOOK



# Sweet Sixteen Book Festival Sweeter Than Ever

BY SUSAN COLEMAN

Reading centers us and reminds us of our common story. The 16th anniversary Virginia Festival of the Book proved once again this spring that books and reading remain vibrant and vital to Virginia's cultural and economic landscape. Between March 17-21, a cumulative audience of 22,193 people gathered in Charlottesville and Albemarle County to attend 206 programs and discuss books and writing with more than 300 writers, illustrators, storytellers, and publishing professionals.

On Saturday alone, two of the largest attended events were held at the Paramount Theater. At noon, 900 children and their families, led by a brass band, paraded into the Paramount for a "Sesame Street Celebration," hosted by WVPT Public Television and featuring **Sonia Manzano**, aka "Maria" of *Sesame Street*. On Saturday evening the Paramount filled with 700 guests for "American Accents: An Evening with Distinguished Authors" **E. Ethelbert Miller**, **Colum McCann**, **Lee Smith**, and **Elizabeth Strout**. "American Accents" was recorded live by the VFH "With Good Reason" and can be heard at [withgoodreasonradio.org](http://withgoodreasonradio.org).

On Friday evening two back-to-back readings of poetry featured **Lyræ Van Clief-Stefanon**, **Haki Madahubuti**, **Major Jackson**, **Kevin Young**, and **Nikki Giovanni**. That same evening, readers of mysteries and thrillers were treated to "Friday Night Crimes" with **Rhys Bowen**, **John Hart**, **David Liss**, **Nancy Martin**, **Julia Spencer-Fleming**, and moderator **Katherine Neville**.

The popular annual Festival Luncheon featured **Michael Malone**, who left no

one guessing why he had won an Emmy, an O. Henry, and an Edgar Award. The Crime Wave Luncheon speaker was **Julia Spencer-Fleming** and the Business Breakfast speaker was **Michael Gelb**. Hosting the annual Authors Reception were **John Casteen IV**, **Cathy Maxwell**, **Andy Straka**, and **Phyllis Theroux**.

Helping behind the scenes and at every program were hundreds of volunteers. From the planning stages to program staffing to assessment and evaluation, volunteers make the Festival happen.

Also crucial to the success of the Festival are the individual, corporate, and foundation donors and contributors whom we recognize on the [vabook.org](http://vabook.org) website. Festival support is still welcome and needed annually to make this event shine. Visit [vabook.org](http://vabook.org) for more information or contact Center for the Book Director Susan Coleman at [spcoleman@virginia.edu](mailto:spcoleman@virginia.edu) or 434-982-2983 to find out how you can help with the seventeenth annual Virginia Festival of the Book, **March 16-20, 2011**.



TOP: **Sonia Manzano**, children's author and famous as "Maria" on *Sesame Street*, charmed an audience of over 900 parents and children at the Paramount.

ABOVE: Novelist **Michael Malone** greets a new fan after his hilarious turn as Festival luncheon speaker.

RIGHT: A magical evening at the Paramount with novelists **Lee Smith**, **Elizabeth Strout**, poet **E. Ethelbert Miller**, and novelist **Colum McCann**. *With Good Reason* host **Sarah McConnell** moderated the evening, which was taped as a *WGR* radio show.

FAR RIGHT: Poet **Nikki Giovanni**, also a former Board member of the VFH, greets an admirer.



# With Good Reason: Poetry in a Recession

BY LYDIA WILSON

*My sister's out of work and my brother's  
out of work and my other brother's  
out of work, these are facts available  
over the phone or in person, just as now,  
three clouds travel north, one  
above another, smallish, amoeba shaped,  
and the bottom cloud just died,  
and the top two have joined forces  
and left me to fend for myself  
under a new sky.*



Bob Hicok

A rapidly shifting environment that leaves one exposed and vulnerable, yet also able to see his surroundings in a new light, the opening lines of **Bob Hicok's** poem "In These Times" reveal the self-portrait of a former Detroit autoworker separated from his struggling family after he relocated thousands of miles away recently to teach poetry at Virginia Tech. For decades, Hicok designed part of the process for automotive production lines, a life he described to host Sarah McConnell host and listeners of "With Good Reason" earlier this year.

"Poetry is such a tiny thing in this country," observes Hicok, and yet his gift for expressing the tensions and beauty in everyday life through language earned him a tenure track position, as well as a Guggenheim Fellowship. "Poetry has given me a level of comfort and security that the more traditional, expected route would not have at this point," he reflected. Hicok's own brother, an attorney, was forced to leave his home state of Michigan to take a teaching position in Alaska. His sister lives again at home with their parents.

