

Our Department
A Word from Gregory M. Pfitzer, Chair

Zangrando Turpie Prize Recipient

In November, 2005, American historians and critics of many stripes all over the USA gathered together to celebrate the Zangrando Turpie Prize recipient. AMERICAN STUDIES

and program development at the local or regional level.

Zangrando is pictured above, at the conference, with Linda Borish and former American Studies Association President (and retired Professor of History, Temple), Allen Davis.

**American Studies
Majors/Minors
Abroad**

life in South Africa is like. We had to cross the river to attend a funeral in

the nearby village of Zalaze, a one-hour hike across the river and up a mountain. The family with whom I stayed in Gcinisa did not speak any English, so it made for an interesting time. I was in charge of feeding our family's goats and chickens for the week, and on Monday we went to sell them in a neighboring village (also pictured). The government gives the residents of Gcinisa a small amount of free electricity every month as part of an electrification project, so we did have lights. What we did not have was running water or toilets, and I had to purify my water with bleach. If you've ever tasted water with a few drops of bleach in it, you'll know how awful that can be. All in all, though, the visit to Gcinisa was a

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Our Seniors: The Class of 2006

Caitlin Bannon, Downers

Our Faculty

Janet Casey

Having taught since 2001 in Skidmore's English Department, Janet is now officially "shared" by English and American

Mary C. Lynn

2005-2006 marked the inauguration of the new First Year Experience program at Skidmore, whose centerpiece was the new system of Scribner Seminars offering first year students their choice of more than forty interdisciplinary seminars, each taught by a faculty member passionate about their seminar topic. Professors teaching the seminars served as faculty advisors for all fifteen of the first year students in their courses. Professor Mary C. Lynn volunteered to offer the American Studies department's first seminar, American Taste, an interdisciplinary analysis of the evolution of American cuisine. Beginning with a taste of native American food, offered by American Studies alumnus Jim Bruchac (1994), the class then studied regional food patterns of the colonial period (spending an afternoon at the Saratoga National Historical Park experimenting with camp cooking in the Revolutionary army, cooking cornmeal mush on an open fire in the pouring rain). First year students in the seminar were then paired with senior majors in Lynn's 300-level Religion in American Culture course for another

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Our Student Assistants



**American Studies
Majors Abroad**

(Continued from page 2)

woman who does not speak English and is the nicest, best host mother one could ask for. She

never had children, so sadly I don't have any host siblings to hang out with; but I'm still extremely lucky to live with her. I am taking four classes with IES, my study abroad program; one with IES students at a local school called Lenguas Vivas, and a tango class with Argentine students at IUNA (a local university). Tango began in Buenos Aires and is everywhere, so I thought it appropriate to learn! Two of my classes, including the one I am taking for American Studies credit, are taught in English but the others are in Spanish. My language skills are not where I would like them to be, but everyday they improve and everyday I grow a bit more confident. I have never lived in a city, so, in addition to the cultural and language change, I am getting used to living with millions of neighbors. I mainly use 'colectivos' (busses) because they are by far the most popular mode of transportation with over 300 lines, but I also use the 'subte' and

walk, walk, walk everyday. I have only been out of the city once to go to Mar Del Plata, but am currently waiting to leave to visit a friend I met in high school who lives in La Plata. Over the semester I plan on visiting different parts of Argentina and hopefully I will also make it to Brazil, Chile, and perhaps some other nearby countries. Money will be the deciding factor!

Sarah says, "The reason I took this picture is because the food here is SO good and SO cheap, especially the beef. I eat out with my friend so much because we get delicious wine, meat, and desserts for about 10 US dollars."

Alissa Moore '07, Italy

I've been in Florence, Italy this semester

Majors:

- Dan Bentley '07
- David Bernstein '07
- Karen Brudvig '07
- Shauna Covell '07
- Sarah Jeffrey '07
- Anne Knopf '07
- Josh Lauren '07
- Nate Levy '07
- Sam McHale '07
- Sarah Mitchell '07
- Alissa Moore '07
- Katherine Reid '07
- Brian Salcido '07

- Alex Shapiro '07
- Ben Thomas '07
- Kate Morris '08
- Kacey Schneider '08
- Carrie von Glahn '08

Minors:

- Emily Carnevale '07
- Kathleen Jevne '07
- Allison Klein '07
- Jessica Mayer '07
- Dan Shapiro '07
- Peter Zogas '07
- Kelsey Lewis '08

a scholarly direction, possibly toward environmental science, literature, or

Fatimah Mahdi, New York, NY (Minor)

The more American Studies classes I took, the more I knew that this was the major for me. After I graduate, I plan on using all of the knowledge and skills from American Studies classes and from my years at Skidmore to try my hand at teaching. After having spent some time working in a local elementary school, I have realized that this is in many ways my calling. My hope is to move to Colorado at the end of the summer, teach for a couple of years and get my masters soon after.

After graduation I will be



spending the summer in Saratoga, working and relaxing.

Michelle Kim, Oakland Gardens, NY (Minor)

I wish I knew my plans for after graduation. There are a lot of things up in the air right now, but at this point, I plan to either pursue a news assistant position at the station where I currently intern (CBS-6 News) or move to France for a year to teach. Or, maybe something else entirely. My short-term goal is to find, somehow, a way to live in Paris and travel around Europe for awhile. My long-term goal is to break into journalism. The best classes I've taken at Skidmore have been in the American Studies department -- the professors, the texts, the other students, and the interdisciplinary methods in the classroom have all contributed to making each class a model representation of what a Skidmore education should be about. I think and perceive things so much differently -- much more critically, and I'm more open to the gray areas.

