

Volume 13, Number 2 Fall 2014

# International Agenda

Magazine of the Schoolcraft College International Institute (SCII)

# Face to Face with the Caribbean



A student from the Univ. of New England is engrossed by her up-close learning in the small island nation of Dominica. Inside, Professor Thomas Klak shares lessons from the experience (p. 14).

See pages 10-35 for coverage of Schoolcraft College's year-long Focus Caribbean project.

Subscribe!

## International Agenda

Published once per semester by the International Institute (SCII)

### Editorial Committee:

- Chair: Randy K. Schwartz (Mathematics Dept.)  
 Sumita Chaudhery (English Dept.)  
 Helen Ditousas (English Dept.)  
 Kim Dyer (History Dept.)  
 Mark Huston (Philosophy Dept.)  
 Josselyn Moore (Anthropology/ Sociology Depts.)  
 Suzanne Stichler (Spanish Dept.)  
 Yovana P. Veerasamy (French Dept.)

e-mail: [rschwartz@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:rschwartz@schoolcraft.edu)  
 voice: 734-462-4400 ext. 5290  
 fax: 734-462-4531

*Material contained in International Agenda may be reproduced or quoted provided that the source is credited.*

Archives are available at the SCII website,  
<http://www.schoolcraft.edu/department-areas/international-institute/international-agenda>

Founding Editor: Donald Ryktarsyk (Business Dept.)

## International Institute (SCII)

Schoolcraft College  
 18600 Haggerty Road  
 Livonia, MI 48152-2696  
<http://www.schoolcraft.edu/department-areas/international-institute/>

The mission of the Schoolcraft College International Institute is to coordinate cross-cultural learning opportunities for students, faculty, staff, and the community. The Institute strives to enhance the international content of coursework, programs, and other College activities so participants better appreciate both the diversities and commonalities among world cultures, and better understand the global forces shaping people's lives.

### SCII Administrative Director:

Cheryl Hawkins (Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences)

### SCII Faculty Co-Chairs:

Josselyn Moore (Anthropology/ Sociology Depts.)  
 Helen Ditousas (English Dept.)

### Focus Series Coordinator:

Helen Ditousas (English Dept.)

### Multicultural Fair Coordinators:

Helen Ditousas (English Dept.)  
 Josselyn Moore (Anthropology/ Sociology Depts.)

### Bridging Barriers Coordinators:

Helen Ditousas (English Dept.)  
 Elizabeth Grace (Child and Family Services)

### GlobalEYEzers Coordinator:

Sandy Roney-Hays (Anthropology/ Sociology Depts.)  
 Anna Maheshwari (English Dept.)

### Global Roundtables Coordinators:

Deborah Daiek (Assoc. Dean, Learning Support Services)  
 Sandy Roney-Hays (Anthropology/ Sociology Depts.)

### Selection Committee for *International Agenda* Writing and Artwork Contest:

Omar Addi (English Dept.)  
 Colleen Case (Computer Graphics Technology Dept.)  
 Candace MacGillivray (Sociology Dept.)  
 Diane O'Connell (Geography Dept.)  
 Sarah Olson (Art and Design Dept.)  
 Randy Schwartz (Mathematics Dept.)  
 Ione Skaggs (Graphic Designer)

## SCII Meeting Schedule

International Institute meetings are open to all who want to learn or to help out. New folks are always welcome. Meetings are generally on Fridays at 12-2 pm in the Liberal Arts Building. Upcoming meetings are as follows:

- September 19, 2014
- October 17, 2014
- November 21, 2014
- January 23, 2015
- February 20, 2015
- March 20, 2015
- April 10, 2015
- May 15, 2015

## SCHOOLCRAFT COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Brian D. Broderick.....Chair  
 Carol M. Strom.....Vice Chair  
 James G. Fausone.....Secretary  
 Joan A. Gebhardt.....Treasurer  
 Gretchen Alaniz.....Trustee  
 Terry Gilligan.....Trustee  
 Eric Stempien.....Trustee  
 Conway A. Jeffress, Ph.D., President

**GlobalEYEzers**, a group affiliated with SCII, meets each semester to discuss current events relevant to international/ intercultural issues. Faculty and staff, as well as students and members of the community, are invited to participate. For more information, contact Anna Maheshwari at [amaheshw@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:amaheshw@schoolcraft.edu) or 734-462-4400 x5296.

# Students!



## Enter the Fall 2014 International Agenda Writing and Artwork Contest

First Prize: \$200 Scholarship  
Second Prize: \$150 Scholarship

...in each of the two categories, writing and artwork.

### Winners from Winter 2014

First Place, Writing: Michael Ragan, Sr. (see p. 21)

First Place, Artwork: Paige Killingbeck (see p. 5)

Second Place, Writing: Elanor Orick (see W'14 issue)

Second Place, Artwork: Hana Dughman (see p. 8).

*Faculty mentors of the winners receive \$25 gift cards.  
All funds are provided by the Schoolcraft College Foundation.*

**Submission Deadline: November 17, 2014**

### Guidelines:

1. Students (or their faculty mentors) may enter essays, research papers, persuasive writing, creative writing, poetry, or 2D or 3D artwork suitable for publication in *International Agenda*.
2. Works may deal with any topic of international or cross-cultural interest.
3. Submit a digital version of the writing or artwork as an e-mail attachment to the address below.
4. Submissions will be judged by a panel of faculty and staff volunteers based on content, originality, and aesthetics.
5. Entrants will be asked to sign a form affirming that the work is their own and permitting it to be used in the magazine.

Complete rules and entry forms can be obtained from the Editor:

Randy Schwartz  
[rschwartz@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:rschwartz@schoolcraft.edu)  
tel. 734-462-4400 ext. 5290  
Office: BTC-510

# Readers!



## Take Out a Free Subscription to *International Agenda*

...so you won't miss a single issue.

Whether you're an on-campus or off-campus reader, we urge you to take out a free e-mail or postal subscription. This will ensure that you continue to receive the magazine twice a year, and will also strengthen your link with Schoolcraft College and its International Institute.

*E-mail (a full-color PDF document) is the preferred mode of delivery, but we also offer postal delivery of the printed black-and-white version.*

There are two different options for initiating your subscription:

1. E-mail your request to [rschwartz@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:rschwartz@schoolcraft.edu). Be sure to give your contact information, and whether you prefer e-mail or postal delivery.
2. Or fill out the coupon below (or a photocopy), and send it to the postal address indicated.

Yes! Start my free subscription to *International Agenda*:

- e-mail the full-color PDF version (preferred)  
 snail-mail the printed black-and-white version

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, state, zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Randy Schwartz  
Biomedical Technology Center  
Schoolcraft College  
18600 Haggerty Road  
Livonia, MI 48152-2696



# Corner of the World: My Work with Invisible Children

by Rachael Childs

*Schoolcraft College student Rachael "Ray" Childs lives in Northville, MI, and is majoring in communications and film.*

Facebook might suggest that you have thousands of friends, allowing you to bask in leisurely unearned pride. But not so fast. British anthropologist Robert Dunbar developed a theory, Dunbar's number, suggesting that there is a cognitive limit to the amount of relationships a single person can comfortably maintain. According to Dunbar, you max out at approximately 150 people. If you don't "groom" these relationships—those weekly visits you share with your best friend to exchange life experiences—they sort of drop from your mind. Essentially, your energy is created and reciprocated by the relationships you spend the most time on. You decide who and what is the most important to you by what you spend the most energy on. And this does not mean number of page visits to that guy you met one time, somewhere or another.

In August 2013 I sat in a fold-up chair in an all-white building, staring out the window at the palm trees blowing in a hot breeze. My little corner of the world had recently transitioned from seasonal metro Detroit to Invisible Children, a nongovernment-operated nonprofit in southern California. Through them, I was also exposed to the corner of the world which the internship was addressing: the longest-running armed conflict in Africa. The speaker standing in front of me was Jason Russell, co-founder and Chief Creative Officer. In March 2012, Jason had directed the fastest-growing viral video to this day, "KONY 2012". The video was created to harness the enormous energy of the social media corner of the world to shine the spotlight on an area left completely in the dark, where a lost war is raging on innocents living in terror in the brush of central Africa.

Joseph Kony is a warlord whose Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has been abducting children and brainwashing them into becoming soldiers solely to maintain his own power. In South Sudan, northern Uganda, and elsewhere in the region, the LRA abducts children as young as five years old (supposedly the age at which a child has enough strength to handle a gun) and forces them to commit atrocities such as killing a family member. He then tells them they can never try to escape from his captivity because they have now angered their community, completely removing any hope they might have of ever returning.

Because the LRA conflict is extraordinarily dense and chaotic, Russell used his master storytelling ability to give "KONY 2012" a simple, narrative format. The half-hour video has succeeded in reaching tens of millions of viewers and allowed them to comprehend such a horrific event. Invisible Children, Inc., founded 10 years ago, uses such videos, social media, and other means to raise awareness of the conflict and to filter this into action to aid and rescue children swept up into LRA membership. The group works



One of the tens of thousands of children who have been captured and forced to become soldiers by the LRA.

to devise escape plans for the children, then to bring them home, rehabilitate, reintegrate, and finally provide them with long-term skills in order to maintain a stable future previously interrupted by trauma.

In 2013, I spent five months of my life sitting in this building in southern California, learning not only from instruction but largely by interaction with human beings who carried not the slightest cynical tendency. As the social media intern, I spent day after day learning to simplify the enormity of the conflict to the most powerful form to inspire members of my generation to get involved. Although my job there could be listed on a résumé, complete with a list of the concrete skills involved, that would never capture the contextual space I was put in. This work transformed my previously ignorant mind into the consciousness that I carry the ability and capacity to generate change in the world, and more crucially, the ability to pass this on to others.

I was changed forever by this experience; my corner of the world will never be as small again. Dunbar's number might hold, but I always have the ability to choose who and what this involves. The communicative world is expanding every day, and our vision must expand along with it. Will I spend my time posting photos of myself to the world, creating an energy strictly focused on flattering myself, or will I dive into the amazing depths of my mind for a way to stick everything I have out for the betterment of mankind? I am forever responsible for those who are victimized by atrocities they hold no control over, because now I know that the world is only changed by those who believe they can do so. •

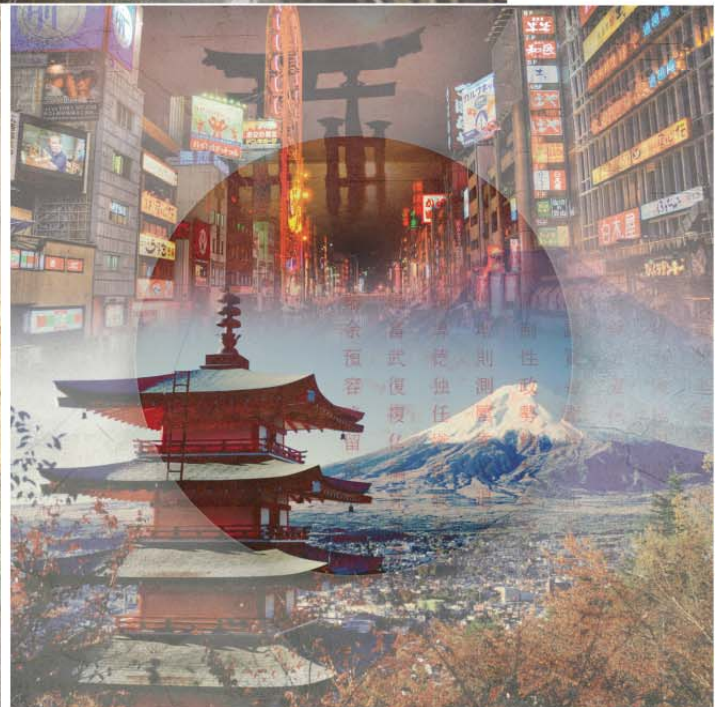
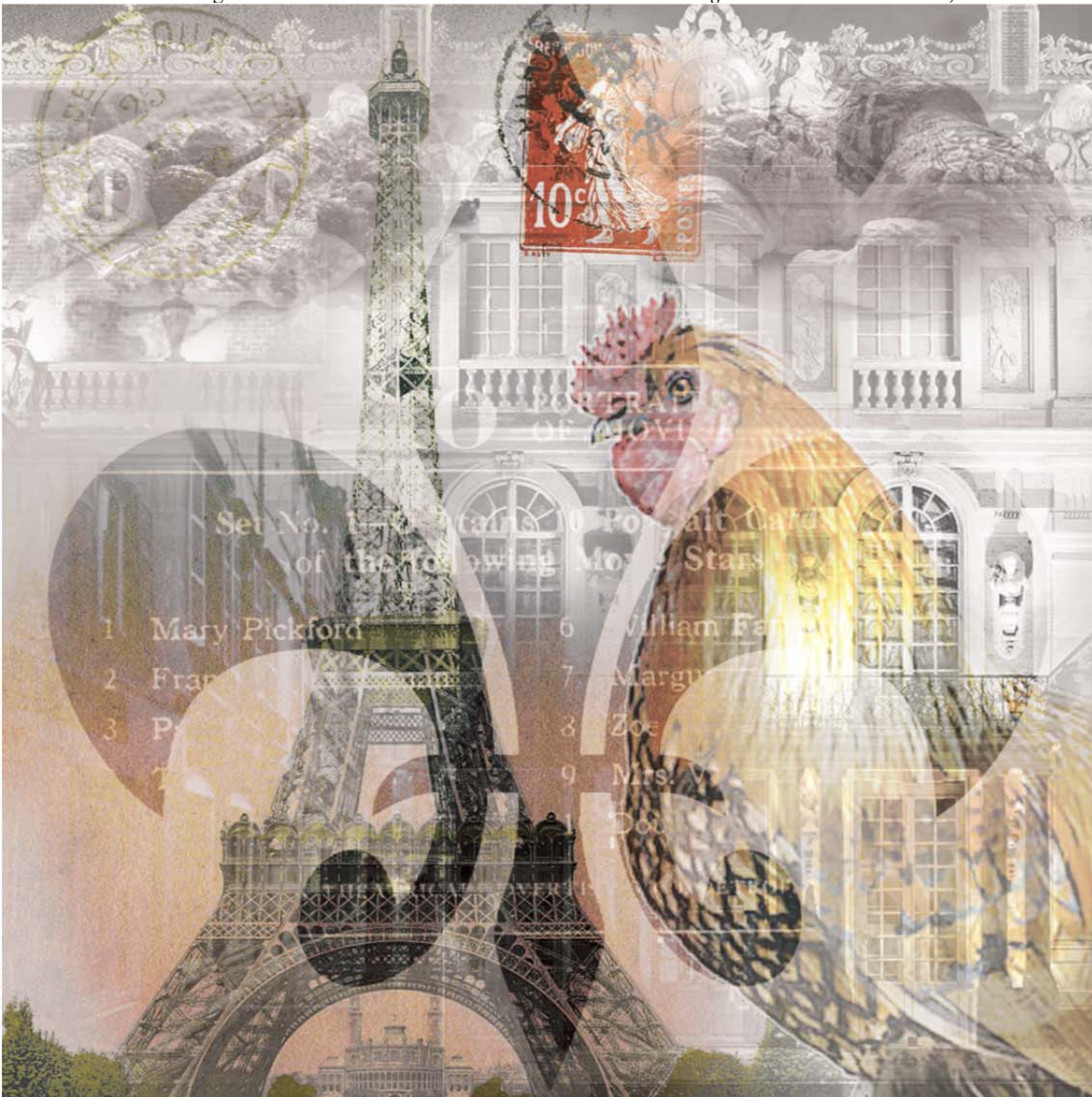


# Cultural Montage

by Paige Killingbeck

Paige Killingbeck of Canton, MI, a Schoolcraft student majoring in graphic design and website design, created this three-panel artwork last Winter for our magazine. She names as her mentors Michael Mehall and Colleen Case, who are professors of Computer Graphics Technology at the College.

We get a feel for France from the first panel, which combines such symbols as the fleur-de-lis, the Gallic rooster, and the Eiffel Tower (this year celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary). In the second panel we recognize Italy from the gondola, the Maltese cross, etc. The third panel, with the pagoda, Mt. Fuji, and other symbols of Japan, makes a nice transition to the article on our next page.





# Visual Kei *Constructing the Self and Commodifying “Japanese-ness”*

by Colleen Breslin

*Colleen Breslin is a recent graduate of Schoolcraft College and the Univ. of Michigan. She served as a Writing Fellow at Schoolcraft, and continues to assist that program. At UM, she majored in anthropology and minored in Asian Studies, and completed an anthropology thesis on the Japanese visual kei music scene that focused on its international fans. Ms. Breslin has traveled to Tokyo and several other world cities, and she plans to pursue graduate study in anthropology.*

When people think of 1980s hair metal and glam rock, they would not typically think of Japan. However, there is an extremely prominent subculture of “Japonesque” hair metal in Japan, known as *visual kei*, that is especially coveted amongst youth from around the world.

