Langston Hughes Center Newsletter

Wednesday, February 1, 2012

In this newsletter:

1. **Upcoming Events:** The Women Jefferson Loved; Angela Davis; Jesse B. Semple Brownbag; "Young Africa"; An Army of Lions; KU’s Black History; Langston Hughes Visiting Professor Lecture; Emanuel Cleaver

2. **In the News:** African American Literary Blog; Black Segregation; Former Black Panther; Heart and Soul; 3 Women Red Tails Left Out; Nation’s Civil Rights Organization; 1876; The Latest Adventures of the Black Underclass; US Election 2012; Study of Race; Timuel Black; Benjamin Mays; Black Owned Beauty Shops; Why Don’t More Blacks Study the Civil War

3. **General Information:** W. E. B. Du Bois and the Wings of Atlanta – Call for Papers; ASALH – Call for Papers; Africana Annual – Call for Papers

Sincerely,

Shawn Leigh Alexander
Assistant Professor of African and African-American Studies
Interim Director, Langston Hughes Center
University of Kansas

**Upcoming Events**

**Virginia Scharff**

**What:** The Women Jefferson Loved – Virginia Scharff, University of New Mexico

**When:** February 6 @ 7:30 pm

**Where:** Lied Center Pavilion (University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus)

**Cost per person:** FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Sponsors of this Event:** Hall Center for the Humanities and the Hall Center Gender Seminar

**About:** Virginia Scharff, Distinguished Professor of History at the University of New Mexico and director of the Center for the Study of the Southwest, will speak at the Lied Center pavilion on “The Women Jefferson Loved.”

Scharff’s lecture stems from her critically acclaimed book of the same title. The book reveals how Jefferson’s love of women shaped his ideas, achievements and legacies. Her historical narrative also puts Jefferson’s free and slave families into the same story, offering readers a more expansive
Angela Davis

What:  *Feminism and Political Activism*  – Angela Davis, University of California Santa Cruz

When:  February 7 @ 5:00 – 6:30 pm (Book signing immediately following the lecture)

Where:  Budig 120 (University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus)

Cost per person:  Free tickets can be obtained by students after January 17 from SUA in the Kansas Union, or faculty and staff may retrieve them from Bailey 213.

Sponsors of this Event:  *Co-sponsored by Student Union Activities; the Office of the Chancellor; the Office of the Provost; the Deans of CLAS; the Clifford P. Ketzl Fund; the School of Social Welfare; the School of Law; KU Honors Program; the Department of Theatre; and the Hall Center. With contributions from the Office of Minority Affairs and the Departments of African and African-American Studies, American Studies, Film & Media Studies, History, Philosophy, and Sociology.*

About:  Through her activism and scholarship over the last decades, Angela Davis has been deeply involved in our nation’s quest for social justice. Her work as an educator – both at the university level and in the larger public sphere – has always emphasized the importance of building communities of struggle for economic, racial, and gender equality. She is known internationally.

http://www.hallcenter.ku.edu/~hallcenter/cgi-bin/index.php/calendar/event/angela-davis-feminism-and-political-activism

Jesse B. Semple Brownbag Series

What:  *Abandoned in the Heartland: Work, Family, and Living in East St. Louis*  – Jennifer Hamer, University of Kansas

When:  Monday, February 13 @11:30 am - 1:00 pm (11:30 -12:00 social period and brownbag lunch)

Where:  Kansas Union, Alcove A (University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus)

Cost per person:  FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Sponsors of this Event:  Langston Hughes Center

About The Jesse B. Semple Brownbag Series:  The Jesse B. Semple Brownbag, every second Monday of each academic month, is an informal forum for the African Americanist community and those who are interested in the general study of race, culture, and American society. The forum discusses activities on campus, historical and current issues related to race, and culture and social relations in America. It offers opportunities for visiting scholars, KU faculty, and KU students to present their ongoing research.

Langston Hughes' character Jesse B. Semple, or Simple first appeared in the *Chicago Defender* on February 13, 1943. Semple became a voice, often in comic or satirical fashion, through which Hughes could comment on international relations, current events and the everyday concerns of the African American community.