Support for the arts and the humanities during hard times, then, is not an intellectual question for Hicok. In his home community, funding these disciplines competes with helping a family put a meal on the table. As a poet, Hicok certainly believes in continuing support, but he says he won't pound his fist on the table insistently. "To me, it's always been a quieter thing. The arts don't go away. There's never been much money offered to it, but it doesn't die. It doesn't go away. That tells me that art is so fundamental to human nature. Students who have been through arts training end up being fuller. When we [zero out those budget lines], we're largely wiping ourselves away."

To hear Bob and Sarah's conversation, as well as a celebration of poetry with Lisa Russ Spaar and an exploration of nonsense literature with Kevin Shortleeve, visit the "With Good Reason" website at [www.bit.ly/wgrpoet](http://www.bit.ly/wgrpoet).

*I'm only praying  
you listen to the theory  
that how we get to be alone  
is how we work to be together,  
since there are stars  
inside your thumb, your breath,  
and how you say yes or no is  
how they shine  
or go out.*

— excerpts from "In These Times" by **Bob Hicok**

The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress in partnership with Target presents  
**LETTERS ABOUT LITERATURE**  
Letters About Literature is a national reading and writing promotion program.

The Virginia Center for the Book announces the 2009-2010 state winners for the **Letters About Literature** program.

More than 2,600 Virginia students entered the competition and 70,000 participated nationwide. In Virginia, the competition is sponsored by the Center for the Book and nationally by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress and Target Stores.

#### LEVEL I, GRADES 4, 5, AND 6

**Olivia Marcantonio** of Colvin Run Elementary (Vienna) for her letter to Jerry Spinelli, author of *Stargirl*

#### LEVEL II, GRADES 7 AND 8

**Emma Leeds Armstrong** of the Village School (Charlottesville) for her letter to Betty Smith, author of *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*

#### LEVEL III, GRADES 9, 10, 11, AND 12

**Julie Krask** of Kellam High School (Virginia Beach) placed first in Level III for her letter to Laurie Halse Anderson, author of *Wintergirl*

Guidelines and entry forms for the 2010-2011 competition will be available in early September at the [virginiafoundation.org/bookcenter](http://virginiafoundation.org/bookcenter) website.



2009-10 Letters about Literature winners (FROM LEFT) **Emma Leeds Armstrong, Olivia Marcantonio, and Julie Krask.**

# The Humanities at Work in the African American Museums and Historic Sites Network

BY CAROLYN CADES

In 2006, the Legacy Museum in Lynchburg, working in partnership with the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, received grant funding from the Institute for Museum and Library Services through its newly established Museum Grants for African American History and Culture program to support the creation of a network of African American history museums in the south-central Piedmont region of Virginia.

During the successful two-year pilot project, staff, board members, and volunteers from the six participating institutions, with the support of the Virginia Association of Museums (VAM) and members of the VFH staff, participated in joint professional training sessions, shared information, ideas, and resources, and worked together to establish a Central Virginia Network of African American Museums.

In December of 2009, VAM, the Legacy Museum of Lynchburg, and the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities brought together representatives from museums and historic sites across the Commonwealth to explore the feasibility of broadening this initial effort into a statewide Virginia African American Museums and Historic Sites Network, and to consider its potential benefits for museums, historic sites, and audiences throughout Virginia.

Several clear priorities were identified: the urgent need for preservation of objects and of oral history; the education of the next generation of museum-goers; and the need for networking and mutual support among museums and historic sites with an African American story to tell.

At subsequent meetings in March and April of 2010, members focused their attention on the powerful economic impact of museums and

historic sites in building communities and driving African American heritage tourism. All recognized the need for public education programs focusing on the importance of preserving African American history.

Museums and historic sites develop strong local constituencies. By linking these constituencies together, the Network could easily become a powerful force for education in the Commonwealth, while energizing local efforts through the sharing of information and mutual support.

Much work remains to be done to

fully establish this Network of museums and historic sites, but the energy and ideas generated in the project's exploratory phase have far exceeded expectations, and new ideas and the participation of museums and historic sites throughout the state are welcome.

VFH and the Virginia Association of Museums are pleased to support these efforts, which are being directed by members of the state's African American museum community, and we will continue to inform our readers of the Network's progress and of new efforts born as a result.