The most poignant question is “why”? Japan, relegated as the nation of *geisha*, of *anime* cartoons, and of futuristic technological advances, is also emphasized as a “strange” fantastical place in our media, and romanticized in our minds as an exotic, faraway land. There are many reasons for this, but it is ultimately rooted in the notion of “Cool Japan”: something about Japan is greatly appealing to youths all over the world. In 2002, Douglas McGray, writing in *Foreign Policy* magazine, coined the term Cool Japan to signify the beginning of a global shift in influence and power.

Visual kei is one of those facets of Japanese culture that exemplify the now deeply ingrained notion of Cool Japan. Regardless of its depth or ostensible authenticity, this branding of “Japanese-ness” has become highly valued.

## Origin and Appeal of Visual Kei

Visual kei (ビジュアル系) is a music scene that originated in Japan in the 1980s and is characterized by extreme visual aesthetics, commonly with androgynous trends. The scene can be likened to Western “glam rock” and “glam metal” of the 1980s. However, visual kei is no longer associated with any one particular musical genre; ambiguous in nature, its music ranges from heavy metal to electronic pop.

With the success of the band X Japan in the mid-1980s, the name visual kei developed from one of the band’s slogans, “Psychedelic violence crime of visual shock” (Inoue 2003, Seibt 2013). These “pioneers” of visual kei, which also included bands like Luna Sea, Buck Tick, and Malice Mizer, were more narrowly defined by the context of the Western bands that influenced them. They stayed within a hard-rock and glam-metal style, whereas current-day visual kei bands are much more multifaceted in their musical palettes (Seibt 2013).

So, what about visual kei makes it “cool” and so appealing to youth? When I conducted research for my undergraduate thesis and traveled to Japan, I was able to speak intimately with many fans of this genre. I learned that while the music plays a central role, the fandom for visual kei goes beyond that. Fans gravitate toward this scene not only because of the sound, but because it gives them an avenue by which to differentiate themselves from their peers, to create a sense of community, and to escape from the routine. Above all, then, youths in Japan and elsewhere are using this “exotic” Japanese-ness as a means of constructing self-identity.



The band  
“The Gazette”



## A concert for the band "Sendai Kamotsu"

Photo: Colleen Breslin

This complex, reciprocal cultural attraction to the "exotic" was mentioned in the same article by McGray cited earlier: "Hello Kitty is western so she will sell in Japan. She is Japanese, so she will sell in the West." Japanese popular culture has embraced wide-ranging elements appropriated from overseas, reframed them into an arguably "Japanese" construction, and this in turn is eagerly consumed by international youths. This phenomenon is certainly present in the visual kei scene, where Western culture has been reinvigorated and furnished with a new label so that it can be seen as "edgy" and "cool".

While the debate continues over whether visual kei is authentically Japanese, it appears that authenticity itself isn't important. What does matter is the *notion* that an item, idea, or product is "Japanese". As Anne Allison put it simply: "Japan" operates more as a signifier for a particular brand and blend of fantasy-ware: goods that inspire an imaginary space at once foreign and familiar and a subjectivity of continual flux and global mobility, forever moving into and out of new planes/powers/ terrains/ relations" (Allison 2006, p. 277). Fans of visual kei want a semblance of something different, cool, and "foreign"—regardless of its historical or cultural intricacies or the authenticity of its origins.

Visual kei, like all genres of music, instills a sense of self-discovery, self-conceptualization and meaning in its fans' lives. Visual kei's fans identify with it because of what it can be, not necessarily because of what it is. Because of the desire to identify one's self with "Cool Japan", visual kei has become unexpectedly popular among international youths. •

### Sources

- Allison, Anne, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2006).
- Fiske, John, "The Cultural Economy of Fandom", in Lisa A. Lewis, ed., *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 30-49.
- Hong, Euny, "Goodbye Kitty: Why it was so easy for Korea to overtake Japan in the pop culture wars", *Quartz*, 2012, <http://qz.com/21468/why-it-was-so-easy-for-korea-to-take-over-japan-in-the-pop-culture-wars/>.
- Inoue, Takako, "Constructing Male Aesthetics in Rock and Makeup: Gender Strategies by Musicians and Fans of Visual Rock in Japan", in Yōko Hayami, Akio Tanabe, and Yumiko Tokita-Tanabe, eds., *Gender and Modernity: Perspectives from Asia and the Pacific* (Kyoto, Japan: Kyoto Univ. Press, 2003), pp. 189-217.

*continued on next page*

In fact, many international fans of visual kei now see Japan in a way that transcends the notion that it is an actual nation. Euny Hong, a columnist for the online magazine *Quartz*, notes that the roots of this phenomenon go back more than a century, when "the West had exoticized Japan to the point that it ceased to be a real place." (Hong 2012) However, today's far more globalized world has brought about a transnational amalgamation of culture and ideas. Japanese and other cultural elements are now far more easily transmitted and consumed on a world scale. Within popular culture, these diverse influences become melded and transfused.

### Branding Visual Kei as "Japanese"

With such attitudes pervasive among both producers and consumers of visual kei, there are varied opinions as to the roots and authenticity of the scene. Visual kei artist Miyavi asserted that "Jrock [another name for visual kei] was original Japanese culture." Another artist, Isshi, the late vocalist for the band Kagrra, had stated, "Originally wearing makeup and costumes was an influence drawn from American rock bands. Then we reinterpreted that American culture into our own, [creating] visual kei" (both quotations from Pfeifle 2011, p. 76). As previously mentioned, visual kei has its roots in Western glam rock and glam metal, so it's not explicitly Japanese, but it also seems to channel traditional Japanese *kabuki* theater. International fans interpret visual kei as uniquely Japanese, which contributes to the allure.

In her wide-reaching Internet survey, university senior Megan Pfeifle found that only 53% of visual kei fans reported that they would listen to a non-Japanese artist emulating the style (Pfeifle 2011, p. 77). Foreign youths are overwhelmingly interested in a "unique" Japan experience. They appropriate to themselves this Japanese subculture that is, in turn, partially appropriated from Western culture, but at the same time they believe it is wholly "Japanese". That, in and of itself, is its greatest selling point.





# Harp Seal Hunt

by Hana Dughman

Schoolcraft student Hana Dughman created this painting that depicts the hunting of the harp seal. Such hunting is practiced commercially in arctic and subarctic regions, such as in Canada, Norway, Russia, and Greenland.

Hana lives in Westland, MI, and is majoring in fine art. She has taken coursework here with Prof. Sarah Olson, Dept. of Art and Design.

## Visual Kei

*continued from page 7*

McGray, Douglas, "Japan's Gross National Cool", *Foreign Policy*, 130 (May/June 2002), pp. 44-54.

Mōri, Yoshitaka, "J-pop: From the Ideology of Creativity to DiY Music Culture", *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 10:4 (2009), pp. 474-488.

Pfeifle, Megan, "Exposing the Underground: The Japanese Subculture of Visual Kei", *George Mason Review*, 21 (2011-2012), pp. 74-87 of online version, available at <http://www.jame-world.com/us/themes-884-globalizing-visual-kei-a-web-series.html>.

Seibt, Oliver, "Asagi's Voice: Learning How to Desire with Japanese *Visual-kei*", in Christian Utz and Frederick Lau, eds., *Vocal Music and Contemporary Identities: Unlimited Voices in East Asia and the West* (New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 248-266.

## Take Our Survey!



After looking through these pages, kindly complete a brief online survey about *International Agenda*. The survey collects feedback about this issue, and the results will help us to further improve the magazine.

The survey can be accessed at this URL:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2C3WHLP>



# Report from the Midwest Institute Conference in Columbus

by Helen Ditouras (SC Dept. of English)

This year's conference of the Midwest Institute for International and Intercultural Education (MIIE) took place at Columbus State Community College on April 11-12. Participating Schoolcraft instructors included myself and Anna Maheshwari (English), and Cynthia Jenzen (Anthropology).

We met in the bustling city of Columbus, OH, for two days of enlightening presentations and delightful cultural performances. The first event included a musical piece by the Columbus State CC Jazz Ensemble, and the second highlight of the weekend included a theatrical show titled "Evening in Ancient Rome" by the CSCC Humanities Department.

This year's conference also included the second annual MIIE Contribution Award, which went to Dr. Theo Koupelis, Dean of Pure and Applied Sciences at Edison State College (Fort Myers, FL). The award recognized Dr. Koupelis's notable commitment to the organization as an outstanding MIIE Coordinator and Board Member. He accepted his award among numerous friends and colleagues who helped establish the framework that has supported the MIIE for several years.

Next year's MIIE Conference will take place at Ivy Tech Community College in Indianapolis, IN, on April 17-18, 2015, and the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference will be hosted at Schoolcraft College on April 15-16, 2016, so mark your calendars!

## Transformation of China's Educational System

An excellent keynote presentation, "A 360-Degree View of China's Transformation from Inside on the Ground", was delivered by Dr. SuiWah Chan, professor emeritus of medical education at Michigan State Univ. Dr. Chan, a distinguished scholar and management consultant now stationed at the Univ. of Michigan, recounted his recent experiences in China witnessing the vast transformation of a culture with which he is intimately connected.

One of the areas currently undergoing radical transformation is China's competitive education system. Dr. Chan described the shift from the old Soviet model of learning to China's current interest in the American educational landscape, where fostering cross-cultural collaboration is the norm. While many students in China compete for admission to the top elite universities, there are far more spots available in the technical colleges, where studies in information technology and other technical subjects is the focus. However, the technical colleges are having a difficult time recruiting students; there do not seem to be enough young people with the talent to fill these emerging positions. In order to restructure the current curricular model, Chinese educators are looking at American community colleges for their more comprehensive programs and their ability to train students for the vast opportunities available in the global economy.

Dr. Chan's expertise in Chinese culture will be further highlighted at Schoolcraft College this October, when he will deliver a lecture to accompany the MIIE's beautiful Chinese Calligraphy traveling exhibit. Dr. Chan, an expert Chinese

calligrapher in his own right, will share his knowledge and art with students, faculty, and the community. (See box on p. 39.)

## Other Sessions

Throughout the weekend, I was fortunate enough to attend some of the other outstanding sessions:

- **Around the World in 80 Panels: A Zesty Introduction to Global and Intercultural Graphic Novels.** In this presentation, my dear friend and colleague, Dr. Dan Yezbick (English Dept., St. Louis CC at Forest Park, St. Louis, MO), explored the various ways that graphic novels can be used in the classroom to promote diversity and intercultural awareness via their stunning visuals and accessible text. Apart from highlighting canonical standards such as Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*, and Joe Sacco's *Safe Area Goražde*, Dr. Yezbick emphasized that there exists a vast selection of other graphic novels that teach culture in exciting and engaging ways. Vivid and informative examples have been published that paint the cultural landscape in such countries as Norway, Germany, Belgium, France, Spain, Italy, Ivory Coast, Egypt, Japan, and Korea. In addition to underlining the international contributions made within the graphic novel scene, Dr. Yezbick also revealed some important American gems that portray the intercultural conflicts experienced by African Americans and Asian Americans. He encourages instructors to consider adopting the graphic novel as a useful and cutting-edge way to teach global issues.
- **Global Ed Through the Looking Glass: Inviting Military Student Voices to Globalize the Curriculum.** This presentation was given by Dan Yezbick's wife, Dr. Rosalie Warren Yezbick, who teaches Arts and Humanities at the online American Military University. She provided a fascinating look at the role that military students can play by sharing cross-cultural anecdotes with their fellow students. According to Dr. Warren, military students represent a rich resource of experiences due to their work with local populations abroad; thus, they are able to share unique insights with other students. She described some of her students' experiences, including teaching Afghan women to bake in the secrecy of their homes, daily soccer games played with children in Iraq, and several other intimate encounters where her students forged warm connections with people from different cultures. In her conclusion, Dr. Warren advised faculty to create a space in their classrooms where military students can share their cross-cultural experiences, especially given that many of these students tend to feel they are not welcome to disclose such experiences.
- **Morality, Human Rights, Values: Whose Perspective?** This presentation was delivered by my Dept. Chair and esteemed colleague, Anna Maheshwari, who shared a module that she developed for her English classes. The module grew out of a week-long MIIE workshop on Human Rights and Cultural Diversity in which Prof.

*continued on page 25*

# Face to Face with the Caribbean

In the 1980s, Cuba's port city of Mariel became famous to Americans as a point of mass embarkation, when Fidel Castro invited everyone unhappy with life on the island—including criminals, drug dealers, and the mentally ill—to sail to Miami. Some of what resulted from this influx of 125,000 refugees, or *Marielitos*, was dramatized in the movie "Scarface" (1983) starring Al Pacino.

But today, Mariel is becoming famous for a completely different reason that reflects some of the forces for change blowing across the region. In January, Cuban president Raúl Castro cut the ribbon on a billion-dollar port facility at Mariel that he said would lead to a new era of commerce "connecting Cuba to the world".

Analysts say the immediate aim of the project, undertaken with Brazilian investment, is to draw the country closer to the economies of Latin America and Asia. But beyond this, they say, it throws into sharper relief Cuba's gradual relaxation of its ban on private enterprise and foreign investment, and America's gradual loosening of its ban on cultural and touristic exchanges with the island. Both sides appear to be preparing for the eventual end of the trade embargo with which the U.S. has strangled Cuba since 1962.

In order to be able to understand such epic changes, students, instructors, and staff at Schoolcraft College have been taking steps this year to learn about the people, history, and culture of the Caribbean. For a decade now, since calendar year 2004, the International Institute has been organizing campus-wide, year-long programming on

selected cultural regions, including East Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, North America, Latin America, and Russia and its Environs. These focus efforts have not only been hugely educational but also a fun, exciting way to put more global awareness up on the "radar screens" of people on campus and in the surrounding communities.

## Why Study the Caribbean?

To become more aware of world cultures and of forces acting on a global scale, the Caribbean makes an unusually fertile and fascinating focus of study.

First, we have much to learn—including about ourselves—from the multicultural mixing in this region. The influences of indigenous, African, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian, British, Dutch, Danish, South Asian, and North American cultures are all packed into one basin, rubbing shoulders with one another and fruitfully cross-fertilizing. In literature, art, music, and other fields, this has led to an incredibly rich diversity. On page 24, see Paul Michalsen's article on Caribbean music and the centrality of what he refers to as creolization and convergence of cultures. The late Puerto Rican sociologist Ronald Fernandez underscored this when he wrote:

Americans want Jamaicans or Puerto Ricans to think (and act) in black and white. Qualifications never exist; you see skin color or you do not. When Caribbean people try to explain that their world is much more complicated, we too often write them off



What sort of future will there be for Danel, this 10-year-old girl in Cuba?

Photo by  
Ann Arbor, MI,  
native Jack Kenny,  
<http://www.cuba-photo.com/>



## Caribbean Festivals: International Ambassadors



Notting Hill Carnival

In major cities all over the world, people from the Caribbean celebrate their cultures by organizing lively street festivals. These party-like affairs recall Mardi Gras or Carnival, with parades, colorful costumes, and calypso, salsa, reggae, or steel-drum music. The West Indian immigrants have been chased from their home islands by poverty or repression, but they bring their customs along with them and have contributed much to their new countries.

In the UK, an annual Notting Hill Carnival was successfully launched in 1958 by a Trinidadian newspaper editor. She acted in response to the country's first widespread racial attacks, in the Notting Hill district of Central London. Over the years, the event evolved into a general Caribbean celebration drawing over 100,000 visitors annually.

But in the 1970s, the Notting Hill Carnival was regularly interrupted by violence. Police would clash with the mostly Caribbean youths, who resented how poor communities of color are regularly prowled by the cops. In solidarity, in 1976 the punk-rock band The Clash wrote a now-classic song, "White Riot". British authorities openly worried about racial tensions, which they called "the Jamaican problem", and it looked like the festival might be banned altogether. On the other hand, Prince Charles, a frequent champion of multiculturalism, prominently endorsed the event. The carnival survived, and in recent years has been free of violence. Over a million people each year attend this biggest carnival and parade in Europe.

Caribbean festivals have also been a colorful and welcome feature of North American cities, reflecting massive immigration from the region over many decades. In Brooklyn alone, there are two major events on Labor Day weekend:

- West Indian American Day Carnival Parade, in Crown Heights, is possibly *the biggest parade in North America, drawing one to two million spectators, thousands of parade marchers, and dozens of bands.*
- J'ouvert (from *jour ouvert*, "day break") is a dawn and pre-dawn street party, first celebrated in Trinidad in 1838 to greet the abolition of slavery there.