"Young Africa" and the Struggle for Historical Memory

What:  "Young Africa" and the Struggle for Historical Memory – Charles Irish, Howard University
An Army of Lions

What: An Army of Lions: The Civil Rights Struggle Before the NAACP (Lecture & Book Signing) – Shawn Leigh Alexander, University of Kansas

When: February 16 @ 3:00-5:00 pm

Where: Spencer Research Library, North Gallery (University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus)

Sponsors of this Event: Kenneth Spencer Research Library and the Office of Multicultural Affairs

About: Ask history students to name the nation’s first civil rights organization, and most will answer with the NAACP, formed in 1909, or possibly the Niagara Movement of 1905. Few know much about the Afro-American League of 1890.

Shawn Alexander, University of Kansas assistant professor, argues in his new book, “An Army of Lions: The Civil Rights Struggle Before the NAACP,” that the Afro-American League’s short history and successes have been obscured in American history due in part to a focus on individuals rather than organizations.

http://www.news.ku.edu/2012/january/25/armyoflions.shtml

KU’s Black History

What: KU’s Black History: Lecture and Discussion – Kathryn Nemeth Tuttle, University of Kansas

When: February 22 @ 12pm

Where: Sabatini Multicultural Resource Center (University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus)

Sponsors of this Event: the Office of Multicultural Affairs

Langston Hughes Visiting Professorship Lecture


When: February 22 @ 3:30 – 5:00 pm.

Where: Alderson Auditorium, the Kansas Union (University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus)

Cost per person: FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

For More Information see:

About The Langston Hughes Visiting Professorship: The Langston Hughes Visiting Professorship was established at the University of Kansas in 1977 in honor of the African American poet, playwright and fiction writer who lived in Lawrence from 1903 to 1916. Over the years, the visiting professorship has attracted prominent or emerging ethnic minority scholars to the university campus, involving a broad range of disciplines and academic departments/schools.

Public Service & Contemporary Politics

What: Public Service and Contemporary Politics – Congressman Emanuel Cleaver II

When: February 22 @ 6:30pm

Where: Dole Institute of Politics (University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus)

Sponsors of this Event: Dole Institute of Politics

About: Congressman Emanuel Cleaver has established himself as one of the most influential African-Americans in politics today through his commitment to civil discourse and his leadership of the Congressional Black Caucus. Join us as we discuss his incredible career and contemporary politics.

http://www.doleinstitute.org/

In The News

African American Literary Blog

See entries from various authors at the following link: http://projectbw.blogspot.com/

Study Finds Black Segregation Lowest in Century

Haya El Nasser | January 31, 2012 | USA Today

Black segregation from other racial groups has hit its lowest point in more than a century — declining in all 85 of the nation's largest metropolitan areas — but social and income inequality persist. A Manhattan Institute report out Monday shows that no housing market has a level of black isolation as high as the national average 40 years ago and that "all-white neighborhoods are effectively extinct." "This shift does not mean that segregation has disappeared," the report says. "The typical urban African American lives in a housing market where more than half the black population would need to move in order to achieve complete integration."

Read the full article at the following link: http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/story/2012-01-30/racial-segregation-decline/52889370/1

Read the full study at the following link: http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_66.htm

Former Black Panther patches together purpose in Africa exile

Christopher Goffard | January 29, 2012 | The Los Angeles Times
Reporting from Imbaseni, Tanzania -- The fugitive shuffles to his computer and begins typing out his will. He is about to turn 71, and it is time. "My life," he writes, "has been a wild and wicked rice...."

All Pete O'Neal has amassed fits on two pages: A small brick home with a sheet-metal roof. A few road-beaten vehicles. A cluster of bunkhouses and classrooms he spent decades building, brick by scavenged brick, near the slopes of Mt. Meru's volcanic cone. Everything will go to his wife of 42 years, Charlotte, and to a few trusted workers.

He prints out the will late one Saturday morning and settles into his reclining chair to check the spelling. He signs his name. Then, to guarantee its authenticity, he finds an ink pad, rolls his thumb across it, and affixes his thumbprint to the bottom of the page.

"I think that'll do it," he says.