African American Museums Network participants meet at VAM conference in March 2010.





# Good News That's "Shaping Our Common Story"

▶ The Virginia Indian Heritage Program won the 2009 Schwartz Prize, given annually by the Federation of State Humanities Councils for outstanding work in public humanities; it is the sixth time the VFH has received the prize.

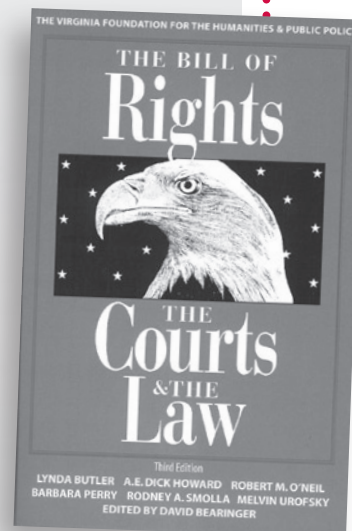
▶ *With Good Reason* has been honored with its second consecutive Gabriel Award, winning *Best Arts Programming – Local Release for 2010*. The winning entry, "Furious Flower," features an intimate talk with Lucille Clifton, former Poet Laureate of Maryland, in the final interview before her death in February 2010.

▶ Charlottesville Business Innovation Council has named VFH a finalist for a 2010 Spotlight Award to recognize the EdUi conference, held in September 2009. EdUi raised the level of knowledge about web design, web site usability, and the fundamental principles of web user experience among schools, museums, universities, historic societies, and scholars working on digital projects. The next EdUi is scheduled for November 2010.

▶ Karenne Wood, Director of the Virginia Indian Heritage Program, was invited to speak at a United Nations Forum on the topic "Indigenous Writers on Writing" on Wednesday, April 28, at the United Nations Building, New York.

▶ This spring Virginia Folklife Program Director Jon Lohman emceed the Mid-Atlantic Tour of "Music From the Crooked Road: Mountain Music of Virginia." The 14-city tour featured some of the finest of Virginia's bluegrass, old time, and mountain gospel musicians, including numerous participants in Virginia Folklife programs.

▶ Since January, VFH has distributed 1600 free copies of its book *The Bill of Rights, the Courts, and the Law* to schools, libraries, organizations, and individuals statewide.



## Staff Departures

**Jesse Dukes**, Associate Producer, *With Good Reason*, will build on his work as a freelance journalist. At the end of May, Jesse will spend a week reporting on the Zabaleen, a group of Coptic Christians in Cairo, for the *Virginia Quarterly Review*. From Cairo he'll travel to Tanzania to help lead a group of UVA's Jefferson Scholars on a journey to Arusha, in the sight of Mount Kilimanjaro, exploring the local cultures. Look for Jesse right back here in Charlottesville in September, and possibly at NYU for graduate school in the Fall of 2011.

During **Hilary Holladay's** two years as Director of the Fellowship Program, she established sabbatical relationships with four universities, led the first VFH-UVA Public Humanities Fellowship Program in South Atlantic Studies for UVA Ph.D. candidates, and fostered record participation in donations by Fellows. With JMU's Furious Flower Poetry Center, she led a seminar on Lucille Clifton and was featured with Clifton on the VFH's *With Good Reason* radio program that was honored with a national Gabriel Award. Hilary is writing a new book, *Understanding Sylvia Plath*, for the University of South Carolina Press's Understanding Contemporary American Authors Series, and finishing her biography of Herbert Huncke, a key figure during the Beat Movement.

**Lydia Wilson**, Program Associate, Media Programs, has been named a Roy H. Park Fellow at the University of North Carolina for two years, starting this Fall. She will pursue a Masters Degree in Journalism. Lydia has worn many hats during her time at the VFH – Publicity Coordinator for *With Good Reason*, Editor and Producer of VFH Radio's Humanities Feature Bureau, and Producer of Folklife Fieldnotes; along with freelance work for our local NPR Affiliates, WMRA and WVTF, APM's Week-end America, and the *New York Times* online.



# Sustainability & Renewal

## NATIVE AMERICAN WISDOM IN AGRICULTURE

BY DAVID BEARINGER

**A**cross the Commonwealth, Virginians are reconsidering their relationship to the earth, and to the ways their food is planted, grown, and harvested. The humanities often make essential contributions to this process.

In seeking a sustainable future, individuals, families, and communities are drawing ideas and inspiration from the past, connecting newer technologies and the fruits of modern research with deeply embedded traditions and approaches to locally-based food production.