In addition, Manhattan and other parts of the city host a Reggae Carifest in November and several Summer parades organized by Haitians, Dominicans, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans, respectively.

as hypocrites and miss one of the most remarkable features of life in many Caribbean nations: When it comes to race and ethnicity, they are among the most civilized people on earth. (p. 161)

That comes from his last book, *America Beyond Black and White: How Immigrants and Fusions Are Helping Us Overcome the Racial Divide* (Univ. of Michigan Press, 2008), where Prof. Fernandez urged Americans to adopt a more Caribbean attitude toward issues of race and ethnicity.

Second, we can learn lessons by examining the persistent poverty of the Caribbean. As explored by a number of articles here, this situation represents a searing legacy of colonialism—one in which our own country is complicit. A few glaring symptoms of the problem:

- In Jamaica, the people-to-doctor ratio is about 5,240 to 1, one of the highest in the world.
- Puerto Rico alone has a debt of \$70 billion, and its ability to repay it was downgraded to "junk bond" status last February by the investment indices Moody's and Standard & Poor's.
- In Haiti, where there are no building codes, a single earthquake in 2010 killed roughly 150,000 inhabitants. Then, medical and aid workers were unable to contain a cholera epidemic that began at a UN peacekeeping base, and 8,600 people have died of the disease.

On the surface, it appears as if the U.S. and other donor nations and aid agencies are doing what they can to eradicate the poverty. But most people in the Caribbean say that no matter how well-intentioned, those efforts are part of the problem, not part of the solution.

- As shown in the documentary "Life and Debt" (2001), during the 1970s and 1980s the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) made loans of billions of dollars to Jamaica, but in return required that the country enact "structural adjustment" policies (trade liberalization, privatization, and deregulation). These failed, ruining Jamaica's agriculture and saddling the country with \$4.6 billion in debt.
- In the early 1980s, as part of Pres. Reagan's Caribbean Basin Initiative, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) supervised the redirection of 30% of Haiti's cultivated land from domestic food production to export-oriented agriculture. The all-important indigenous production of rice and of creole pigs, pillars of the food supply, was decimated. The capital city swelled with refugees from the countryside, and Haiti became dependent on food imports.

"We see through your aid", says Jean-Bertrand Aristide in the documentary, "The Agronomist" (Jonathan Demme, 2003), which was screened as part of our Caribbean Film Festival on campus last April. Aristide knew that USAID was funneling millions of dollars to his political opponents. The democratically-elected president of Haiti, he was overthrown in a coup the year after the film's release.

*continued on next page*

## Face to Face *continued from page 11*

These cases show how crucial it is for us to get beyond a superficial understanding of the region. By digging deeper, we will see not only what's really happening in the Caribbean, but also what's really happening within our own borders.

### How You Can Participate

Faculty, students, and other readers can participate in the Focus project in a variety of ways.

First, we urge you— all readers— who might have your own knowledge of or experience in the Caribbean (or in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, next year's focus region) to send us an idea, letter, photo, or article for the next issue of this magazine, or else volunteer to be a campus speaker or help out in other ways.

Second, instructors can integrate topics relevant to the region directly into their coursework by developing ideas and materials for classroom presentations, course readings and assignments, student projects, etc.

- In Winter 2014, Sumita Chaudhery (English) invited her Composition 2 students to select a Caribbean island and write a research paper on it, using a list of questions she provided. An example is reprinted on page 21.
- Also last Winter, Marjorie Nanian (Political Science) invited her International Relations students to research and write about the controversy surrounding the U.S. military base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and the detention and treatment of prisoners there. An example is reprinted on page 28.
- In the Fall 2013 and Spring 2014 terms, Suzanne Stichler assigned her Spanish 101 students to research and write a short paper in English on any of several suggested topics about Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. An example is

Integrating the Caribbean into disciplines like geography and history is a snap, but instructors in other disciplines can also be creative. For instance:

- Students in language and literature classes could be exposed to writers such as Aimé Césaire, Édouard Glissant, Derek Walcott, George Lamming, Maryse Condé, V. S. Naipaul, Jamaica Kincaid, Julia Alvarez, Lorna Goodison, Reinaldo Arenas, Junot Díaz, and Edwidge Danticat.
- Philosophy and political science students could explore the thought of figures such as José Martí, Marcus Garvey, C. L. R. James, and Stuart Hall, or they could investigate U.S. policy toward Cuba and other countries in the region.
- In music and art courses, students could study one or more of the traditional or modern genres from the islands.
- Students in biology and conservation courses have much to explore. In Puerto Rico alone, there is El Yunque rainforest; the wondrous bays that are bioluminescent with microscopic plankton; and the EPA cleanup that resulted in a national wildlife refuge on Vieques. J. R. McNeill's fascinating book *Mosquito Empires* (2010) explains why the ecology of the Caribbean makes it vulnerable to contagious disease, and what role this has played in the region's politics and warfare.
- Nursing and service-learning students could investigate and even help combat key public health problems in the region. Many nongovernmental and charitable organizations focus their work specifically on assisting health care in Haiti, including the Haiti Nursing Foundation (<http://haitinursing.org/>), based in Ann Arbor, MI; the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (<http://www.ihmsisters.org/www/home.asp>), based in Monroe, MI; and Partners in Health (<http://www.pih.org>), based in Boston, MA.



The Saint-James plant, largest rum distillery on the island of Martinique, with a Christian crucifix in the foreground. Rum is an important product of the cane sugar industry. This French colonial producer, established in 1765, was named "Saint-James" to maximize its appeal in New England, the sole market at the time. Martinique is now an overseas department of France, and its Ministry of Rum is still a leading government agency on the island.

Photo: Piotr Redlinski,  
New York Times Feb. 23, 2014



Third, there are events scheduled right here on the Schoolcraft College campus. Focus Series Coordinator Helen Ditouras has played the lead role in organizing a year-long series of special programs for students, staff, and the general public:

- Feb. 3: Wayne State Univ. Prof. Krysta Ryzewski on Cultural Heritage Resources in the Wake of Volcanic Disaster on the Caribbean Island of Montserrat
- Mar. 19: Photographer Chris Cavaliere on his exhibit, "Portraits of Haiti"
- Apr. 19: Caribbean Film Festival—"In the Time of Butterflies", "The Agronomist", and "Chico and Rita"
- Month of Sep.: "Estampas", an exhibit of portraits of the Nicaraguan Caribbean from the HistoryMiami museum
- Sep. 19: Illinois Central Coll. Prof. E. Anthony White on U.S. Deportees and the Impact on Criminal Justice Systems in the Caribbean
- Oct. 13: Sinclair Community Coll. Prof. Katherine Rowell on Population Censuses and the Social Construction of Race in Costa Rica and the U.S.
- Nov. 13: Wayne State Univ. Prof. Janine Lanza on the Haitian Revolution.

These speakers, films, and other events have been very popular and stimulating; for example, about 62 people attended Prof. Ryzewski's talk about Montserrat last February. Watch for a more detailed schedule of these programs on the SCII website and on campus bulletin boards. The entire faculty is urged to recommend this series to students as an excellent way to gather insight and information. Some instructors might want to bring an entire class to a given talk, film, or exhibit (contact Helen at 734-462-4400 extn. 5647 or [hditoura@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:hditoura@schoolcraft.edu)); others might want to fold these into extra-credit opportunities for selected students. Friends, family, and members of the community are also cordially invited to attend.

Other resources available on campus include:

- Bradner Library has a wide variety of published sources on the region. The staff will be happy to introduce you and your students to them.
- Bradner Librarian Wayne Pricer has compiled webliographies (listings of choice websites) on relevant topics such as "Latin America", "Haiti Earthquake", and "Immigration". Access them at the following website:  
<http://www.schoolcraft.edu/a-z-index/learning-support-services/library/resources/>.

As in the past, the campus GlobalEYEzers group invites instructors, staff, students, and community members to participate in lunchtime discussions about current events and issues in a global context, with ethnic food provided. See page 2 for details.

Let us know how you and your colleagues bring some global and multicultural perspective into your coursework this year!

From Kentucky to São Paulo:

## “Come A Little Closer”

“Come A Little Closer”, a song from Kentucky rock band Cage the Elephant, has gained huge popularity and airplay since its release late last year. But not many of the millions of listeners are aware of what inspired the song. Lead singer Matt Shultz explained it during an interview with Chris Rutledge of *American Songwriter* magazine:

I was in my hotel room in São Paulo, and I woke up early one morning, had a cup of coffee, and opened the window to watch the sun come up over the villas, all the makeshift housing on the hillside out of tarps and pieces of scrap metal and stuff. And I was looking at it, and it looked like an intricate system of boroughs, or an anthill. But then I started thinking that up close inside the houses there were little souls, souls that were walking around and had heartache, and love, and loss and joy. So that's kind of where I got the concept of looking at things closer.



Photo from the PBS-TV series "Black in Latin America".

A shantytown in Salvador, Brazil.

communities distributed across the island (For more on Dominica and the course, please see Klak 2012 and Klak and Mullaney 2013).

Notably, the length of the study abroad experience featured in this paper is just 13 days. The time spent abroad is constrained by time blocs available during breaks from school. But I don't feel it necessary to apologize for the trip's short length; intercultural engagement is not necessarily a function of the length of time spent overseas. It is possible to have a richer and more interactive intercultural experience during a short term trip compared to a longer one during which there is a distinct separation between what visitors and hosts are doing.

Here's the challenge: The study abroad goal of rich intercultural engagement runs up against some fundamental aspects of human nature. Glance around a busy school cafeteria and you are likely to see evidence of the human tendency to associate with others similar to oneself. The centuries-old proverb "birds of a feather flock together" illustrates the observation that people tend to congregate with similar others (admittedly the proverb is often applied in critique). Social psychologists have been documenting this behavior for decades. They have labeled it *homophily*, or the "love of the same", i.e., the tendency of people to form relationships with similar others (Retica 2006). Its antonym is *heterophily*, or the "love of the different", and that's a study-abroad goal. The following quote from social psychologists is valuable here for the way that it illustrates the density, embeddedness, multi-dimensionality, and ubiquity of homophilic relationships in our daily lives:

Similarity breeds connection. This principle—the homophily principle—structures network ties of every type, including marriage, friendship, work, advice, support, information transfer, exchange, comembership, and other types of relationship. The result is that people's personal networks are homogeneous with regard to many sociodemographic, behavioral, and intrapersonal characteristics. Homophily limits people's social worlds in a way that has powerful implications for the information they receive, the attitudes they form, and the interactions they experience. Homophily in race and ethnicity creates the strongest divides in our personal environments, with age, religion, education, occupation, and gender following in roughly that order (McPherson et al. 2001).

There is even evidence that homophily is so fundamental to our behavior as to be partly driven by genetics (Rushton and Bons 2005). Despite homophily's ubiquity and essential nature, social psychologists have also noted the benefits of heterophily. Meeting people different from you and befriending dissimilar others enlightens you with alternative viewpoints and provides a broader education (Bahns et al. 2012). Students' post-trip comments attest to such personal gains from intercultural engagement.

I'll leave aside the field of social psychology from here forward while retaining the useful shorthand terms of homophily and heterophily. In a nutshell, a principal goal of my study abroad program is to raise awareness of the normal tendency toward homophily, while encouraging heterophily in an

# The Importance of Intercultural Engagement in Study Abroad: *Experiences in Dominica*

by Thomas Klak

*Professor Klak teaches in the Dept. of Environmental Studies at the Univ. of New England (Biddeford, ME). Previously, he was a Professor of Geography at Miami Univ. (Oxford, OH), where he also directed the program in Latin American, Latino/a, and Caribbean Studies. He holds a Ph.D. in Geography from the Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Klak's key academic interests are in sustainability, local ecological restoration and native landscaping, and study abroad partnerships and pedagogy.*

Faculty lead short-term study abroad programs for different reasons. For natural science teachers, taking students to the tropics puts them in direct contact with the flora and fauna otherwise seen in textbooks and photos. For foreign language instructors, immersing students in the cultural context and daily life of the language demonstrates its contemporary relevance and advances conversational competency. Whatever the trip focus, most study abroad leaders observe that faculty-guided international experiences push students beyond their comfort zones and introduce them to a world to further explore. Short-term study abroad often serves as a gateway as students later catapult themselves into longer-term international experiences, such as year-long residency at foreign universities, graduate study, the Peace Corps, and other pursuits.

All of the above are good reasons to invest the considerable time and effort to lead a study abroad program. However, my own experience with study abroad over recent decades has led me to pursue another ambitious and admittedly challenging and even frustrating goal: to create daily opportunities for my students to cross intercultural boundaries to interact and engage with people otherwise thought to be very different than themselves.

This photo-driven essay illustrates how I pursue the goal of intercultural engagement through an annual course that spends 13 days in the Eastern Caribbean country of Dominica. The course emphasizes sustainable living, demonstrated by cash-poor Dominica that is nonetheless rich environmentally and in community engagement, and is also near carbon neutrality. Participating students are sophomores, juniors, and seniors majoring in environmental science but also a wide range of other fields. Importantly, prior to travel, the study group spends three months preparing for the visit through readings and discussions, a matching fund-raising campaign with needy schools, and Skype conversations with several of our long-term Dominican partners. All this allows students to maximize their time in the country, at which time they are already familiar with its history, geography, and culture, and acquainted with our host



intercultural context that features many characteristics that usually divide us. Our Dominican hosts differ from us visitors in terms of one or more attributes including race, income, lifestyle, age, education, occupation, religion, worldview, and life experience. It is therefore a tall order for students to overcome homophily and embrace heterophily during short-term study abroad experience in Dominica. On the other hand, Dominicans are bilingual in English and French creole, and only accents impede verbal communications between hosts and my students, and indeed the many other visitors to the island who speak these languages.

The remainder of this essay reflects on homophily and heterophily through photos taken over recent years during study abroad in Dominica. The photos depict activities located in a wide range of villages throughout Dominica. This is important to my study abroad agenda. Not only should study abroad encourage engagement, but the wider the range of host-country people engaged, the richer the experience.

You will notice that there are more female than male students in the photos. This reflects the fact that our undergraduate population is predominantly female, and also that they are more likely to pursue study abroad. I make a special effort to encourage male students to go on the trip.

**Figure 1:** Here is a fairly typical study abroad photo with travelers happily posing with arms around each other. An exotic landscape serves as a backdrop—in this case Dominica's Morne Trois Pitons National Park. One of our Dominican nature guides rests behind us. I include myself in this photo to emphasize that no one is immune to homophily. In fact, our intra-group bonding serves to engage students in our valuable end-of-the-day reflection sessions on the Dominica experience. The point is not to negate homophily, but rather to raise awareness of it, and to encourage more heterophily during study abroad. (The face paint is local volcanic clay said to be good for the skin.)



**Figure 2:** The social/dinner gathering captured in this photo was years in the making. The location is the deck at the home of a couple from Giraudel village with the most room for such gatherings. The relationship between our university group and the host group of flower growers began years ago with an annual visit to backyard gardens and to the village botanical garden. As trust grew on both sides, leaders discussed ways to extend the relationship through shared meals. The visiting university group now prepares a simple, communal lunch for everyone at the botanical garden meetinghouse. Students purchase the ingredients the previous day at a vegetable market or supermarkets in the capital city of Roseau, and refrigerate them overnight. As portrayed in the photo, the flower growers reciprocate meal-wise by each contributing one or two dishes to the buffet dinner attended by around 40 people, including the

16 members of our group and our driver. The study group has in fact piggybacked on what used to be an annual social dinner internal to the flower growers group at this home. Now it is that, plus a hosting party for our study group each January. All attendees agree it is a pleasant evening of food, music, and socializing. The interactions are an accomplishment given the multidimensional differences between hosts and visitors including race, age, lifestyle, and accent.

Still, there is room for more intercultural engagement. There are 23 people in Figure 2 (you can see only parts of some people). Note the lack of interweaving in the way hosts and visitors are seated: Eight locals sit in a row along the left wall. Across the back is the local Peace Corps worker on the left (dark shirt), then six members of our study group in succession. Along the right side of the photo, eight more locals sit in a row. This is a typical seating arrangement, despite my pre-party instructions for students not to huddle together but rather to intersperse, in part out of respect to our generous hosts. As mentioned earlier, homophily means that it is normal for people to feel more comfortable sitting with people who are like themselves, so the intercultural interaction is indeed a challenge. This tendency is exacerbated by the fact that in Dominica, and probably in most countries, hosts insist that visitors are first through the buffet line and are also first to be seated. For interspersing to occur, visitors would need to spread out so that there are seats left between them, which is not a normal practice, but something I'm working on.