Read the full article at the following link: http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-black-panther-20120129-html,0,2641122.htmlstory

**Heart and Soul: Portraits of Black American**

January 26, 2012 | *BBC*

From slavery to segregation, the history of black people in the United States is impossible to tell without mentioning some of the nation's darkest secrets.

While these hard truths cannot be ignored, however, the story of the African American experience is much more than a centuries-long struggle to overcome racism and violence.

In his new children's book, Heart and Soul: the story of America and African Americans, award-winning artist Kadir Nelson celebrates the key moments and characters in black history.

The book's unnamed narrator, inspired by Nelson's own grandmother, guides the reader through a series of transformational moments from colonial times to the civil rights era.

He told the BBC how he hopes the book will help young people better understand how black Americans helped shape the country's history.

Read the slide show at the following link: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-16735646

**3 Women 'Red Tails' Left Out**

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. | January 25, 2012 | *The Root*

*Red Tails*, the new George Lucas film depicting the valiant Tuskegee Airmen, reminds us of the often overlooked role of African Americans in World War II and their noble achievements. While much has been written about the airmen, very few of us understand how important three women were to their existence. And this is one crucial historical element that Lucas left out.

Since the Civil War, the United States had maintained a Jim Crow Army. While the Navy never deviated from integration, the Army (the Air Force did not become a separate service until after the war) rigidly segregated African Americans into separate units. While Africans Americans might be effective soldiers, the Army War College in 1925 maintained that "in the process of evolution, the American Negro has not progressed as far as the other subspecies of the human family." (*Red Tails* opens with a quote from this report.) Blacks, it held, were neither smart enough nor physically strong enough nor brave enough to endure the demands of combat, let alone flight.

Read the full article at the following link: http://www.theroot.com/views/three-women-red-tails-left-out

**Nation's First Civil Rights Organization Blazed Way for NAACP**

Mary Jane Dunlap | January 25, 2012 |
Ask history students to name the nation’s first civil rights organization, and most will answer with the NAACP, formed in 1909, or possibly the Niagara Movement of 1905. Few know much about the Afro-American League of 1890.

Shawn Alexander, University of Kansas assistant professor, argues in his new book, “An Army of Lions: The Civil Rights Struggle Before the NAACP,” that the Afro-American League’s short history and successes have been obscured in American history due in part to a focus on individuals rather than organizations.

Read the full article at the following link: http://www.news.ku.edu/2012/january/25/armyoflions.shtml

1876: The Year When Things Got Went from Bad to Worse for Indians and Blacks

William Loren Katz | January 23, 2012 | HNN

As 2011 ended the U.S. Senate voted 92 to 6 for the McCain-Levin amendments [S 1867] to the National Defense Authorization Act. In the name of fighting terrorism, an astounding majority of Democratic and Republican leaders granted unlimited authority to the president [and future presidents] and the Army to arrest anyone, citizen or foreigner, here or abroad, and imprison them in Poland, Pennsylvania, or Guantanamo or anywhere else—indeed. Ninety-two of our Senators agreed the detained could be denied access to attorneys and loved ones, and “enhanced interrogation” rather than legal procedures would determine if they are guilty of terrorist plots. True, some rigid constitutionalists and libertarians from Senator Rand Paul on the right to the ACLU on the left have condemned S 1867 as a threat to our core beliefs and democratic system. But S 1867 swept through on the 235th anniversary of our Declaration of Independence.

Read the full article at the following link: http://hnn.us/articles/1876-year-when-things-went-bad-worse-indians-and-blacks

The Latest Adventures of the Black "Underclass"

Clarence Lang | January 19, 2012 | Black Commentator

Republican presidential hopefuls Newt Gingrich and Mitt Romney have burnished their conservative credentials through racially coded invective evoking the dependency of the black “underclass” on government handouts. Late last year, Gingrich caused a commotion when he referred to child labor laws as “truly stupid.” He mused that poor children could develop the honest work ethic missing in their communities, and escape poverty, by replacing unionized janitors in their schools, and working as library and office assistants. The comments had little to do with race explicitly; yet, his casual assumption that such children lack adult role models who work, or earn money legally are circumstances commonly attributed to the “underclass,” and made the target of his remarks clear. Gingrich stirred a toxic brew of anti-unionism, thinly veiled racism exempting children of color from protections against exploitation, and disdain for meaningfully combating poverty.