Insights gained from the study of history, from oral traditions, and sometimes from other cultures have added strength and meaning to the shift away from highly mechanized and chemi-

cally sustained processes and helped to propel what amounts to a revolution in community-supported agriculture state-and-nationwide.

In March, the VFH and the Virginia Indian Heritage Program, working in partnership with UVa's Institute for Environmental Negotiation, Virginia Tech, and the World Healing Institute, presented two programs entitled "Sustainability and Renewal: Native American Wisdom in Agriculture."

These programs, one in Blacksburg, the other on Virginia's Eastern Shore, focused on the ways traditional societies are connected to the earth through their agricultural

practice, and how Native (in this case Navajo) traditions, values, and beliefs are the basis for practical decisions about the growing and harvesting of food.

**Rose Marie Williams** and **Jamescita Peshlakai** (both Navajo) spoke to large, enthusiastic audiences at both sites about their efforts to reinvigorate and revive Native traditions in northwest Arizona, and about what they consider to be their sacred duty, as Native American women, to pass on traditional values and beliefs through their agricultural practice.

Williams is a Navajo farmer and rancher of the Towering House Clan, born for the Many Goats Clan, and comes from a family with long experience in farming and ranching. She practices dry farming, dry irrigation and natural spring water farming, and grows many crops as well as raising livestock on the Navajo reservation.

Peshlakai is a Navajo of the Tangle People Clan, born for the Redhouse Clan. She was born and raised in the western portion of the Navajo reservation and is a U.S. Army combat veteran of the Persian Gulf War. Currently, she is Lead Coordinator of the Navajo Nation Traditional Agricultural Outreach program, and has been working



ABOVE: Rose Marie Williams and Jamescita "Tina" Peshlakai with David Bearinger of VFH, following a tour of the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington. Photo courtesy of Tanya Denkla-Cobb.

RIGHT: Pictured, left to right: Tanya Denkla-Cobb (UVA Institute for Environmental Negotiation), Rose Williams, Cecil Cobb, Jamescita Peshlakai, David Bearinger, Annie Hess (World Healing Institute). Photo by Elvin Hess.





with Williams through an organization called *Dine, Inc.* to develop new markets for traditionally grown Navajo food products.

For more than two decades, the VFH has worked closely with Virginia's state-recognized Indian tribes, an experience that led us, early on, to broaden our conception of what it means to be a "humanities scholar." Within this broader framework, indigenous knowledge stands on an equal footing with academic scholarship.

Williams and Peshlakai embody Navajo traditions, which are living traditions with root systems reaching back thousands of years. But in their agricultural work, they have also embraced skills and methods derived from many sources, and have influenced farmers from other cultures in the same way.

Williams was invited to participate in this year's Women in Agriculture conference in Baltimore, which brought them east and gave us the opportunity to host their visit to Virginia.

They spoke in Blacksburg to the annual Virginia Indian Nations Summit on Higher Education (VIN-SHE) conference, sharing their wisdom with members of the Virginia Tech and Blacksburg communities, and with representatives of state-recognized Virginia tribes.

They were also featured two days later in a program organized by the World Healing Institute, at the historic Cobb Island Station near the village of Oyster on Virginia's Eastern Shore, surrounded by land that was once the home of Virginia Assateague people and that for centuries has been among the most agriculturally productive in the nation.

The Virginia Foundation is committed to creating cultural bridges, exploring vital issues and questions through the lens of the humanities, encouraging new thinking across disciplines, and to programs that engage broad, diverse audiences.

Programs like this one—that reach across cultures and draw connections between history and tradition, issues in the present, and the search for a better, more sustainable future—give new currency to the humanities and reach to the heart of our essential mission.

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## THE VIRGINIA FOLKLIFE PROGRAM ON THE ROAD



Summer/Fall 2010

### JULY 9-11

National Folk Festival, Butte, Montana; presenting Virginia artists.  
[www.nationalfolkfestival.com/2010](http://www.nationalfolkfestival.com/2010)

### JULY 22-25

Floydfest, Floyd, Virginia;  
VFP will sponsor the Virginia Folklife Porch stage.  
[www.floydfest.com](http://www.floydfest.com)

Guitar workshop on the Virginia Folklife Program Stage, Floydfest



### AUGUST 9-14

Galax Old Time Fiddlers Convention, Galax, Virginia  
[www.oldfiddlersconvention.com](http://www.oldfiddlersconvention.com)