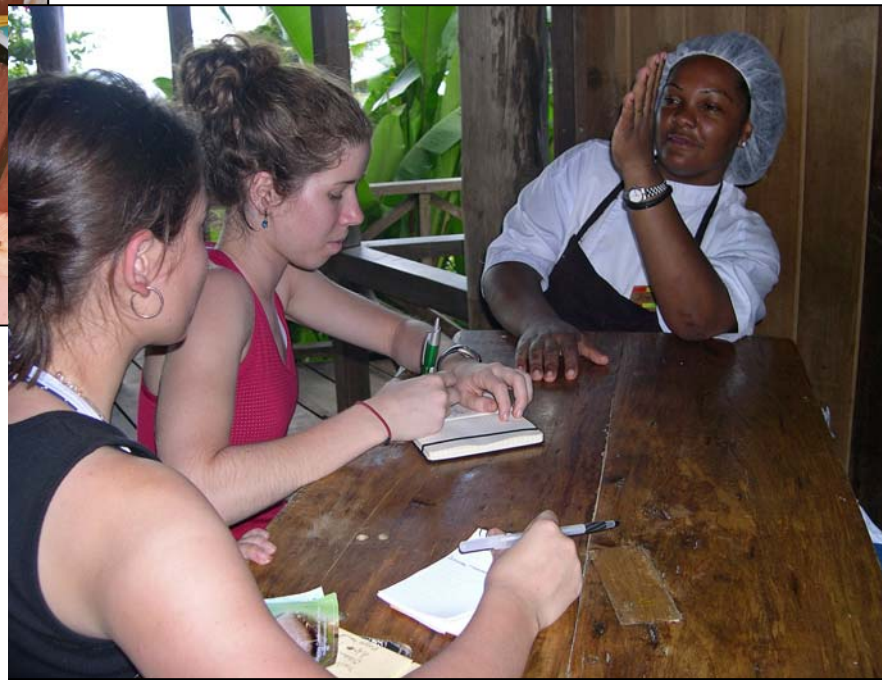
*continued on next page*



## Domenica

*continued from page 15*

**Figure 3:** Our study group enjoys a traditional meal prepared by members of the Kalinago cultural group, comprised of approximately 15 younger members of Dominica's Native American population, and dedicated to cultural revival including traditional dress. As in the Giraudel example illustrated in Figure 2, enriching intercultural interactions like this require sustained leadership effort. Both groups of young people tend to be shy regarding intercultural engagement, but they experience strong feelings of satisfaction and even enlightenment as a result of such interactions.



**Figure 4:** Homophily and heterophily, despite being antonyms, are not necessarily in zero-sum opposition in a study abroad context. Students with strong homophilic bonds can energize and empower each other to reach out and richly engage in heterophilic interactions. In this photo, two students who have encouraged each other to learn about local sourcing of food in the Dominica tourism industry interview the *chef de cuisine* of a highly successful eco-lodge. They ask her about her experience in establishing relationships with dozens of small-scale farmers and fishermen to purchase vegetables, fruits, meats, and fish. As this photo illustrates, heterophilic interactions do not require students to go it alone. As a general rule, I urge students to explore villages and towns in groups of two but no larger than three. This offers them some protection and security (more important for female students), while the group size is limited to reduce the effect of the "tourist bubble" which can inhibit interactions with locals.



**Figure 5:** When the homestay family has time away from work and other obligations to introduce visiting students to daily life, as this family does, it is one of the most enriching parts of the study abroad experience. Many barriers to intercultural exchange melt away in the home setting and children tend to help in this regard. Our group spends three nights in homes in the village of Boetica. The remaining nine nights in Dominica are spent at three eco-lodges in different parts of the country, because one of our interests is sustainable tourism to economically enhance local livelihoods.



**Figure 6:** An organic farmer teaches students how to use a cutlass (a small machete) to prepare holes for planting vegetables. This arrangement, whereby students help plant corn, beans, cabbage, *dasheen*, and other crops, depending on the year, took years to establish as standard practice during this annual farm visit. Neither host nor students were initially entirely comfortable with the idea that visitors would help with the gardening and get dirty. Now it is a standard element of the visit, and an enriching and memorable experience for both sides. Months later, the farmer remembers to relay to me a report on the harvest, thus far always successful.



**Figure 7:** Certain students are intercultural engagement leaders. They purposely make a daily effort to reach out across cultural lines in situations where many students are shy, uncomfortable, or intimidated. The difference seems less inherent than a result of effort: some students try harder than others. The facial expressions in this photo at Warner Primary School (one of our matching fund-raising partners) depict the intensity and potential significance of intercultural experiences. The photo also suggests that the interactions can be just as impactful for hosts as for visitors. A challenge for study abroad leaders is to make good use of the most engaged students so that those who are more timid will push themselves to go beyond their homophily comfort zones throughout the trip.

*continued on page 23*



## Teaching High School in Jamaica:

# Megan Williams, in Conversation with Mike Mosher

*Megan Williams teaches English Language courses at the College of Agriculture, Science and Education in Portland, Jamaica. Megan was educated at Shortwood Teachers' College in Kingston, and University of the West Indies. She also taught or was employed at Camperdown High School and Paul Bogle High School.*

*Mike Mosher is Professor, Art/Communication & Digital Media at Saginaw Valley State University in Michigan. Mike is also Megan's uncle, and delights in her posts of family photos, and her images of roadside fruit vendors or fishermen selling the catch from the blue-green sea that arrive in the middle of the Michigan Winter. This is the first opportunity the two have taken to talk about the profession of teaching.*

MM: How big is your town, and how would you describe it? How close, and closely connected, to Kingston?

MW: Portland is located in the northeast of Jamaica, two hours away from Kingston. It has caves, waterfalls, hills, rivers, and beautiful beaches. Tourists who enjoy the outdoors and nature visit Portland.

MM: How is the public school system organized? Are curriculum and school policies set at a local level, or nationally?

MW: The Jamaican public school system is organized as follows:

- the primary level has grades 1 to 6 (6- to 12-year olds)
- the secondary level has grades 7 to 11 (12- to 17-year olds)
- the post-secondary level has grades 12 and 13 (17- to 19-year olds)
- the tertiary level (universities and colleges).

Most Jamaican students enroll in privately owned basic/infant schools between the ages of 2 and 6 years. Consequently, they have been attending school at least two years before entering the public school system.

The curriculum and school policies are determined nationally, by the Ministry of Education.

MM: Is there uniform testing across Jamaica? At what level, and what subjects?

MW: Yes, uniform testing is conducted across Jamaica. There are four national and one international set of tests:



Photo: Norma Williams

### Megan Williams

1. The Grade One Readiness Inventory
2. The Grade Four Literacy Test, which assesses students' literacy and numeracy competencies
3. The Grade Six Achievement Test, which assesses students' competence in Communication Task, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Prior to the tests, students choose five high schools they wish to attend in order of first to fifth choice. Based on the test scores, students are placed in one of the high schools of their choice, or in their region. High schools are broken down into two categories, traditional and non-traditional. The better GSAT performers are usually placed in traditional high schools; excellent performers receive scholarships.
4. The Grade Nine Achievement Test, which places grade nine students from All Age Schools into a high school.
5. At the end of grade eleven, students sit for the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) exam and/or the General Certificate Examination (GCE). The CSEC was created by countries in the Caribbean region, and GCE originated in England. These examinations assess all subject areas, which include English Language, Mathematics, Biology, Physics, Spanish, French, and many others.



The grades assigned in these exams range between 1 and 6: grade 1 is a distinction; grade 2 is a pass with credit; grade 3 a satisfactory pass. Grades 4 - 6 are failing grades, or a basic level pass.

MM: In what subjects are Jamaican, or your, students weakest?

MW: Jamaican students are weakest in mathematics. And English is the second language of most students. Their first language is Jamaican Creole, which has a similar lexicon as English. As a result, students confuse the two languages and struggle to master Standard English, which is the country's official language.

MM: Please describe your typical working day.

MW: I teach students in high school years 1 to 3 who are completing a 4-year teaching degree program. My contact hours with students vary. There are days when I teach for 6-7 hours, while other days I might only teach for one hour. Additionally, I supervise student teachers (in their first to fourth years of teaching) on teaching practicum during my non-contact hours.

MM: What are special days or events in your school, and how are they significant? I remember your son Brandon singing folk songs with his class on Independence Day— does this take place only in the lower grades?

MW: Each year in October, Jamaica celebrates Heroes Day in honor of its seven national heroes who made significant contribution to the country's development. These heroes fought for freedom from slavery, for independence from Britain, and for

Universal Adult Suffrage. National Heritage Week celebrations take place during the last week of leading up to Heroes' Day. Schools engage in exhibitions of students' creative pieces and artifacts, culinary fairs, flag-raising ceremonies, heritage concerts, and other cultural performances: dance, music, and poetry.

Jamaica Day is another special day on the calendar of Jamaican schools. It is a project of the Culture in Education Program, which was designed "to emphasize the goodness and grace of the Jamaican people." This day highlights everything Jamaican: its rich culture and the resilience and accomplishments of the people. Schools display vintage items, such as the bottle torch, coal stove, self-heating iron, and the coconut broom. Culinary displays usually include local dishes such as ackee and salt-fish, mannish water, potato pudding, and grater cake. Jamaica Day serves to focus on the Jamaican culture, as most youths are overly exposed to the western culture via the media: movies, Internet, video games, and cable television.

MM: How are specifically Jamaican values, culture, or Jamaican patriotism introduced in the schools?

MW: Schools introduce patriotism by teaching students the Jamaican anthem and pledge, the national tree, flower, dish, coat of arms, and heroes. Jamaica Day, which I previously mentioned, is one such day that promotes the Jamaican culture and patriotism.

In addition to fostering students' awareness and understanding of national identity and traditions, schools are required to expose

*continued on next page*



Andrea Bruce

Girls leaving school for home in the Mountain View neighborhood in Kingston, Jamaica. (*New York Times*, Aug. 18, 2013)

students to environmental and economic issues. As students' civic understanding is nurtured, they will increasingly consider their potential contribution to Jamaica.

MM: What social and political issues most influence the schools?

MW: Jamaican schools are adversely impacted by insufficient support from corporate Jamaica, poor socialization and stigmatization of students from inner city areas, and weak schools. These schools have been labeled as 'failing' which serves to demoralize teachers and students. Also, there is insufficient infrastructural and financial support from the Ministry of Education, so many schools lack sufficient resources.

MM: What interferes with your students' academic success?

MW: Factors that interfere with students' academic success include financial challenges that impede regular school attendance, lack of parental support, physical and psychological neglect/abuse, and poor cognitive development.

MM: Are teachers organized, in unions or influential professional organizations? Has this improved wages or working conditions?

MW: The Jamaica Teachers' Association is the union that supports Jamaican teachers. It has successfully lobbied for increase in salary and for benefits such as study leave with full pay after working two years with the Ministry of Education.

MM: In the U.S., skilled teachers too often leave the profession to make more money in other fields. Does that happen in Jamaica? Do they leave to teach elsewhere in the Caribbean?

MW: Yes, it does happen. Jamaican teachers leave to teach in the U.S., Canada, and the Caribbean. The remuneration of Jamaicans teachers is considerably less than that of first-world countries, and other countries in the region with a stronger economy, such as Grand Cayman, and Trinidad and Tobago.

MM: Do you see yourself teaching until retirement? When would that be, and would you receive a pension?

MW: No, I want to be an entrepreneur. If I were to teach until retirement, I would retire at 60 years old with pension.

MM: In the United States, the racial composition of public schools is seen as a factor in their success. It usually reflects economic issues where they're located as well. While Jamaica is historically multi-ethnic— "Out of many, one people" is your motto— it is essentially a nation of black people of African ancestry, right?

MW: True, our ethnicity is predominantly black, so race has little influence on students' success. However, there are schools in the inner city areas of Kingston where it is believed that their low academic performance is related to the poor economic background of their parents and the volatile nature of their immediate surroundings. The converse is thought to be true of schools in the areas where parents are considered to be middle-

class, who frequently give these schools financial support in addition to government funding.

MM: Do you have any specific advice for black students, or for teachers of black students, in the United States?

MW: Even though a few Jamaicans may not share the experience of being racially profiled or discriminated against, many of us have experienced discrimination because of the shade of our complexion: light or dark. Nevertheless, we have achieved significantly in academics, sports, entrepreneurship, and entertainment on a local and international platform. Do not be sidetracked by the color of your skin and how others might perceive you because of it. Strive for excellence.

MM: What do you most want your students to know? About school? About life? About you?

MW: I want my students to know that school is a "test-run" for the rest of their lives. They can develop good work ethics, integrity, and camaraderie that will be essential if they are to succeed in their personal and professional lives after school. I want my students to know that I too have doubted my capabilities, but hard work and perseverance have always paid off for me.

MM: If you were appointed Minister of Education, or head of your own school, what would your first changes or actions be?

MW: I would implement the following:

1. Teaching assistants assigned to all grades at the primary school level. Currently, the student-teacher ratio does not always facilitate each student's academic and social needs being met.
2. Mandatory parent-teacher conferences during each school term in the primary and high schools.

MM: Do you have a teaching philosophy?

MW: No child should be left behind in the classroom. If one child is left behind, it is one too many.

MM: What would you tell a new teacher on her or his first day of school?

MW: The "wise teacher" is one who is aware that he or she needs to keep learning even from those whom we have prepared to teach: students. It gets better every day. Your teaching skill will improve with each passing day in the classroom, just like fine wine. Have genuine affection and love for your students, which will serve as the biggest motivator in their learning.

\* \* \*

*More information on the College of Agriculture, Science and Education in Portland, Jamaica, is available at <http://www.case.edu.jm/html/>.*

*There are several videos on YouTube from the College, including some performers at its Dis Poem Word Festival in 2012. The College recently posted a fun promotional video, "Happy", on its Facebook page, available at <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=656811451059436&set=vb.116413025099284&type=2&theater>.*



# Haiti:

## A Portrait of Desperation

by Mike Ragan

*Michael Ragan, Sr., of Livonia, MI, wrote this paper at Schoolcraft College last Winter in English 102 (Composition 2), taught by Sumita Chaudhery. It won the first-place \$200 scholarship prize in the writing category of the Winter 2014 International Agenda Writing and Art Contest. Mike is not only a Schoolcraft student but also the Director of Custodial and Grounds Operations at the College.*

Situated on the western one-third of Hispaniola, the Caribbean's second-largest island, one would think Haiti would be difficult to miss. Contrarily, Haiti may be so impossible to forget that the rest of the world would rather pretend to not see it. This impoverished country struggles in a national malaise that has been more forced upon it than self-induced. After centuries of mayhem and mistreatment, Haiti exists in a state of cultural chaos and quandary. The challenge for Haiti and the developed world is to acknowledge the sins of the past, to make an honest though uncomfortable assessment of the present, and to set a course through the myriad obstacles before it in pursuit of a better future.

The island of Hispaniola, originally populated by the Taino Indians, a subset of the Arawak who migrated northward from South America, lay in contented isolation for centuries (Corbett, par. 5). Though presumed an extinct group, Vilma Schultz reports that in her field research she discovered Arawak-speaking people in small, isolated tribal communities that have survived deep in the South American interior, but in numbers so small that their survival as a distinct group appears doubtful (Schultz, pp. 160-164).

### The Sordid Tale of Columbus

Unfortunately for the Arawak living on Hispaniola, the island gained the distinction of becoming the location of the first European settlement in the Americas, the place from which the Spaniards would launch their bloody conquest of the Caribbean and the North American mainland.

Columbus found the inhabitants of the New World to be pleasant people, describing them as welcoming, gentle, good natured and, though poor, generous toward the Europeans in trade. He admired them for their physical stature, pleasant faces, beautiful eyes, and tawny brown complexion. Their absence of hostility being evident, he noted they did not possess metal weaponry, so lacking in knowledge of metallurgy that when he permitted them to handle his sword, they cut themselves (Paul Halsall, ed.).



Spanish atrocities against Hispaniola's Taino population as depicted by Bartolomé de las Casas

But an ominous entry in Columbus's journal proved both revealing of European intentions and prophetic when he penned, "With fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want" (Zinn, p. 1).

After his flagship, the *Santa Maria*, ran aground on a coral reef in the shallow harbor, Columbus, with the willing assistance of the Taino, dismantled the ship and erected a fortification on Dec. 24, 1492, naming it *La Navidad*. He left 40 volunteers from his crew on the island, only to find their remains and the settlement destroyed upon his return in 1493. The once friendly natives had killed the Spaniards in retaliation for cruel oppression and the rape of their wives and daughters.