Read the full article at the following link: http://www.blackcommentator.com/455/455_black_underclass_lang_guest_share.html

US Elections 2012: Tensions Over Race Likely to Suppress Black Vote

Chris McGreal | January 18, 2012 | The Guardian

It was billed as a unity celebration.

But there was not much evidence of that as Spartanburg's African American residents streamed in to the city’s main auditorium as part of a week of “celebrating people of all cultures and ethnicity”.


"Only a few white folks will come out to something like this," said Lisa Campbell, an African American student. "It's racism. Racism is still prevalent here. It's not real subtle."

Read the full article at the following link: http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jan/18/south-carolina-primary-racial-tension

**Study of race, students lack academic rigor**

Crystal Sanders, Jason Hendrickson and Bianca Williams | January 17, 2012 | *The Herald-Sun*

As black alumni of Duke University, we are deeply troubled and offended by the recent study emanating from faculty members at our alma mater. The research and logic in their unpublished study titled, "What Happens After Enrollment: An Analysis of the Time Path of Racial Differences in GPA and Major Choice," is both flawed and incorrect.

Moreover, the problematic premises and equally problematic conclusions drawn within the study need immediate attention. We feel that it is imperative that we set the record straight on the history of affirmative action, the academic abilities of students of color, and the utility of humanities and social sciences degrees, because the study referenced above provides nonfactual information in all three areas.

Read the full article at the following link: http://www.heraldsun.com/view/full_story/17183786/article-Study-of-race--students-lacks-academic-rigor
Read the full study at the following link: http://seaphe.org/pdf/whathappensafter.pdf

**Timuel Black Jr.'s Memorabilia is rare glimpse into black Chicago**

Dawn Turner Trice | January 15, 2012 | *Chicago Tribune*

In the 1960s, Chicago historian and educator Timuel Black Jr. had a lady friend with a penchant for neatness who gently suggested he throw out some of the bags of memorabilia crowding his Hyde Park apartment.

Against his better judgment, he impulsively got rid of a shopping bag or two.

Not long afterward, Black told a curator at the then-Chicago Historical Society that he would lend the museum several handwritten letters Black had received from the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and labor leader A. Philip Randolph. When Black began to search for the letters, well, you can imagine what he realized.

Read the full article at the following link: http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/columnists/ct-metrice-timuel-black-01-16-20120116,0,1543899.column

**New Biography explores civil rights legacy of King's mentor Benjamin Mays**

Mary Jane Dunlap | January 11, 2012 |

Benjamin E. Mays is often remembered as Martin Luther King Jr.'s mentor, yet many historians have
Benjamin L. Mays is often remembered as Martin Luther King Jr.’s mentor, yet many historians have overlooked Mays’ legacy as an educator and theologian in the Civil Rights Era.

Randal Jelks, associate professor of American studies at the University of Kansas, has written a new biography of Mays (1894-1984) that recognizes “that the Civil Rights Movement was as much a theological struggle as it was a secular social democratic movement.”


Read the full article at the following link: http://www.news.ku.edu/2012/january/11/mays.shtml

**Black-Owned Beauty Shops Groom Political Activism**

Michel Martin & Tiffany Gill | December 28, 2011 | NPR

In her new book, Beauty Shop Politics, Professor Tiffany Gill looks at African-American women who owned beauty shops during decades before the civil rights movement. She speaks with host Michel Martin about how salons — then and now — have become centers for economic opportunity and political awareness.

Read the full transcript and listen to the podcast at the following link: http://www.npr.org/2011/12/28/144381812/black-owned-beauty-shops-groom-political-activism

**Why Do So Few Blacks Study the Civil War?**

Ta-Nehisi Coates | The Atlantic

In my seventh-grade year, my school took a bus trip from our native Baltimore to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, the sanctified epicenter of American tragedy. It was the mid-’80s, when educators in our inner cities, confronted by the onslaught of crack, Saturday Night Specials, and teen pregnancy, were calling on all hands for help—even the hands of the departed.