### SEPTEMBER 4

Albert Hash Memorial Festival, Grayson County, Virginia; organized by the VFP to honor fiddle maker and community leader Albert Hash.  
[www.myspace.com/alberthashmemorialfestival](http://www.myspace.com/alberthashmemorialfestival)

### SEPTEMBER 17-19

Bristol Rhythm and Roots Reunion, Bristol, Virginia. The VFP's Virginia Folklife Stage features some of Virginia's finest traditional artists.  
[www.bristolrhythm.com](http://www.bristolrhythm.com)

### OCTOBER 8-10

Richmond Folk Festival. The VFP will curate and host the Virginia Folklife Area, "Maritime to Mountain Time," presenting traditional arts of the Virginia coal fields and seacoast.  
[www.richmondfolkfestival.org](http://www.richmondfolkfestival.org)

## Spring 2010 VFH Fellows



Spring 2010 VFH Fellows, their affiliations, and book projects are **W. John Green** (front row, far right), Senior Research Fellow, Council on Hemispheric Affairs, *Kill the Messengers: A History of Political Murder in Latin America*; **Bill Freehling**, VFH Senior Fellow, *Lincoln's Growth and America's*, and *Showdown in Virginia: The 1861 Convention and the Fate of the Union*; **Maurie McInnis**, Art History, UVa, *Slaves Waiting for Sale*; **Martien Halvorson-Taylor**, Religious Studies, UVa, *The Pharaoh's Palace and the Bed of Ahasuerus: Memory, Diaspora and Identity in the Hebrew Bible*; **Ted Delaney**, History, Washington and Lee University, *School Desegregation in Western Virginia and Southern Identity*; **Kristin Swenson**, Religious Studies, VCU, *Serpents of Fire and the Winged Cherubim: Biblical Images of the Supernatural*; and **Hanadi Al-Samman**, Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Cultures, UVa, *Anxiety of Erasure: Trauma, Authorship, and the Diaspora in Arab Women's Narrative*.

## VFH bids farewell to six outgoing Board members

**Audrey Davis** (Alexandria), **Rhoda Dreyfus** (Charlottesville), **John Fishwick, Jr.** (Roanoke), and **William Wiley** (Richmond) joined the Board in 2004; **Lisa Gable** (Upperville) joined in 2007 and **Randolph Church** (McLean) started his third three-year term the same year. They quickly began to make a difference – asking insightful questions about our operations, financial management, and marketing efforts. We've been strengthened as an organization by their push for excellence in all areas. But what we'll miss most is this group's enthusiasm for the work of the VFH and their commitment to ensuring its future.



Audrey Davis



Rhoda Dreyfus



John Fishwick, Jr.



William Wiley



Lisa Gable



Randolph Church

## VFH Seeks Board Nominations

The Nominating Committee of the VFH Board is looking for nominees who are broadly representative of the citizens of Virginia, including all geographic regions of the Commonwealth, and the various civic, ethnic and minority group interests. We strive to sustain a balance among scholars in the humanities, civic and business leaders, cultural leaders, and the general public. We are looking for people who will:

- **Represent the World to VFH by conveying humanities needs to VFH, represent academic disciplines, and be aware of trends that may affect VFH or its beneficiaries;**
- **Represent VFH to the World** by connecting VFH to potential beneficiaries, funders, and partners, speak on behalf of VFH to peers and communities, and advocate for VFH in the political arena;
- **Be informed** about VFH program and administrative issues;
- **Be effective Board Members** by preparing for Board Meetings, understanding the pressures that shape VFH, using life skills for benefit of organization and state, participating in fund raising, providing oversight and governance; and above all...
- **Understand, believe in, and articulate the VFH Mission.**

If you would like more information about becoming a board member or about making a nomination, please contact VFH Board Nominating Committee, c/o Sheryl Hayes, [sheryl@virginia.edu](mailto:sheryl@virginia.edu).

## Excerpts from Letters of Support for VFH

**G**iven the recent State budget process and national economic challenges, the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities sends its message of thanks to the many who have advocated for and supported the VFH—this year and always.

For more than 35 years, the VFH's mission has been to develop the civic, cultural, and intellectual life of the Commonwealth. Through its wide range of exemplary programs and resources, the VFH assists individuals, families, schools and communities understand the past, confront important issues in the present, and shape a promising future. Below we provide a sample of Virginians' responses for VFH support:

"...The Virginia Foundation for the Humanities generates and invests revenue in communities throughout the Commonwealth through the historical and cultural research, publications, and programs it supports. VFH programs help save the state and nation money in difficult to measure but important ways. Humanities research helps us see new dimensions of historical issues or understand how old solutions can be creatively adapted to new situations. ..."