Upon reconstruction of the outpost, the subjugation of the natives began in earnest. Dismemberment, mutilation, and murder of the defenseless natives served as entertainment for the oppressive Spanish masters. These atrocities combined with smallpox brought from Europe resulted in the wholesale extermination of the race. The Taino unwittingly and unwillingly exported syphilis to the Old World (Heinl and Heinl, pp. 12-13). The Columbian exchange had begun.

### Enslavement and Annihilation

In addition to deadly diseases, the exchange of imports and exports between the New World and Spain involved agricultural goods, livestock, technological advances, and a social order thitherto unknown on the island so far from Europe (Crosby). The exchange, driven by greed and made economical by slave labor on the sugarcane and other plantations, resulted in a cruel holocaust the scope of which would not be seen again until the rise of Nazism in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The enormity of crimes against the helpless natives aroused controversy among men of conscience. One such man, the Dominican reformer Bartolomé de las Casas, became famous and hated for the publication of his vivid exposé in Europe. He denounced the slaughter of the native people in graphic detail,

*continued on next page*

## Haiti *continued from page 21*

relating the swift annihilation of the indigenous population. He estimated the number of Hispaniola's Taino population at 3 million in 1492, although this is likely too high. Whatever the original figure might have been, extant records indicate it fell to a mere 150 people by 1550 (Heinl and Heinl, p. 13).

With the extinction of the Taino, the labor pool vanished. An initial effort to alleviate the shortage resulted in the relocation of 40,000 Indian slaves from the Bahamas. These, too, proved unmatched for the hardships put upon them, and they quickly perished. To resupply the hapless island with a slave class, Negroes were imported from the west coast of Africa at an accelerating rate. The first shipment arrived in 1550, and culminated in a slave population of 700,000 souls in 1874 (Heinl and Heinl, p. 25).

In the years following 1492, Haiti changed hands with the successive ascendancy of warring European powers, finally becoming the property of the French. It mattered little who became their masters at any point in time: subjugation, misery, and death attended them; foreigners in their own land, their island paradise became a living hell. Their new homeland became a death camp surrounded by a fence of water extending to the horizon.

### Independence and Its Problems

Eventually the Afro-Caribbean slaves of Haiti rebelled, and a long fight for freedom ensued. The oppressed inhabitants of the island found new hope and determination when King Louis XVI of France gave royal assent to the "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen" in 1789, during the early months of the French Revolution (Heinl and Heinl, p. 39).

In 1804, after centuries of struggle, the African people of the island prevailed in the first successful revolution of slaves in history. Haiti became the world's first black republic, and the second nation to gain freedom in the Western Hemisphere (CIA World Factbook).

Winning independence did not end the bloodshed that had for so long been part and parcel of life in Haiti, "that true paradise on earth, which has been the theatre of such horrible scenes and frightful dramas, whose soil has drunk more blood than sweat" (Haitian writer Edgar La Selve, as quoted in Heinl and Heinl, p. 9). Haiti has continued to suffer at the hands of her own sons who have risen to power in successive waves of turbulent democracy and bloody revolt.

Since the 1820s there have been "nearly 200 subsequent revolutions, coups, insurrections and civil wars, aside from the

Nearly 20% of Haitian children age 5 or younger are seriously underweight.

Photo: Chris Cavaliere

ravages of the tropics . . ." (Heinl and Heinl, p. 7), a social turmoil that has permeated Haitian national life. Twenty-three constitutions have been written and adopted since her independence (CIA World Factbook). Internal insecurity, oppression, and violent civil unrest compete to ruinous proportions as the prevailing trait of national identity in this paradise lost.

In many respects, much has remained the same since the first 50 years of European rule:

- Haitians still die in large numbers. The death rates in categories such as infant and maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS, and other infectious diseases remain high relative to international statistics.
- The median age is 21.9 years, with only 9.1% of the population living past the age of 55.
- Nearly 20% of children, five years old and under, fall below the healthy weight standard.
- Exploitation of the defenseless continues to this day, with 21% of children aged 5-14 forced into child labor. Sex trafficking of youth has become a growing problem, and a lucrative export product, with the attendant consequences of increased drug addiction, runaways, homeless children, gang affiliation, and rising street crime.
- Out of a work force of 4,810,000, over 40% have no employment; more than two-thirds of the labor force does not have formal jobs.
- Illiteracy is rampant, with less than half of the population over 15 years of age able to read or write.
- Some 80% of Haitians live below the poverty line, and 54% in abject poverty (CIA World Factbook).

The Caribbean, a popular playground developed by foreign investors and a favorite vacation destination of wealthy nations, boasts beautiful and opulent accommodations throughout the region— everywhere, that is, except in Haiti. Without political, military, or economic incentive to spur investment, there exists little interest in doing so. Haiti possesses scant natural resources. The valuable mahogany forests have been felled and shipped away. Lacking oil deposits, or a strategic military importance, to a significant degree Haiti is left a ravaged people to writhe in





### A Call for Selfless Intrusion

Just as Europe turned a blind eye to the atrocities perpetrated upon the Haitians for material gain in the glad days of discovery, so today the nations who have wrung the wealth from Haiti, their hands perpetually stained with Haitian blood, to a large extent turn their attention from the present atrocities.

It must be acknowledged that Haiti does receive foreign aid, so much in fact that over half of its annual budget comes from outside sources— most of it from the U.S. directly, or indirectly through the United Nations (CIA World Factbook). However, the needs remain great and the attempts to alleviate those needs remain woefully inadequate. The time has come and passed when the nations who enriched and advanced themselves at the expense of Haitian lives and resources do more than throw money at the problem in a manner analogous to wealthy parents throwing money at dysfunctional offspring. Surely Haiti's condition testifies to the lack of nurturing and attendance to their best interests on the part of its European parents.

In a world of nations where the great powers espouse political correctness and deferential respect for native culture, and self-determination and national autonomy as key components of international relations, there seems little to no actual adherence to those ideals when political, military, or financial interests warrant heavy-handed involvement in another nation's affairs.

Haiti has nothing to offer; it has already given all. If ever the condition of a people justified benevolent, selfless intrusion, witness the condition of the Haitians. Haiti still languishes in the shackles of poverty and death put upon it so long ago. It remains an island of desperation in an ocean of plenty. Without help from across the seas, Haiti's future will be a tragic continuation of the past. •

### References

- Corbett, Bob, "Pre-Columbian Hispaniola— Arawak/Taino Indians", World History Archives (Hartford Web Publishing), [www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/43a/100.html](http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/43a/100.html).
- Crosby, Alfred W., "The Columbian Exchange: Plants, Animals, and Disease between the Old and New Worlds", National Humanities Center, <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nattrans/ntecoindean/essays/columbian.htm>.
- Halsall, Paul, ed., "Christopher Columbus: Extracts from Journal", Internet History Sourcebooks Project, [www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/columbus1.asp](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/columbus1.asp).
- Heinl, Robert Debs, and Nancy Gordon Heinl, *Written in Blood: The Story of the Haitian People, 1492-1971* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978).
- Schultz, Vilma, *Vanishing Peoples of the Earth* (Washington, DC: National Geographic Society, 1968).
- U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook: Haiti", [www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html](http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html).
- Zinn, Howard, *A People's History of the United States* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980).

## Domenica

*continued from page 17*

In conclusion, I encourage study abroad leaders to take into account the intercultural engagement experiences and efforts reviewed in this paper, and to reflect on their own experiences. How important is heterophily among your study abroad goals, and how do your experiences with college students compare to mine? By no means am I suggesting that I've overcome the homophily tendency, i.e., students preferring to interact amongst themselves during study abroad. Considerable bonding inevitably occurs within the student travel group, and leads to many hours of internal conversation, both related (and also often unrelated) to the country we are visiting and our travel experiences. Students often note that the intra-group social bonding is a positive outcome of the study abroad experience. A leadership challenge is to make students more aware of the intergroup bonding, which needs little encouragement, and to help them extend interactions beyond this comfortable comradery to include more and more of our hosts. What I can say in conclusion is that I feel that I've made progress over the years toward this goal of facilitating intercultural interactions. But it continues to be a work in progress. It requires constant vigilance or else the natural homophily tendencies will consume too large a share of the study abroad experience for many students. •

### References

- Bahns, Angela J., Kate M. Pickett, and Christian S. Crandall, "Social Ecology of Similarity: Big Schools, Small Schools and Social Relationships", *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, 15:1 (2012), pp. 119-131.
- Klak, Thomas, "Synergy between Geographical Scholarship and Study Abroad Teaching: Dominica's Farming Communities", *Focus on Geography* 55:4 (2012), pp. 125-131.
- Klak, Thomas, and Emma Gaalaas Mullaney, "Levels and Networks in Community Partnerships: A Framework Informed by our Overseas Partners", *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement*, vol. 6 (2013), pp. 1-21, also available at <http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/journals/index.php/ijcre>.
- Mepherston, Miller, Lynn S. Lovin, and James M. Cook, "Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks", *Annual Review of Sociology*, 1:27 (2001), pp. 415-444.
- Retica, Aaron, "Homophily", *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, 10 December 2006, also available at [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/10/magazine/10Secton2a.t-4.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/10/magazine/10Secton2a.t-4.html?_r=0).

### Acknowledgments

Thanks to Jeanne Hey and Charlie Stevens for their astute comments on an earlier draft, and to Randy Schwartz for encouraging this reflection piece.

# Convergence of Cultures and the Evolution of Music in the Caribbean

by Paul M. Michalsen (SC Dept. of Music)

The Winter 2014 edition of *International Agenda* featured an article entitled “The Caribbean: Bougainvillea and Barbed Wire”, containing the following quote from photographer Chris Cavaliere used as a descriptor of the entire Caribbean region: “Beauty and pain intertwined.” This prolific statement also encompasses the development of the region’s own unique musical style and how the political and cultural struggles of its people fostered the expansive reach of its music.

The backbone of the region’s musical influences comes from the indigenous inhabitants of the islands, commonly referred to as the Amerindians. Although historians estimate their population exceeded half a million, they were largely decimated following the arrival of the Europeans in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. The music of this civilization revolved around a ceremony called *areito*. Musicians stood in the center of a circle, around which as many as one thousand participants would dance. The use of instruments such as rattles (predecessor to the *maracas*), gourd scrapers (*guiros*), and drums (*mayohuacan*) was combined with call-and-response style chanting. The early drums were created with hollowed logs with carved-out H-shaped tongues. Little remains of this early music, with the natives largely exterminated following the arrival of Christopher Columbus and his European posse. Indigenous populations were subjected to forced labor, exposure to European illness, and the introduction of Spanish pigs that destroyed native crops. After the disappearance of the native cultures, Europeans turned to Africa to fill the need for forced labor, ultimately introducing the most influential component of Caribbean music today.

Caribbean music contains some underlying general principles common in African music, although specific elements that can be directly traced to that continent are markedly absent. This can perhaps be attributed to the European influences and to the mixture of Caribbean slave populations, which often consisted of members of ethnic groups from throughout the African continent. One common element retained by Caribbean music common in African styles is *collective participation*, encouraging all members of the community to actively participate without making any distinction amongst socio-economic classes. Individuals can participate by clapping, playing an instrument, or dancing. The style does not require, or expect, any advance training on the part of participants, recognizing at some level that each individual’s musical ability and contributions are unique. This approach perhaps led to the diversity of styles in the genre, with equal respect and recognition given to artists who incorporate their own individualistic styles, and also incorporating modern genres such as rap and pop-rock.

The second element commonly believed to have arisen from the African influences is the inherent focus on rhythm in the music. When you listen to Caribbean music, you will note that the music contains a harmony and melody, but the rhythm distinguishes it artistically. The strong beat grabs the listener’s attention and provides a repetitive pulse that often reverberates under the feet of listeners and is often combined with a “call and response” element. Performers can alter a performance by varying the pattern of beats or by combining beats with narration or singing. The strong stylistic influence of the “call and response”

and rhythmic undertones can also be heard in modern rock, R&B, and rap music, which often consist of a series of repeated notes and chord patterns in musical phrases. Contrast this to the “European styled” music, such as ballads performed by popular American singers that contain a main tune or chorus.

The evolution of the Caribbean into its own culture based on the merging of Africans, Europeans, and other outside groups is often referred to as “Creolization”. This is perhaps the best example of how different cultural backgrounds have evolved to create a new art form. In the music context, examples of this process include the following:

- Cuban *rumba*: A combination of European and African. Strong, repeated rhythms suggest an African influence, while the use of melodies and Spanish language are reminiscent of European musical style.
- Puerto Rican *danza*: This music has become a symbol of the island’s identity. Its refined piano composition, originating in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, has a European feel. Young pianist Manuel Tavárez popularized the style after completing his studies in Paris, composing over 300 *danzas*.

The music of the Caribbean is perhaps the best example of how the value of music should never be defined by what has come before it, but its ability to encompass a constantly changing art form.

## Sources and Learning More About Caribbean Music

### “Caribbean Music & Dance”

This student project from American Culture 213 (Univ. of Michigan) includes photographs of instruments used in the evolution of Caribbean Music:

[http://www.umich.edu/~ac213/student\\_projects06/dorir/instruments.html](http://www.umich.edu/~ac213/student_projects06/dorir/instruments.html)

### Caribbean Music Association

Professional association with links to events, photographs, and music: <http://www.caribbeanmusicassociation.co.uk/>

Dreisinger, Baz, “Festivals Where the Beat Makes You Move” (a guide to Caribbean music festivals), *New York Times*, 10 Nov. 2013: [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/10/travel/festivals-where-the-beat-makes-you-move.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/10/travel/festivals-where-the-beat-makes-you-move.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0).

Hebdige, Dick, *Cut 'n' Mix: Culture, Identity, and Caribbean Music* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

### iTunes Caribbean Music Downloads:

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/genre/music-world-caribbean/id1195>.

Manuel, Peter, *Caribbean Currents: Caribbean Music from Rumba to Reggae* (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 2006).

Manuel, Peter, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean* (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 2009).

Washburne, Christopher, “The Clave of Jazz: A Caribbean Contribution to the Rhythmic Foundation of American Music”, *Black Music Research Journal*, 17:1 (Spring 1993), pp. 59-80.



# The Father of Jamaican Dub Poetry



Oku Onuora was a rebel at an age when most kids don't even know what "rebel" means. He grew up in the slums of Eastern Kingston, where he and his friends fought police violence with graffiti, protests, and guerrilla-style skirmishes. In an effort to raise money for a ghetto community center and school, they turned to armed heists. In 1970, after robbing a post office, Oku was arrested and sentenced to 15 years in prison.

Behind the walls, however, he found a whole new way to rebel by inventing a form of spoken word that he called *dub poetry*, an outgrowth of Jamaican dub music. It consists of lines with a distinctly reggae-style rhythm, prepared ahead of time (not improvised), and chanted before an audience. Sometimes it is accompanied by music, but in those cases the lyrics remain primary and the music is carefully "dubbed in".

In 1974, after two reggae bands visiting prison accompanied Oku's performance, the prison authorities seized his poems and declared them subversive. The warden called him to his office and demanded, "Why don't you write about birds and trees and flowers? Why do you have to write so much blood and all that?" Oku responded by composing the following poem:

## I Write About

You ask  
why do you write about  
blood sweat and tears  
don't you write about  
birds flowers trees love?

Yes

I write about birds  
I write about trees  
I write about flowers  
I write about LOVE

caged birds strugglin'  
trees with withered branches and severed roots  
flowers on graves  
love for the destruction of oppression

In the face of popular demand, as well as outcry from the world literary community, Oku was reprieved and released after serving seven years in Fort Augusta and St. Catherine District

prisons. Within a year, in a Kingston studio he waxed the first recording of dub poetry, a 45-rpm single called "Reflection in Red".

The art form of dub poetry soon spread to Toronto, London, and other world cities. For more on the subject, check out Christian Habekost's *Verbal Riddim: The Politics and Aesthetics of African-Caribbean Dub Poetry* (Rodopi, 1993).

Oku Onuora and the two other titans of dub poetry— Mutabaruka and Linton Kwesi Johnson— were all born in Jamaica in 1952 and are all still active.

The poem here, and some of the other information, is from an interview by Jill Taylor and Anthony Brennan, "Oku Onuora: 'A Poem is Like a Bomb'", *The Reggae and African Beat*, April 1985, pp. 20-21.

—RKS

## MIIE Conference

*continued from p. 9*

Maheshwari enrolled, held at Kalamazoo Valley CC in Aug. 2013. Its objective is to underscore the way in which Western values and morals are not necessarily values and morals that are, or should be, universal, and to encourage students to appreciate and understand different global perspectives. The capstone of this module is an assigned research-based paper highlighting a human right of the student's choice, and exploring the nuances present in various cultural norms.