Preposterous notions abounded. Black people talked openly of covert plots evidenced by skyrocketing murder rates and the plague of HIV. Conscious people were quick to glean, from the cascade of children murdered over Air Jordans, something still darker—the work of warlocks who would extinguish all hope for our race. The stratagem of these shadow forces was said to be amnesia: they would have us see no past greatness in ourselves, and thus no future glory. And so it was thought that a true history, populated by a sable nobility and punctuated by an ensemble of Negro “firsts,” might be the curative for black youth who had no aspirations beyond the corner.

The attempt was gallant. It enlisted every field, from the arts (Phillis Wheatley) to the sciences (Charles Drew). Each February—known since 1976 as Black History Month—trivia contests rewarded those who could recall the inventions of Garrett A. Morgan, the words of Sojourner Truth, or the wizard hands of Daniel Hale Williams. At my middle school, classes were grouped into teams, each of them named for a hero (or a “shero,” in the jargon of the time) of our long-suffering, yet magnificent, race. I was on the (Thurgood) Marshall team. Even our field trips felt invested with meaning—the favored destination was Baltimore’s National Great Blacks in Wax Museum, where our pantheon was rendered lifelike by the disciples of Marie Tussauds.

Read the full article at the following link: http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/02/why-do-so-few-blacks-study-the-civil-war/8831/

**General Information**
W.E.B. Du Bois and the Wings of Atlanta: A Commemorative Conference at Clark Atlanta University

The year 2013 will mark the 50th anniversary of the passing of Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois. On his birthday in February of that year, it is fitting that Clark Atlanta University (CAU) celebrate his life and scholarship. Dr. Du Bois wrote his most influential works in the 23 years he spent as a professor at Atlanta University. Serving as faculty of the Departments of History and Economics, he taught at Atlanta University from 1897 to 1910, and then returned from 1934 to 1944 as chair of the Department of Sociology. Dr. Du Bois also had impact in the area of social work and as a novelist, poet and short story writer. The W.E.B. Du Bois and the Wings of Atlanta Conference will serve as a meeting at the crossroads of various paths of Du Bois’s work. Conference participants will engage in an interdisciplinary and international introspection of the life, scholarship and activism of one of the most influential intellectuals of the 20th century.

In a four-day conference, beginning on February 20, 2013 and concluding on Du Bois’s birthday of February 23, Clark Atlanta University will host panels that highlight his countless contributions, especially those produced in the 23 years of his tenure. Central works to be discussed include the Phylon journal (founded in 1940) and the Atlanta University Publications (which he directed 1898-1914), where he covered topics including African Americans in higher education, art, the Black church, urbanization, health, business, economics, and race relations in Georgia. Books published while in Atlanta are also central to the CAU discussion: The Souls of Black Folk (1903), Black Reconstruction (1935) and Dusk of Dawn: An Essay toward and Autobiography of a Race Concept, the second of his three autobiographies (1940).

The Wings of Atlanta conference seeks to bring together local, national and international scholars to explore themes in Dr. Du Bois’s publications and collected papers in order to illuminate his experiences at Fisk University, Harvard University, University of Berlin, Atlanta University, Philadelphia, Massachusetts, New York, Chicago, Ghana and other areas where Du Bois lived and worked. Especially welcome are panels addressing the multitude of Du Boisian intellectual legacies and implications of his myriad research agendas.

This conference will be held as a conclusion to the year-long W. E. B. Du Bois Major Works Seminar Series hosted by the Clark Atlanta University Office of the President, Office of the Provost, School of Arts and Sciences, and the Department of History. The W.E.B. Du Bois and the Wings of Atlanta Conference, held on CAU’s campus, offers a uniquely significant locale from which to commemorate, interrogate, and celebrate the life and work of this exquisitely educated and distinctly complex man.

As interest is wide but space limited, individual conference papers will be considered, but panels of 4-6 papers will be given preference. Panel proposals should be no more than 4 pages long and individual paper proposals no more than 2 pages. Panel submissions must identify the panel chair, names, phone numbers, email addresses, and institutional affiliation information for the chair and all panelists.

