

American Folklore Society Monthly News Bulletin

March 2009

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

John Cephas, 1930-2009

Piedmont blues guitar master and National Heritage Fellow John Cephas died March 4th, 2009. With his passing we have lost an irreplaceable national treasure. Cephas was not only a great artist, but also a great supporter and defender of the traditional arts. For information about Cephas and his long-time performing partner Phil Wiggins, please go to www.cephasandwiggins.net/.

Memorial University Ethnographers Receive Canada's Highest Scholarly Accolade

Last fall, Beverley Diamond (Director of the MMAP Research Centre and the Canada Research Chair in Ethnomusicology) and Gerald Pocius (University Research Professor and member of both the archaeology and folklore departments) of the Memorial University of Newfoundland were named to the Royal Society of Canada (RSC), the highest academic honor in Canada.

In citing Dr. Pocius's accomplishments, the RSC refers to him as "English Canada's leading interpreter of ordinary objects." By looking at how everyday things are used, the society goes on to comment, Dr. Pocius, "has produced studies both sensitive and rigorous, earning him international standing as a scholar. While trained as a folklorist, he is a true interdisciplinarian."

Dr Pocius, the director of the Centre for Material Culture Studies, has researched and written on a variety of topics and has worked on many aspects of Newfoundland folklore and popular culture. He has published three books to date, including *A Place to Belong* (2001), which won the prestigious Chicago Folklore Prize and the Cumming Awards from the Vernacular Architecture Forum in the U.S. Since 2002, he has worked extensively with UNESCO, the Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador on intangible cultural heritage issues.

The Royal Society of Canada calls Dr. Beverley Diamond “a guiding voice in contemporary ethnomusicology in Canada” and “an inspiring mentor to more than 70 MA and PhD students” and credits her for developing cross-cultural perspectives on gendered musical practices. Dr. Diamond is the director of the Music, Media and Place Research Centre (MMA) and is the country’s only senior research chair in music.

Diamond and Pocius were inducted into the Royal Society’s ranks at a ceremony last November 15 in Ottawa.

The RSC elects members from all branches of learning who have achieved national and international recognition by publishing learned works or original research in the arts, humanities and sciences. Founded in 1882, the country’s oldest scholarly organization currently has about 1,800 fellows.

Pat Turner Quoted in Politico

Rumor scholar Patricia Turner of the University of California, Davis, was quoted in a March 1 Politico.com story about Birthers: people who believe that Barack Obama is an illegitimate President because, they say, he was not legally born in the United States.

To see the full story, visit www.politico.com/news/stories/0209/19450.html.

AFS Eastern Asia Folklore Section Announces Yeh Prize

The Eastern Asia Folklore Section of the American Folklore Society is proud to present the Jonathan T. Y. Yeh Award for Student Scholarship in Asian and Asian American Folklore. The award aims to foster and promote graduate and undergraduate students in the early stages of their careers, encourage advanced scholarly research and publication on Asian and/or Asian American folklore subjects, and support AFS members who want to participate more actively in the society. The \$500 prizewinner will be announced at the annual meeting for the best student research paper that contributes to Asian and/or Asian American folklore studies through research and analysis.

The co-conveners of the section will form the committee, together with three additional members, including Nora Yeh, to select the papers. At the time of application, the applicant must be a registered full-time graduate or undergraduate student under 30 years old. He or she can be enrolled in any discipline in an US academic institution. The work must show compelling prospects for the publication of his or her scholarly work and demonstrate a

dedication to research and/or teaching folklore studies.

All applications must include a one-page cover letter describing the applicant's background and current activities, indicating why the applicant deserves consideration for this award; a one-page CV; a 10-12 page research paper, double-spaced (approximately 2,500 words); and two letters of recommendation from academic institutions or equivalent, sent under separate cover (e-mail attachments are acceptable).

Please send all materials via e-mail and in hard copy to Fariha Khan, fariha@sas.penn.edu, Asian American Studies Program, University of Pennsylvania, 166 McNeil Building, 3718 Locust Walk, Philadelphia PA 19104 USA. All complete applications must be received by **July 1** and will be evaluated by the committee members by September 1. The prize will be awarded at the AFS annual meeting each October.

American Folklife Center Offers Research Awards

The American Folklife Center is still accepting applications for its 2009 research awards. This year, we are awarding one or more awards from the Gerald E. and Corinne L. Parsons Fund, and one or more awards from the Blanton Owen Fund. Applications are due no later than **March 6**.

Brief descriptions of these awards are below. For full descriptions, and instructions on how to apply, please visit www.loc.gov/folklife/grants.html.

(1) The Gerald E. and Corinne L. Parsons Fund Award

The purpose of the Gerald E. and Corinne L. Parsons Fund is to make the collections of primary ethnographic materials housed anywhere at the Library of Congress available to the needs and uses of those in the private sector. Awards may be made either to individuals or to organizations in support of specific research projects.

Projects may:

- *Lead to publication in media of all types, both commercial and non-commercial
- *Underwrite new works of art, music, or fiction
- *Involve academic research
- *Contribute to the theoretical development of archival science
- *Explore practical possibilities for processing ethnographic collections in the Archive of Folk Culture or elsewhere in the Library of Congress
- *Develop new means of providing reference service

- *Support student work
- *Experiment with conservation techniques
- *Support ethnographic field research leading to new Library acquisitions.

Awards may be made in amounts up to \$1,000.

(2) The Blanton Owen Fund Award

The Blanton Owen Fund Award was established in 1999 in memory of folklorist Blanton Owen by his family and friends to support ethnographic field research and documentation in the United States, especially by young scholars and documentarians. Currently, this award is offered every other year. The main component of a project eligible for this award is ethnographic fieldwork leading to cultural documentation in the form of field notes, audio and video recordings, and photographs.

Awards may be made in amounts up to \$800.

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