- **Race as a Social Construct: The Browning of America and the Whitening of Costa Rica.** This presentation by Dr. Katherine R. Rowell (Dept. of Sociology, Sinclair Community College, Dayton, OH) included some of her intriguing research that grew out of a week-long seminar on Peace and Conflict Studies in December 2011. By closely examining the U.S. census in comparison to the Costa Rican census, Dr. Rowell revealed some fascinating trends: the browning of American census figures and the whitening of Costa Rican ones. By fleshing out the details behind these figures, Dr. Rowell emphasized the way in which "censuses do more than simply reflect a social reality; rather, they play a key role in the construction of that reality." I am pleased that Dr. Rowell accepted my invitation to provide an encore presentation at Schoolcraft College on Oct. 13.
- **Fair Trade in an Age of Mega Corporations.** One of the most provocative presentations I attended was this talk delivered by one of our very own, Prof. Cynthia Jenzen (Anthropology). During her lively presentation, Prof. Jenzen provided an historical overview of the development of the fair trade industry. By focusing a critical lens on the massive trade in coffee, she was able to outline the differences between the prevailing capitalist markets and fair-trade practices. The goals of fair trade include safe, non-exploitative working conditions, public accountability and financial transparency, democratically run producer cooperatives or workplaces, and fair wages for laborers. Prof. Jenzen has reviewed a book about fair-trade coffee for *International Agenda* (Sep. 2012).

## Book Review

# Profound Stories of Love and Loss: Junot Díaz

Junot Díaz,  
*This is How You Lose Her*  
 Riverhead Books  
 Hardcover edition, 2012  
 Paperback edition, 2013  
 Deluxe illustrated edition, 2013  
 Other editions in Kindle, audio CD,  
 multimedia CD, and Spanish

by Helen Ditousas (SC Dept. of English)

**F**act: At the height of his career, I sent Junot Díaz an outlandish e-mail message that included a few paragraphs of writing and a proposition that we co-author a short story. Fiction: We are now co-writing a promising novella, but given the borders between us, we usually brainstorm via text messages. Every so often we laugh about our mutual love for Latin freestyle music, which I first discovered that we shared after reading his acclaimed collection *This is How You Lose Her*. And it always comes down to the same debate: Stevie B vs. Johnny O. I say Johnny O, but he insists Stevie B defined the era of freestyle for all immigrant and first-generation youth, including Latinos, Italians, Greeks, and Arabs— and if I'm forgetting anyone, my deepest apologies.

Junot Díaz is a Dominican-American writer and a professor of creative writing at MIT. He was born in 1968 in a neighborhood of Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic (DR). Díaz was already the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2008) when he gained tremendous additional notoriety for *This is How You Lose Her* (2012). Although Díaz had made his mark back in 1996 with the publication of another short-story collection, *Drown*, *This is How You Lose Her* took things to another level, sparking a love affair between Díaz and the literati— and everyone in between.

Within a year of its debut, Díaz teamed up with illustrator and graphic novelist Jaime Hernandez to release an illustrated version of *This is How You Lose Her*. Marketed as a collector's item, this deluxe edition includes some gorgeous, sensual illustrations (see the example here) of the sort that had made Jaime and the brothers Hernandez famous in their *Love and Rockets* graphic serials. Their drawings bring Díaz's strong and sometimes vulnerable Dominican women further to life, with their voluptuous figures and scornful looks. The reader, flipping through these humorous and at times utterly heartbreaking tales of love and loss, is haunted by the kaleidoscope of women as much as they torment Yunior, the male protagonist who narrates the stories.

Yet, as much as I would like to celebrate Hernandez's artwork as a pivotal addition to Díaz's book, I'd be lying if I urged you to go buy the illustrated edition. And this is coming from a woman who read Gilbert Hernandez's entire *Palomar* series neatly assembled as a giant 512-page graphic novel. Here



lies the difference: illustrations are central to a graphic novel—they are the very life of this genre. The images of Latino women that line the pages of the *Love and Rockets* and *Palomar* series leave a visual imprint in our minds that skillfully matches the wonderful narratives created by the brothers Hernandez. By contrast, the illustrated version of *This is How You Lose Her* is not a graphic novel—it simply includes some illustrations that serve to portray Díaz's women, ranging from Yunior's mother to all of the women he betrays page after page.

Before I move on, a word of caution: if you are a feminist of the Andrea Dworkin type, stop reading. As a matter of fact, do not even pick up this book. Because Díaz's philosophical contemplations on life will be lost on you. You will not be able to get past the misogyny—the references to the many *sucias* (sluts) that Yunior encounters and his dirty musings. And even though I've read these stories many times, I too still wince when I encounter the misogyny. But for the same reason that I adore Philip Roth, I admit that I love Díaz too. These men write narratives from the perspective, well, of men. All kinds of men. Educated men. Working-class men. Guilt-ridden men. Troubled men. And oftentimes, the lives of said men take ugly turns that result in ugly reflections. Particularly when it comes to the battle of the sexes. But if you can get past the sordidness, what lies beneath are some profound stories of what it means to love and lose.



*This is How You Lose Her* begins and ends with Yunior's yearnings and reflections on the one that got away. And Díaz perfectly bookends this entire compilation with two of the best stories in the book, "The Sun, The Moon, The Stars" and "The Cheater's Guide to Love". In the first story, we meet Yunior in his youth, immediately after Magda, his Dominican girl—the love of his life—catches him cheating. And so begins Yunior's relentless efforts to win her back. He even plans a trip to the DR in hopes of re-kindling their romance while meeting his family back home. But as the title of the book reminds us, it's a fruitless endeavor. Because even if your girl has a heart of gold, this is how you lose her.

When we meet Yunior again in "The Cheater's Guide to Love", he's an almost middle-aged professor and upcoming writer. Basically, he's Junot Díaz. But for all the narratives of romance and heartbreak, he's just a tad bit wiser. In this final tale, Yunior watches the years go by as he tries to win his girl back. But he doesn't. She moves on. And instead, we learn about the bromance between him and Elvis (his closest confidante), the racism he witnesses in Cambridge as a man of color, the infidelities he and Elvis pursue, the births of children, the challenges of writing well, and the inexorable breakdown of the body that afflicts Yunior, from plantar fasciitis to chronic pain. What this concluding tale reveals is the portrait of a man who is humbled—not just by women, but also by age, and all the melancholic meditations that come with such humbling.

The stories between these two bookends include some definite notables. "The Pura Principle" recounts the battle between Pura and Yunior's mother, who attempts to shield her son Rafa from the claws of Pura's opportunistic ploy to marry Rafa for U.S. resident status. The conflict is magnified by the fact that Rafa is dying, and Pura's transparent scheme is all the more enraging. My other favorite is "Nilda". The opening lines in this chapter read, "Nilda was my brother's girlfriend. This is how all these stories begin." And what we come to discover in the next few pages is the rise and fall of Nilda, a once beautiful, albeit poor, Dominican girl; the death of Yunior's brother, Rafa; and the longing, turned to pity, that Yunior carries in his heart for Nilda, who loses her beauty, and later on, her teeth, in a vicious attack by a bunch of girls from the 'hood. What's most tragic in this tale is not Nilda's physical decline, but her poverty, and her downward spiral through the years. This story is told through Yunior's eyes which, for once, seem supremely sympathetic and deeply humane.

Apart from the plethora of reasons one could love this book, I have my own reasons. And to anyone else, they might seem simple, or even silly. When I read *Drown*, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, and of course *This is How You Lose Her*, I feel intimately connected with Díaz. It's as if we share the same history that is marked by immigration, diaspora, and feeling at once neither here nor there. There's a moment in "The Cheater's Guide to Love" when Yunior's latest fling, a married woman from the DR studying in Cambridge, dismisses his Dominican identity—because he's American. As a child of Greek immigrants, I so get it. It's an internal tug-of-war with identity, a struggle that even through the early stages of middle age never seems to end. And Díaz fleshes out the nuances of this struggle skillfully throughout the various stories.

Finally, I especially love the references he makes to music, from freestyle—one of the most influential musical genres to emerge in the 1980s within Latino communities throughout the U.S.—to the popular Dominican duo known as "Monchy y Alexandra" and their heart-wrenching *bachata* duets. *Bachata*, the national dance of the DR, has dominated international Latin dance for several years now and is bringing to center stage young artists like Prince Royce and Romeo Santos, who are American-born Dominican singers. In the meantime, Díaz especially shines among the talented Dominicans who are affixing their national culture onto the American map and the American psyche.

But back to Monchy y Alendandra. "Dos Locos" is my favorite song and by far their greatest hit. And given our obvious affinity, I'm sure that if I asked Junot Díaz, he would concur. •



## Pageturners Book Club

Schoolcraft College's Pageturners Book Club hosts free book discussion sessions facilitated by Schoolcraft students. They are open to all students, faculty, staff, administrators, and community friends. For information about times, dates, and locations, see <http://sites.google.com/site/scpageturners/>.

### September: Marjane Satrapi, *Chicken with Plums*

Acclaimed graphic artist Marjane Satrapi brings what has become her signature humor and insight, her keen eye and ear, to the heartrending story of a celebrated Iranian musician who gives up his life for music and love.

### October: Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*

One of the world's first best-sellers, this tragic masterpiece attained an instant and lasting success upon its publication in 1774. A sensitive exploration of the mind of a young artist, the tale addresses age-old questions—the meaning of love, of death, and the possibility of redemption—in the form of Werther's alternately joyful and despairing letters about his unrequited love.

### November: Teresa K. Irish, *A Thousand Letters Home*

One month after the 2006 death of her father, Aarol W. "Bud" Irish, Teresa Irish opened his army trunk and discovered his nearly 1,000 letters from WW2. Visited only by him over the course of six decades, the fragile and yellowed letters were written to Bud's parents and to the sweetheart who would later become his wife.

# The Case for Detainee Rights at Guantánamo Bay

by Amber Bageris

*Amber Bageris wrote this paper at Schoolcraft College last Winter in Political Science 209 (International Relations), taught by Marjorie Nanian. She lives in Northville, MI, and is majoring in economics.*

Upon his re-election in 2012, President Barack Obama re-addressed his earlier declaration and commitment of shutting down the U.S. detention center at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. The camp was opened at the U.S. naval base there in 2002 under the Bush Administration as a reaction to the 9/11 terrorist attack. The first detainees of the camp had arrived on January 11, 2002, having been captured for various terrorist-related crimes and believed to be highly dangerous.

Due to an exposure via the Internet site WikiLeaks, confidential documents regarding the treatment of the prisoners as well as the exact reasons they were being held left many people in an uproar. Detainees were being tortured by the U.S. military through various inhumane interrogation methods such as waterboarding (which simulates the feeling of drowning), hypothermia, and stress positions. Outside of the humiliating interrogation techniques, most of these prisoners have not been given a fair trial, or even told a specific amount of time that they will continue to be detained. This is against the U.S. rule of law.

Some of these criminals were involved in the horrific attacks that killed numerous Americans, and for many people it remains hard to sympathize with the issue of guaranteeing human and civil rights to those who were the alleged culprits. Unfortunately, tragedies happen on a daily basis. The reason why America was an admired country was not only that it rewards hard work, but also because of our freedom and tolerance in the spheres of religion, speech, and press, and our fairness in being just and treating everyone with basic human rights. Our country's constitution gives everyone a fair chance.

On the basis of our Constitution alone, the U.S. should not participate nor condone inhumane activities. It is a violation of the Fifth and Sixth Amendments. The Fifth Amendment states:

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

And the Sixth Amendment states:

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself; nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.



Detainees upon arrival at Camp X-Ray, Naval Base Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, January 2002. (DoD photo by Petty Officer 1st class Shane T. McCoy, U.S. Navy.)

## Civil Rights for All

Some might argue that the individuals in question are not U.S. citizens and therefore forfeit the liberties of a U.S. citizen when captured. However, what does that say to countries we have been trying to rehabilitate and orient towards democracy? What becomes of our argument that other countries should stop detaining American prisoners of war without a fair trial? Are we just employing a policy of “do as I say but not as I do”, further provoking greater discontent and negative perceptions of the United States?

Since its opening, 779 men have been held at the Guantánamo facility and 162 remain. Throughout the past year, many of the prisoners have participated in hunger strikes, but in order to keep the prisoners alive for future questioning, the Guantánamo staff has had to forcibly feed the prisoners via feeding tube and restraining devices, going against the prisoners' free will.

The U.S. should not detain prisoners without formal charges and without full human and civil rights. While there is a risk that some released detainees could go on to plan attacks against the U.S., it must be acknowledged that there is always a risk in protecting our freedom and defending our constitutional values, and we should not make a mockery of them, as noted by former Marine Commander Major Gen. Michael Lehnert, who was the first commander of the task force that opened the camp.

Whether the President decides to keep the Guantánamo Bay facility open or to close it, at bare minimum he can address that these prisoners must receive treatment equal to that given other prisoners within the U.S. That is a value that the U.S. can continue to be admired for, and we should never turn our back on our values. The United States needs to continue to assert its leadership in human and civil rights as a means of diplomacy for future international relations.



# The Cuban Missile Crisis: A Double Gamble

by Michael Hart

Michael "Mickey" Hart wrote this paper at Schoolcraft College last Fall as an assignment in Spanish 101, taught by Suzanne Stichler. Mickey is a returning student; he graduated from Schoolcraft with an Associate of Arts degree in 2000, and also earned a degree from an automotive college in Colorado. A native of the Detroit area, he is now involved with automotive research and development. He began taking classes at Schoolcraft again to acquire Spanish language skills to better communicate with his industry counterparts in Mexico and to travel extensively in Latin America.

The Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962 was likely the closest the world has ever come to global nuclear war.

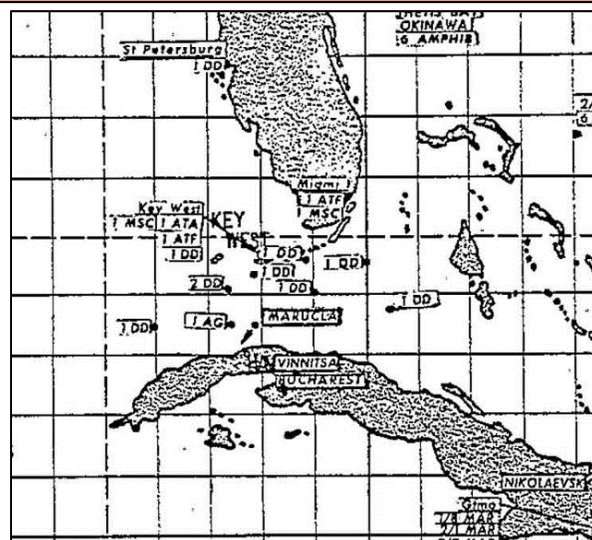
Cuban president Fidel Castro's Marxist regime was an uncomfortable circumstance for the U.S., and the American-backed attempt by Cuban exiles to overthrow Castro's government during the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961 had further eroded relations between the U.S. and Cuba. Meanwhile Cuba, with its communist government, forged a new political and economic relationship with the Soviet Union (U.S.S.R.). The U.S.S.R. and the U.S. had been embroiled in an increasingly escalating Cold War since the end of World War 2. At this time the U.S.S.R. found Cuba to be a most convenient ally as they were behind in the arms race, especially in long-range nuclear bomb capabilities. These were the factors contributing to the Cuban Missile Crisis.

## Kennedy's Gamble: Bay of Pigs

The Cuban Revolution, which lasted from 1953 to 1959, had seen President Fulgencio Batista, a U.S. ally, ousted and Fidel Castro installed as leader. Castro immediately declared the new Cuban government as socialist, severing ties with the U.S. and establishing political and economic relations with the U.S.S.R. This was of great concern to U.S. Pres. Dwight D. Eisenhower because of the Cold War tensions and rivalry between the two superpowers. Communism, especially communism in the Western Hemisphere and backed by the Soviet superpower, was not acceptable to Eisenhower.

In March 1960 Pres. Eisenhower allocated money to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to plan and assist with the overthrow of Fidel Castro's regime. The CIA proceeded to organize the operation with the aid of various exiled Cuban counter-revolutionary forces. Following his election in 1960, Pres. John F. Kennedy was informed of the plan and gave his support in allowing the project to continue.

In April 1961 the invasion began with forces entering at a beach named Playa Girón in the Bay of Pigs, Cuba. The forces initially overcame local opposition. However, after four days of fighting they surrendered to the Castro-led Cuban army. This event, the attempted overthrow of Castro's government, became known as the Bay of Pigs.



Crisis map from October 1962.

## Khrushchev's Gamble: Missiles in Cuba

The U.S.S.R. was behind in the Cold War arms race and did not have the same nuclear weapons capabilities that the U.S. possessed. Of specific concern to Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev was the fact the U.S.S.R. did not have any long-range nuclear weapons. The U.S. had such missiles deployed domestically and in Europe that could strike any part of the U.S.S.R.