— **Deborah A. Lee**

*Independent Scholar and Public Historian, Purcellville, Virginia*

"...There is much more to be done to bring forth the many contributions made by African-Americans in Virginia. VFH has been a leading force in this effort. Without their support I feel that so much would be lost in telling these stories..."

— **Rebecca Gilmore Coleman**

*Past President, Orange County African-American Historical Society*

"...I am part of the VFH Master and Apprentice program 2009, as Master of Traditional Hunting Methods. Hunting is an on going tradition in Virginia and generates much money for the state. I have done much this year to promote this tradition. As a native of Virginia I feel that the VFH is without any doubt the back bone of our culture for generations to come."

— **Olin Bare**

*2009-2010 Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Teams Master Artist, Rockbridge County*

"...I've been attending [the Virginia Festival of the Book] for years. When I first attended, there weren't a lot of folks in the audiences. Now, it's crowded. My daughter and I attended 16 sessions last year, and every session was packed... The festival is predominantly free, and a wonderful gift for lots of folks..."

— **Patricia Pullen**

*Charlottesville, VA*

"...The humanities are relevant to our human lives. Literature, philosophy, religion, history, and the arts reflect the attempts of human beings to respond to their experience in some way that makes sense of it, perhaps even in some way that enables people to forge a bond with one another. In connecting the points between us and showing direction, the humanities map our location. They help us to see the larger picture and to find our place within it..."

— **Cathie Brettschneider**

*Humanities Editor, University of Virginia Press*

## South Atlantic Fellows



Clockwise, from back left are **Hilary Holladay**, VFH; South Atlantic Fellows **Ana Alves**, **Scott Spencer**, **Stephen Silverstein**, **Jason Farr**, **Tim Lovelace**, **Jon Forney**, **Steve Knepper**, **Jennifer Elliott**, and **Elizabeth Ladner** (not pictured, **Todne' Thomas Chipumoro**).

**D**uring the spring 2010 semester, the VFH and the University of Virginia inaugurated the Public Humanities Fellowship Program in South Atlantic Studies. The new initiative brought 10 Ph.D. candidates from UVa to the VFH for a twice-monthly seminar culminating in a public conference. Led by Hilary Holladay, director of the VFH Fellowship Program, the students learned how to write and speak for audiences outside their academic disciplines.

The South Atlantic Fellows heard guest talks by resident VFH Fellows and participated in group critiques of one another's writing. The seminar culminated in the South Atlantic Studies Forum on April 28 at UVa's Newcomb Hall Art Gallery. Students, UVa faculty, and members of the public attended the forum, where the grad-student Fellows presented short papers on their dissertation topics. Grouped into panels, the presentations included History Ph.D. candidate Tim Lovelace's "Atlanta Apartheid and the United Nations Race Convention," Art History Ph.D. candidate Jennifer Elliott's "Constructing Cherokee Plantations," Ana Alves's "Interstate Violence in Latin America: Two Puzzles," and English Ph.D. candidate Steve Knepper's "Southern Studies and the Agricultural Legacy of the Plantation." The forum concluded with a keynote lecture by Claudrena Harold, assistant professor of history at UVa, speaking on "From South Carolina to Johannesburg: Cultural and Political Articulations of the Global South in the Black Radical Imagination."

The South Atlantic fellowship program was created by Hilary Holladay and Bruce Holsinger, UVa's Associate Dean for Humanities and the Arts. It grew out of the South Atlantic Humanities Project, a collaborative endeavor funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.





**Virginia Foundation  
for the Humanities**

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## MAPPING LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

# Danville, Virginia 1945 – 1975

.....  
This online exhibit examines the responses of ten Danville residents to the civil rights struggle that occurred in their hometown. Text by Emma C. Edmunds, principal researcher, is accompanied by the work of Charlottesville photographer, Tom Cogill, who took portraits of individuals who shared their stories. Funding was provided by the VFH and the Elizabeth Stuart James Grant Trust of Danville.  
.....

[www.vcdh.virginia.edu/cslk/danville](http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/cslk/danville)



**Ruth W. Isley and  
Charles T. Oliver**  
Photos by Tom Cogill