One-page proposals for undergraduate and graduate student posters are also encouraged.

Send proposals to Dr. Stephanie Y. Evans at sevans@cau.edu.
For questions or additional information, call Dr. Evans at 404-880-6352.

Conference proposals will be accepted between January 1, 2012 and July 1, 2012.

Call For Papers – ASALH

In all their struggles, the quest for justice in every facet of life continuously dominates the life work and story of African American women to the present day. In honor of the many stratagems employed and the victories won, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History has chosen in to dedicate 2012 to exploring African American women’s roles in and contributions to the making of America.
While there are many exemplars of this year’s theme, it coincides with the 150th Anniversary of the birth of Ida B. Wells-Barnett (July 16, 1862). In recognition and honor of Mrs. Wells-Barnett’s contributions, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History celebrates the personal fortitude, community organizing, creative resistance and political leadership of African American women past and present, as we especially honor Wells’ legacy of championing for her race as well as her gender. Her life’s work remains an indelible mark on American society.

As the nation continues to face challenges of equality and equity, this theme will help identify a new wave of notable 21st Century women who are vigorously building on 20th Century club women’s work and have become subjects of study and debate in various disciplines. Deadline for Submission of panel and paper proposals: Monday, April 16, 2012

All proposals must be submitted electronically to ASALH through the All Academic online system at http://convention2.allacademic.com/one/asalh/asalh12/. For complete panels that are submitted by Monday, March 19, day and time preferences will be given on a first come first served basis. Please refer to the FAQ page for what constitutes a complete panel at http://www.asalh.org/files/FAQs_sheet.doc.

Proposals should include title of the paper or panel, author(s) and affiliation(s), an abstract of paper or panel of 200-250 words, and all contact information. Only panel proposal submitters will receive complimentary audio/visual equipment on a first come first served basis.

For information on how to make electronic submissions, visit http://convention2.allacademic.com/one/asalh/asalh12/, and visit the FAQ page at http://www.asalh.org/files/FAQs_sheet.doc for important information regarding submissions. For technical questions about electronic submission contact program@asalh.net.

Academic Program Chair: Stephanie Y. Evans, Clark Atlanta University Academic Program Co-Chair: Cheryl Hicks, University of North Carolina-Charlotte Academic Program Co-Chair: Natanya Duncan, Morgan State University

For questions regarding academic papers or panels, contact: sevans@cau.edu

**Call For Papers – Africana Annual**

Africana Annual: a journal of African and African Diaspora Studies
The Department of African & African American Studies at the University of Kansas is proud to announce the establishment of Africana Annual and to invite the submission of full-length articles and review essays. Africana Annual is a broadly conceived annual interdisciplinary peer-reviewed journal. The principal focus of the journal is to create and facilitate critical dialogue and analysis of the African, African American, and African Diasporic experiences. An interdisciplinary journal encompassing history, politics, sociology, performance arts, economics, literature, cultural studies, anthropology, Africana studies, gender studies, ethnic studies, religious studies, the fine arts, and other allied disciplines. Africana Annual embraces a variety of humanistic and social scientific methodologies for understanding the social, political, and cultural meanings and functions of the varied experiences of Africana. We invite authors to submit work that examines key issues or profound topics on African America, Africa (north and south of the Sahara), and the Diaspora.

**Submission Policies**
The journal encourages authors to submit unsolicited articles and comprehensive review essays. All academic articles should be between 20 and 30 pages. Comprehensive review essays should be about 10 to 15 pages in length. All articles and comprehensive review essays will be peer-reviewed. Authors should e-mail their manuscripts as Microsoft Word files to: Africana Annual <africana@ku.edu> Authors must provide full contact information, including e-mail address, with manuscripts.

All manuscripts must follow the current edition of the Chicago Manual of Style and should use endnotes. Materials submitted to Africana Annual must not have been previously published nor submitted for publication elsewhere while under review by Africana Annual editors. All
submitted for publication elsewhere while under review by Africana Annual Editors. All manuscripts accepted are subject to editorial modification.

The deadline for submission for the inaugural issue is **May 31, 2012**