Given the U.S.S.R.'s strong relations with Cuba, and knowing Fidel Castro felt, after the Bay of Pigs, that another U.S.-led attack on Cuba was inevitable, Khrushchev developed a plan to send and deploy intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Cuba to be able to strike targets in the U.S.

During a meeting in May 1962 Khrushchev proposed his plan to Castro, and Castro agreed. During that Summer several missile sites were constructed in Cuba to facilitate the deployment, and subsequently the U.S.S.R. delivered medium-range nuclear missiles there in secret. In early October 1962 the U.S. flew numerous U-2 aircraft surveillance missions over Cuba, acquiring photographic evidence of the nuclear missiles and missile launch sites. The confirmation of this new, threatening evidence began a 14-day confrontation, with Cuba and the U.S.S.R. on one side and the U.S. on the other.

War seemed imminent. The U.S. Navy formed a military blockade around Cuba to prevent any further missile deliveries, and Pres. Kennedy issued an ultimatum to the U.S.S.R. demanding that the existing missiles be removed. The U.S.S.R. refused the ultimatum and declared that the blockade, which was in international waters, constituted an act of aggression that could lead to a world nuclear missile war.

Fortunately, due to intense negotiations and willingness by the leaders of both the U.S. and U.S.S.R., the conflict was resolved. Khrushchev agreed to dismantle and return the nuclear missiles to the U.S.S.R., and for its part the U.S. agreed never to invade Cuba.

*continued on page 33*

# History of the Freedom Struggle in Puerto Rico

by Yma Johnson

*Yma Johnson is an independent writer based in Ann Arbor, MI, where she was born and raised. During 1996-2000 she worked as a journalist and copy editor at the San Juan Star (Puerto Rico). Her article "Unbreakable Rebellion: The Maroons of Jamaica", in our last issue, focused on some of her ancestors in Africa and the Caribbean. Ms. Johnson holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Michigan, and is currently pursuing a master's degree in creative writing at Eastern Michigan University.*

**"When tyranny is law, revolution is order."**

— Pedro Albizu Campos (1891-1965),  
President, Puerto Rican Nationalist Party

On April 19, 1999, while I was living in Puerto Rico, a civilian U.S. Navy security guard named David Sanes Rodríguez was killed by an errant bomb during routine weapons testing by the U.S. Navy on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques. His death, one of many fatal accidents related to misdirected bombs, became a rallying cry for an end to the U.S. military occupation of Vieques. More fundamentally, the scandal reopened 100 years of old wounds stemming from the incendiary origins of Puerto Rico's political relationship with the United States and the subsequent decades of political violence and repression.

The U.S. seizure of Puerto Rico, Cuba, Guam, and the Philippines in 1898 was the first step in an expansionist policy aimed at extending American military and economic power across the globe. First, these possessions were economic gold mines; in fact, the very name Puerto Rico means "rich port". The island is abundant in raw materials, and for centuries has been a major producer of sugar and two byproducts, molasses and rum, as well as other lucrative exports such as coffee, tobacco, and minerals. Second, from a military standpoint the island is strategically located in the Caribbean Sea adjacent to South America, giving the U.S. the ability for rapid naval deployment in the region.

For decades, Puerto Rico's liberation movement posed a credible threat to these advantages and resources. U.S. authorities and their Puerto Rican clients have long feared that even a small group of militants could fan flames of popular discontent with U.S. domination of the island, and ignite a massive struggle for independence.

## Abortive Early Attempts to Seek Autonomy

America's military presence on the island began in 1898, when Spain ceded Puerto Rico and Cuba to the United States in the Treaty of Paris after losing the Spanish-American War. That same year, a delegation from Puerto Rico traveled to Washington seeking independence; they maintained that Spain could not bestow the island as spoils of war. They were ignored, and the treaty went into effect in April 1899.

In 1900, U.S. Pres. William McKinley created a Puerto Rican executive cabinet that served under U.S.-appointed Gov. Charles Allen. The Cabinet was comprised of six Americans and five Puerto Ricans, among them José de Diego, a poet, statesman, journalist, and lawyer. De Diego, revered by many as the father of the Puerto Rican independence movement, quit his cabinet position to advocate for the island's right to self-govern, and helped found the Unionist Party in 1904. That same year, he was elected to the House of Delegates, a body politic that voted for independence and legislative reforms intended to grant the island greater autonomy; Gov. Allen vetoed all of those proposals. De Diego presided over the House until 1917 when he launched an unsuccessful bid to block the Jones-Shafroth Act, which made Puerto Ricans U.S. citizens and subject to the World War I draft.

Pres. Theodore Roosevelt asserted that, "It is manifest destiny for a nation to own the islands which border its shores." In this climate, U.S. multinational companies and banking interests—backed, when necessary, by the military—launched aggressive grabs for land and other resource in the Caribbean and in South and Central America. Bank syndicates owned Puerto Rico's coastal railway, postal system, and international seaport. In 1913 Allen, who had left his post as governor, became president of the American Sugar Refining Company, now known as Domino Sugar.

José Coll y Cuchí founded the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party (PRNP) in 1922. Attorney and politician Pedro Albizu Campos, who would become the party's most famous member, joined in 1924 and rose to its presidency in 1930, the same year that American Sugar converted more than 40% of the island's prime farmland to sugar cane plantations. The police brutally repressed the Nationalists, and after poor election turnout in support of independence, Albizu Campos anchored his call for independence in armed revolution.

## The 1930s Massacres at Río Piedras and Ponce

The Río Piedras Massacre on October 24, 1935 was a turning point in the escalating tensions between the U.S. and the Nationalists. Pres. Franklin Delano Roosevelt appointed Liberal Party member Carlos Chandón as dean of the University of Puerto Rico (UPR), which is located in a district of San Juan named Río Piedras. Although the Liberal Party supported independence, they were working with pro-statehood politicians in an effort to find some common ground. Albizu Campos denounced the appointment, and accused Chandón of trying to turn the campus into an American propaganda machine. Student supporters of Chandón organized a rally to declare Albizu Campos *persona non grata*, and PRNP supporters planned a counter-demonstration. The Dean requested a police presence in case the protests turned violent. Officers patrolling the campus approached a vehicle driven by two nationalists; in the resulting *melée*, four nationalist students and one police officer were killed.

In the wake of this massacre, the PRNP announced its withdrawal from the political process until the U.S. left the





The Ponce Massacre, 1937. Carlos Torres Morales, a photojournalist for the newspaper *El Imparcial*, took this famous picture when the shooting began.

island. The deaths in Río Piedras radicalized the Young Patriots, a formerly non-political group on the UPR campus. They allied with the Nationalists and reorganized themselves as a quasi-militia called the Cadets of the Republic. The Nationalists had blamed Colonel Elisha Riggs for the Río Piedras Massacre because as police chief, he was the final authority on any police action. Early in 1936, two members of the Cadets of the Republic assassinated Riggs. The two accused men were arrested and executed at the police station without trial.

A U.S. federal grand jury indicted Albizu Campos and eight other members of the PRNP on charges of sedition and other crimes for creating the Cadets, who they alleged were organized with the intention to overthrow the U.S. government. A jury of seven Puerto Ricans and five Americans acquitted them in a 7-5 vote, but Judge Robert Cooper called for a new trial with a reconfigured jury of 10 Americans and two Puerto Ricans. The PRNP nationalists were convicted.

To protest the 10-year prison sentence handed down to Albizu Campos and to commemorate the end of slavery under Spanish rule in 1873, the PRNP organized a peaceful demonstration in Ponce on March 21, 1937. They had acquired all the proper permits from the mayor of Ponce. When the current governor, Gen. Blanton Winship, learned about the event, he canceled the permits an hour before the march. Organizers were not notified that the permits had been withdrawn, and when they began to march, police opened fire on the unarmed crowd for 15 minutes. Testimony from a doctor treating at the scene said people were clubbed and shot while running away. Islanders and members of the U.S. Congress were vocal about their outrage over the incident. Nineteen people died, over 200 were injured, and 150 demonstrators were arrested in what became known as the Ponce Massacre.

No one was indicted for their role in the shootings at Ponce. The prosecutor resigned, claiming that Gov. Winship was obstructing his investigation. An American Civil Liberties Union investigation condemned the police actions and denounced Winship for civil rights violations and brutal repression. Despite these findings, many high-ranking Nationalists were tried for insurrection. The first trial ended in a hung jury. The accused were retried and convicted, and six PRNP members were sentenced to life imprisonment.

Albizu Campos began serving his 10-year federal prison sentence in Atlanta, GA, on June 12, 1937. Nationalist retaliation for their leader's incarceration was immediate: the following day Raimundo Díaz Pacheco, the Cadets' commander-in-chief, together with nine other nationalists, attempted to assassinate Judge Cooper for having stacked the jury in Albizu Campos's trial. They were apprehended and imprisoned.

The following year marked the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Puerto Rico in 1898. In what could be seen as an act of deliberate provocation, Gov. Winship moved the traditional military parade celebrating this anniversary from San Juan to Ponce. In front of 40,000 people, on July 25, 1938, PRNP nationalist Angel Esteban Antongiorgi attempted to assassinate Gov. Winship. Antongiorgi killed one police officer before he was shot to death; Winship was unhurt.

The following year, the U.S. Navy purchased 22,000 acres of land on Vieques, approximately two-thirds of the island. The military gave each resident \$30 in compensation, and a single day of notice to evacuate! People who refused to leave were evicted, and their houses bulldozed. The military sliced Vieques down the middle so that remaining residents were forced to live on a thin strip of land between weapons storage facilities and a bombing range. In time, the range would carry out tests of ship-to-shore artillery and napalm.

#### The 1950s Uprisings and Martial Law

After the resistance leader Pedro Albizu Campos finally completed his 10-year federal prison term in Georgia, his return to Puerto Rico in 1947 was heralded by the PRNP nationalists and other *independentistas*. They hoped it would usher in a new stage in the struggle for independence.

In an attempt to head off such resistance, the commonwealth enacted the infamous *Ley de la Mordaza* or Gag Law on June 10, 1948. This made it a crime to display the Puerto Rican flag, sing patriotic songs, speak or write about independence, or hold any kind of meeting or assembly about the island's status. Penalties included up to 10 years in prison and/or a \$10,000 fine. It was signed into law by U.S.-appointed Gov. Jesús T. Piñero, co-founder of the Popular Democratic Party (PDP). The PDP,

*continued on next page*

which had consolidated its political power, now wielded the new law to overtly criminalize all nationalist endeavors. It advocated changing Puerto Rico's status from territory to commonwealth.

In response to the Gag Law, Albizu Campos called for armed revolution on October 27, 1950. The Nationalists staged uprisings in eight cities across the island. The three most significant took place in Jayuya, Utuado, and San Juan. Led by Blanca Canales, Jayuya Nationalists seized the police station, killing one officer and wounding three, and the other police officers soon surrendered. The rebels then burned the U.S. Post Office, cut telephone lines, raised the Puerto Rican flag, and declared the island a free republic.

U.S. Pres. Harry Truman declared martial law in Jayuya, and sent in the U.S. Army and Air Force to attack the town. Large sections of Jayuya were destroyed, although the PRNP managed to hold the city for three days. Canales and many other nationalists were ultimately arrested and sentenced to long prison terms.

Meanwhile, in Utuado, a group of 32 Nationalists attacked the police station. Twenty were killed in the initial gun battle, with the remaining 12 retreating to their headquarters. When the National Guard forced them to surrender, the final nine survivors were executed without trial behind the police station.

In the capital of San Juan, the Nationalists stormed La Fortaleza, the governor's home, and the U.S. Federal Court house. Unbeknownst to Díaz Pacheco, his brother Faustino had become an informant for the FBI in 1939, so the police were ready when the group arrived at La Fortaleza. The gunfight, which lasted over an hour, left four nationalists dead and one wounded.

On Oct. 30, Albizu Campos was arrested and convicted of violations of the Gag Law and sedition, and sentenced to 72 years in prison. Later, allegations that he was a victim of radiation experiments in La Princesa Prison were confirmed by doctors who came to visit him. He would eventually die on April 21, 1965.

But the spirit of Albizu Campos's call for resistance spread to the U.S. itself. A few days after the October 27 uprisings, PRNP members Griselio Torresola and Oscar Collazo of New York City attempted to assassinate Pres. Truman in Washington, DC. Inspired by the uprising in their hometown, Jayuya, their intention was to show that the armed revolt was not an isolated attempt to decolonize the island, but an open declaration of war on the United States. What ensued was the biggest gunfight in Secret Service history. At least 27 shots were fired at Blair House, where Truman was staying during White House renovations. Torresola was killed, while Collazo was captured and given a death sentence, which Truman later commuted to life imprisonment.

In the island's elections of 1952, held in the wake of the uprisings, the Puerto Rican Independence Party, which had been formed six years earlier and was the only pro-independence group on the ballot, received its greatest level of support ever, at 19% of the vote. The U.S. responded by scheduling a referendum to choose between the existing colonial status and a new commonwealth status. The latter was approved on Feb. 6, 1952.

Although 82% of referendum voters approved commonwealth status, independence activists declared that the referendum was illegitimate because it offered neither statehood nor independence as options. The Constitution of the new commonwealth, formally the *Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico*, established a bicameral legislature, a popularly-elected governor, a bill of rights, and autonomy similar to that of state governments— except that Puerto Ricans could not (and still cannot) vote for President. In addition, the U.S. maintained control over key aspects of governance, including currency, foreign treaties, and defense.

The Nationalists' proverbial last stand occurred on the floor of the U.S. Congress in 1954. Led by Lolita Lebrón, four armed militants opened fire from the visitors' gallery, firing over 30 shots and wounding five congressmen. Lebrón was sentenced to 16-50 years in prison, and was released after 25 years when Pres. Jimmy Carter pardoned those involved in the attack.

### A New Generation of Struggle in the 1970s

The incarceration of its major leaders, combined with the Gag Law, effectively dismantled the first generation of armed independence activists. The movement was reborn in 1968 with the founding of the *Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional* (FALN), a paramilitary organization based on Marxist-Leninist principles. Its founder, Filiberto Ojeda Ríos, wanted to turn Puerto Rico into a communist country. FALN, the predecessor of the Boricua People's Army or *Los Macheteros*, was responsible for more than 120 bombings, acts of sabotage, and violent attacks on the U.S. mainland and Puerto Rico during 1974-1983.

The infiltration of the Puerto Rican Air National Guard base is among the most famous incidents involving Los Macheteros. The fighters destroyed or damaged 11 aircraft, costing the U.S. military \$45 million. Other FALN activists succeeded in pulling off a heist in which they stole \$7 million from a Wells Fargo depot in West Hartford, CT. They threw some of the money from the rooftops as symbolic protest against greed and imperialism.

Filiberto Ojeda Ríos, after 20 years on the FBI's Most Wanted Fugitives list, was slain in 2005 when the FBI served an arrest warrant at his home in Puerto Rico. A seven-year-long investigation by the Puerto Rican Civil Rights Commission determined it to be an illegal killing. Fellow FALN leader Oscar López Rivera was charged in 1981 with armed robbery, possession of an unregistered firearm, and interstate transportation of a stolen vehicle, and sentenced to 70 years in prison. At 33 years and counting, he remains the longest-held political prisoner in U.S. history.

In 1978 two members of another Puerto Rican nationalist group, the Armed Revolutionary Movement, working with a third man who turned out to be an undercover police officer, planned to sabotage two communications towers in Cerro Maravilla to protest imprisonment of the 1950s *independentistas*. The pair was ambushed and shot. Later, after a cover-up unraveled, 10 officers were convicted of perjury, obstruction of justice, and destruction of evidence, and four were convicted of second-degree murder. This incident, which be-



came known as the Cerro Maravilla Massacre, remains one of the most significant political scandals in the island's history.

Two later scandals brought to light how the U.S. has set out to systematically destroy the island's independence movement using harassment, killings, and incarceration. The FBI operation COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program) was launched in Aug. 1956 for the express purpose of spying on, discrediting, and disrupting the operations of "subversive" Puerto Rican nationalists, in addition to perceived domestic threats like the Black Panthers and anti-Vietnam War activists. Only a fraction of the estimated 1.8 million existing COINTELPRO documents have been revealed. J. Edgar Hoover eventually shut down the program, and a later FBI Director, Louis Freeh, admitted in 2003 that the agency had engaged in "egregious illegal action, maybe criminal action" in relation to the island's independence movement. The *Las Carpetas* ("dossiers") scandal erupted in 1987 when it was revealed that since 1936, Puerto Rican police had maintained files on 75,000 citizens designated as political subversives. Much of the information had been turned over to COINTELPRO operatives to assist in their activities.