Alice Peisch, Wellesley, MA (Minor)

After graduation I plan on returning home to Wellesley, MA for the summer. Hopefully I'll be able to relax a bit and save some money before moving to NYC. Last summer I interned at a magazine, and I hope to return to the city and work in publishing.

Joshua Kinsel, Beavercreek, OH (Major)

When I take my hiatus from academe after graduation, I'm certain I'll continue American Studies as a hobby, or at least a habit. I plan to head to Montana for the summer to either work with Americorps or volunteer on organic farms before reconsidering

Kerina Pharr, Williamstown, MA (Major)

I am looking to use my Spanish minor and the appreciation and knowledge for culture which I have accrued through my major, American Studies. I am currently interviewing for jobs with translation companies. I'm also very interested in the recent debates involving immigration and would like to lend my bilingual and intercultural skills to help maintain the United States' legacy of being a nation of immigrants.

Tim Ryan, Barrington, RI (Major)

My plans for next year are undecided. I hope to travel this

Our Faculty

to Barack Obama's *Dreams From My Father*. Class discussion led Woodfork to volunteer to serve on the committee that chose the summer reading for the class of 2010. From discussions, Professor Woodfork nominated, and the book committee selected, Gregory Howard Williams's memoir *Life on the Color Line*. In addition to the previously offered classes, Woodfork introduced two new ones: *Diversity in the United States* and *Critical Whiteness in the United States*. The "Diversity" class addressed interrelationships and tensions that characterize a culturally diverse democracy by examining how accepted cultural traditions intersect with contested themes such as race, the family, adoption, gender, sexuality, and education. The "Whiteness" class examined whiteness in US culture and history, including

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Fall, 2006, Course Offering Preview

illuminating some of the conflicting forces at work in American society, including debates over immigration, Prohibition, evolution, sexuality, and the role of women in society, the course will examine some of the major intellectual, social, and cultural issues of the era.

AM 362: American Autobiography, TuTh, 12:40-2:00, J. Woodfork

An example of American culture through the lives of specific people



Dan Nathan gave a lecture at the 41st Annual Walter Prescott Webb Lecture Series at the University of Texas at Arlington titled "Chasing Shadows: The Baltimore Black Sox and the Perils of History." In this series, titled "Baseball in American and America in Baseball," noted historians of American sport delved into the historical development of baseball in American and tried to explain the rich symbolism of baseball for the players, for the spectators, and for America.

Mary C. Lynn pulled the materials out of the 1940 time capsule which had been unearthed from the foundations of the old Scribner Library. Contents ranged from a *Skidmore News* and photos of the May Queen's court to a *New York Times* front-page story reporting Hitler's blitzkrieg—as well as a jeweled black choker often work by founder Lucy Skidmore Scribner.

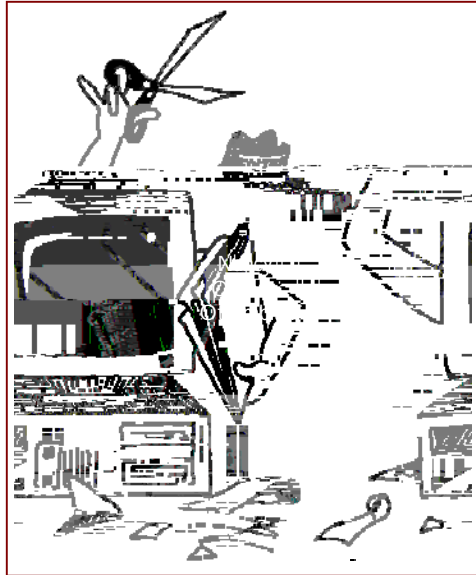
Joanna S. Zangrando won the Mary C. Turpie Prize in American Studies (see front page).

Joshua Woodfork brought together (22 March 2006) students from his course on diversity, department faculty, Dean of Faculty, Muriel Poston, Assoc. Dean of Faculty, Sarah Goodwin, and numerous other folks to view, in the Entertainment Lounge of the Spa, a video tape of the first in the FX-Network series *Black. White*. This was followed by pizza and a really eye-opening discussion., after which the group viewed the live third part of the series.

The American Studies Department faculty, majors and minors enjoyed a nice afternoon of bowling and pizza on 14 December 2005, to honor **Zangrando's** winning of the Turpie Prize (the bowling was actually Joanna's idea). It seems everyone had a great time.

Dan Nathan and his family encountered a bear in the Berkshires on Easter Sunday. The Nathans, as well as the bear, are fine!

Based on the current fervor over publicity surrounding immigrant rights and demonstrations, the American Studies club decided to sponsor one more event before graduation. Our nation has a rich immigrant past, but it has always been troubled by questions of immigration policy with respect to whom to admit and under what conditions. These problems are reflected in the recent congressional debates regarding immigrant legislation, and nationwide demonstrations of legal and illegal aliens and their supporters. The students attending Skidmore now will be tomorrow's leaders and they, too, need to be educated on the issues surrounding the legacy of immigration in this country. American Studies club Secretary, Kerina Pharr ('06) and Julia Raufman ('06), President of the Spanish Club, collaborated to create an informative visual display (may be



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SPRING AT HYDE PARK FOR AM 221 (see inside for more pictures)