By 1999, when David Sanes Rodríguez was killed by the errant U.S. Navy bomb at Vieques, voter support for Puerto Rican independence had dwindled to less than 4%, compared to the peak of 19% following the Nationalist uprisings of 1950. Despite what was perceived in many circles as his insufficient response to *Las Carpetas*, the pro-statehood Gov. Pedro Rosselló was in agreement with nationalist leader Lolita Lebrón and activists from across the globe in calling for the immediate departure of the U.S. Navy from Vieques. After many years of international outcry, peaceful-protest occupation of the military base to prevent further ordnance testing, and hundreds of arrests, in 2003 the Navy was finally forced out of Vieques once and for all.

## Cuban Missile Crisis *continued from p. 29*

The Cuban missile crisis was an example of how different ideologies and perceived threats could lead to worldwide nuclear war. The Cold War, with its constant tensions, was the main precipitating factor for increased anxieties in the U.S. and U.S.S.R. Castro's fledgling communist government and the U.S.S.R.'s support of it further escalated tensions in the U.S. Coupled with this were the U.S.S.R.'s concerns over not having nuclear strike capabilities comparable to those of the U.S. I would like to think that the willingness to peacefully resolve this crisis was an awakening to both sides, allowing them to develop a better understanding of and respect for each other.

### Sources

- History Channel, "Cuban Missile Crisis", <http://www.history.com/topics/cuban-missile-crisis>.  
 John F. Kennedy Library and Museum, "Cuban Missile Crisis", <http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/Cuban-Missile-Crisis.aspx>.  
 Library of Congress, "Revelations from the Russian Archives: Cold War: Cuban Missile Crisis", <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/archives/colc.html>.

## New Light on a Dark Crisis

More-recently revealed records have shed new light on the Cuban Missile Crisis. U.S. government documents released in the late 1980s show, for example, that a major aspect of the U.S.-U.S.S.R. negotiated settlement of the conflict was kept secret at the time: the U.S. side agreed to remove its intermediate-range nuclear missiles from Italy and Turkey. That was significant because these missiles, capable of striking key areas of the U.S.S.R., were foremost in prompting Khrushchev's counter-move to send Soviet missiles to Cuba.

Two books published by Stanford Univ. Press in the 50<sup>th</sup>-anniversary year, 2012, are based on American and Soviet declassified materials, respectively:

- *The Cuban Missile Crisis in American Memory: Myths versus Reality* is the third book about these events by Sheldon Stern, the former Historian of the Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston and the first scholar to gain access to White House tape recordings from the crisis. Stern makes the case that while Pres. Kennedy's Bay of Pigs invasion should take much of the blame for precipitating the crisis, JFK abhorred the prospect of nuclear war and consistently rebuffed aides and officials who were pressing for a military attack in the impasse, notably his own brother, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Curtis LeMay.
- *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis: Castro, Mikoyan, Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Missiles of November* is a posthumous work from Sergo Mikoyan, the son and personal secretary of Khrushchev's top aide, Deputy Prime Minister Anastas Mikoyan. He reveals that his father, as well as Castro and Che Guevara, all initially opposed Khrushchev's proposal to install nuclear missiles in Cuba. But when the crisis was defused in October, the Cubans, who were left out of the negotiations, bitterly denounced the settlement as a betrayal of their national interest, since (1) the U.S. couldn't be trusted not to invade the island again, and (2) there was no discussion of the status of the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo. The Soviets offered to covertly leave behind over 100 short-range tactical nukes— of whose existence the U.S. side was unaware— but in November they abandoned the plan because they decided that Castro was too difficult to control.

"Thirteen Days" (2000) is a movie-thriller about the crisis, starring Kevin Costner. Brown University's non-profit Choices Program offers teaching materials at: <http://www.choices.edu/resources/twtn/twtn-cuban-missile-crisis.php>.

— RKS

## One Big Basin: The British Caribbean and American Lowcountry

by Randy K. Schwartz (Editor)

Sugar crystallizes something in our American Soul. It is emblematic of all Industrial Processes. And of the idea of becoming white. White Being equated with pure and ‘true’ it takes a lot of energy to turn brown things into white things. A lot of pressure.

— artist Kara Walker

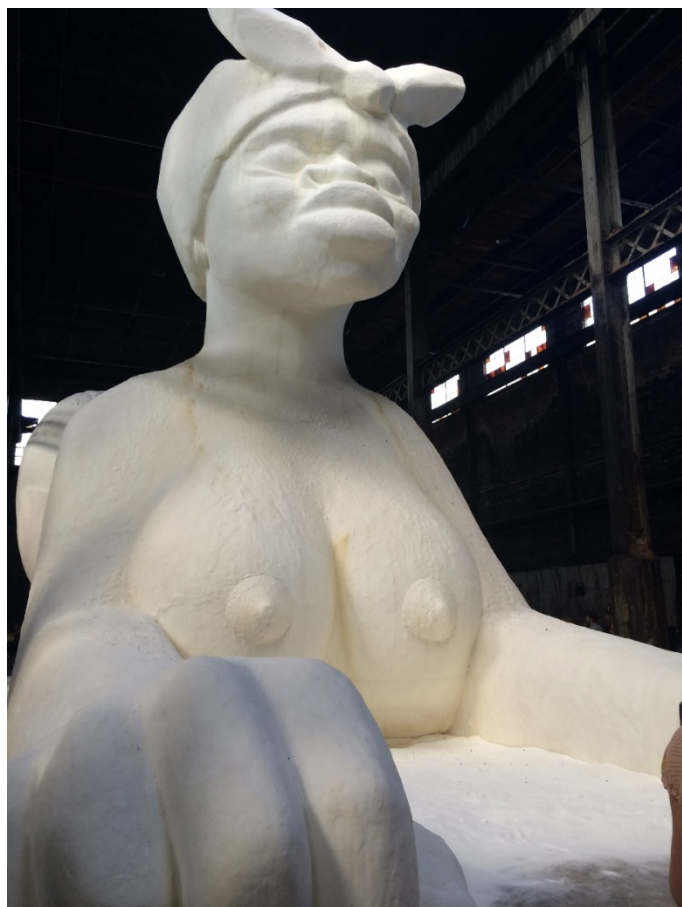
The critically acclaimed movie “Belle”, which opened last April, put a new perspective on the Caribbean in front of American audiences. The film is based on the real life of Dido Elizabeth Belle (played by Gugu Mbatha-Raw), born in the West Indies in 1761, the daughter of an enslaved African woman and a British admiral. She is brought to England and baptized, and lives in the wealthy household of the admiral’s uncle, the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Mansfield and the Lord Chief Justice of England. Later, adjudicating the trial of slavers on the ship *Zong*— they had jettisoned 142 sick Africans as “damaged goods” and then tried to collect insurance for their deaths— Lord Mansfield renders a path-breaking argument asserting that slavery in the British Empire has no legal basis.

The case of Belle and her British domestication is an example of what Kara Walker describes, in the above quote, as the “pressure” that was exerted in the Americas to turn brown things into white. She’s referring, most literally, to the refining of cane sugar, the main commodity for which Britain valued its Caribbean colonies. But more basically, she’s referring to the process by which African and Caribbean peoples were

“downpressed” and reduced to European colonial subjects. In light of Belle’s case, it almost goes without saying that there was also a gender aspect to this cruelty. Andrea Stuart, for example, in her book *Sugar in the Blood* (reviewed by Steven Berg in our last issue), writes that “in Barbados a man could not be accused of ‘raping’ his slave because the slave was property and therefore had no legal rights.”<sup>1</sup>

More than anything else, it was in order that wealthy families throughout the empire could enjoy their daily “fix” of sweetened tea, rum, and other confections that Britain maintained its slave colonies and sugar plantations in the West Indies. Sugar was so inextricably linked to slavery that in London, signs for shops that sold sweets often bore the likeness of a “black boy”. The teeth of Queen Elizabeth I were famously blackened by her daily use of West Indies or Barbary sugar in her tea, yet she considered the city’s burgeoning population of imported African servants such a nuisance that she ordered them expelled from England, without success.

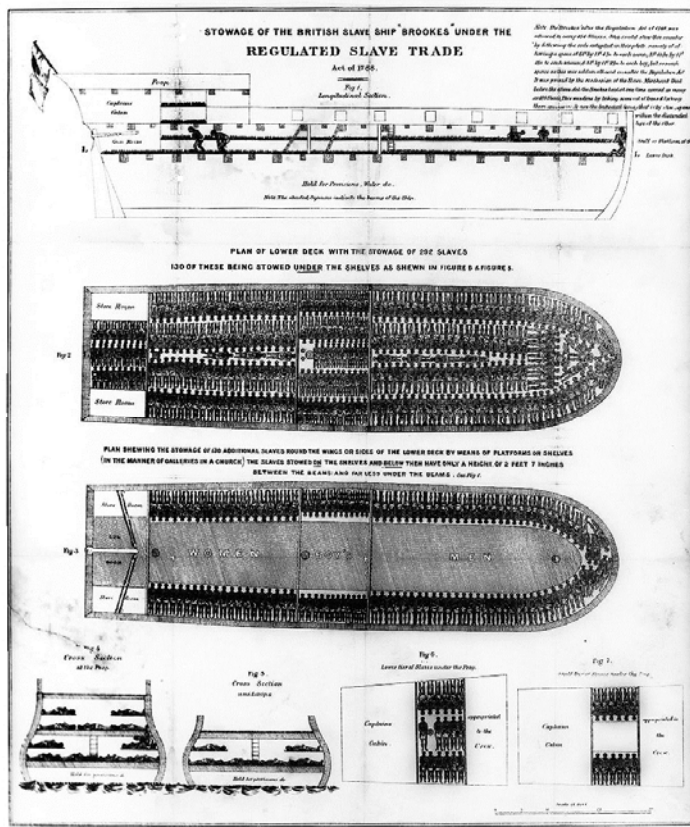
Annual British imports of refined sugar soared from 10,000 tons in 1700 to 150,000 tons in 1800. To toil on the plantations, British slave ships cargoed across the Atlantic more than 3 million Africans, roughly 200,000 of them between 1710 and 1730 alone. At that time, British holdings extended from the Caribbean all the way up the North American seaboard; in an early instance of globalization, these far-flung colonies were engaged in a “triangular trade” involving slaves, sugar, molasses, and rum. The trade accounted for about 80% of Britain’s overseas income. To take one example, South Carolina



Kara Walker’s temporary art installation this past Summer, “A Subtlety, or the Marvelous Sugar Baby, an Homage to the unpaid and overworked Artisans who have refined our Sweet tastes from the cane fields to the Kitchens of the New World on the Occasion of the demolition of the Domino Sugar Refining Plant”. Its centerpiece was a 40-foot-tall sphinx-woman coated in glistening white sugar. The whole work was created and displayed in an abandoned Domino Sugar refinery in Brooklyn, NY.







Human cargo diagram of the British slave ship Brookes

In Jamaica, hundreds of British slaves freed themselves in plantation uprisings between 1665 and 1738, as described by Yma Johnson in her article about the Maroons in our last issue. In the 87-minute film “Akwantu: The Journey” (2012), and the accompanying course discussion guide, writer/director Roy T. Anderson depicts his own voyage of discovery surrounding his Maroon ancestors.

Other slave revolts in the region include the Stono Rebellion in South Carolina in 1739, in which more than 60 people died, and Tacky’s Rebellion in Jamaica in 1760. In 1822 Denmark Vesey led a group plotting a slave uprising around Charleston, SC. Vesey had earlier been enslaved in Haiti and Bermuda, and is believed to have been born about 1767 on the island of St. Thomas. His plot included the liberated blacks taking control of Charleston, seizing boats there, and escaping to Haiti, where a slave revolution had already achieved liberation and independence from France in 1803. However, word of the conspiracy leaked out, and the plot was foiled; Vesey and 34 others were hanged.<sup>5</sup> A monument to Vesey was dedicated in Charleston just last February.

The first British statesman to fight slavery was William Wilberforce, a Member of Parliament whose activism extended across 45 years. He organized sugar boycotts and introduced bills in Westminster, helping prepare the ground for the abolition of the slave trade in 1807. The U.S. followed suit in 1808 with a law prohibiting the importation of slaves. Slavery itself would be abolished in the British Empire in 1833 (the year Wilberforce died), which freed 800,000 people from bondage.

In his biography of Wilberforce, current Leader of the House of Commons and First Secretary of State William Hague deplored the history of the transatlantic slave trade, calling it “brutal, mercenary and inhumane from its beginning to its end.”<sup>6</sup> But Mr. Hague has dismissed recent calls by the Caribbean nations for monetary reparations in conjunction with this history. The 15-nation Caribbean Community plans to file suit for such reparations in national courts in Britain, France, and the Netherlands. If that fails, it will take its case to the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Netherlands.

## Endnotes

1. Andrea Stuart, *Sugar in the Blood: A Family’s Story of Slavery and Empire* (Knopf, 2013), p. 188.
2. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (Norton, 1974), p. 33.
3. Matthew Mulcahy, *Hubs of Empire: The Southeastern Lowcountry and British Caribbean* (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2014).
4. Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2006).
5. Douglas R. Egerton, *He Shall Go Out Free: The Lives of Denmark Vesey* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2000).
6. William Hague, *William Wilberforce: The Life of the Great Anti-Slave Trade Campaigner* (Harcourt, 2008), p. 127.

was so locked into serving the needs of Barbados—producing beef, pork, and lumber in exchange for sugar and slaves—that it was essentially “the colony of a colony”. That was the title of Chapter 1 in Peter Wood’s classic work, which notes that English documents, sometimes even after 1700, referred to “Carolina in y<sup>e</sup> West Indies”.<sup>2</sup>

In a book coming out this Fall<sup>3</sup>, Matthew Mulcahy concludes that it’s most useful to think of Barbados and the rest of the British West Indies, along with the Lowcountry (the semitropical tidal coast) of colonial Georgia and South Carolina, as comprising a single region during this era. There, Africans so outnumbered Europeans that they were able to preserve many of their traditional practices and languages, resulting in creole cultures. In commercial terms, as noted above, these lands were integrated into a single colonial enterprise for two centuries until the Thirteen Colonies gained independence. Thus, Mulcahy’s concept of the British Caribbean and the southeastern Lowcountry as “one big basin” helps explain, among other things, why the most forward-looking members of the British ruling class could see that in the wake of the American Revolution, the sun would eventually set on the empire’s use of chattel slavery.

That such pragmatic reasons—not moral ones—played the underlying role in Britain’s abolition of slavery is a key point made by Christopher Brown in his book on the subject<sup>4</sup>. But he also shows that moral and economic reasons, even taken together, were not sufficient by themselves: the end of slavery in the British colonies required the conscious activism of abolitionist statesmen and rebellious slaves, the latter often armed with their cane machetes.

# Kudos

More than 200 Schoolcraft College students and faculty participated in a program last Jan. 16 for Martin Luther King, Jr., Day. They gathered in the Vis-Ta-Tech Presentation Room to watch “Brother Outsider”, a bio-pic on Bayard Rustin (1912-1987), who was an African-American civil rights and gay rights leader and one of King’s trusted advisors on nonviolence and other issues. Kudos to instructors **Sam Hays** (English) and **Robert “Zooley” Pook** (Philosophy), and student **Eric Watson**, for their roles in organizing the event and leading discussion afterward.

Kudos also go to **James Nissen** (SC Humanities Dept.), who conducted the all-volunteer Ann Arbor Concert Band in an unusual all-Shostakovich program at Ann Arbor’s Michigan Theater last Jan. 19. The concert included the first movement of Symphony No. 7, “Leningrad”, which Jim had spent most of the previous Summer arranging for concert band. The original piece arose amid the German bombardment of what is now St. Petersburg during WW2, and reflects the heroic Soviet resistance that helped turn the tide on the eastern front. The January program also included the “Festive Overture”, an arrangement of a prelude for piano, some folk dances, and the finale of Symphony No. 5.

In conjunction with Black History Month, the Schoolcraft **Civil Rights Action Club** presented two videos followed by discussion: on Feb. 18, “Fruitvale Station” (2013), a drama based on the true story of a young African-American man killed by a police officer at a BART station in Oakland, CA; and on Feb. 20, “More Than a Month” (2012), a PBS-supported documentary in which writer/director Shukree Hassan Tilghman asks what it means that we have a Black History Month, and whether it even makes sense to teach African-American history as separate from American history.

Kudos to Prof. **Anna Maheshwari** (English), the never-tiring founder and director of the **Coins to Change** service-learning project at Schoolcraft College. This year, its fundraising to help build a middle school for AIDS orphans in the village of Nyaka, Uganda, was advanced by several initiatives. A Valentine’s Day benefit sale featured t-shirts, handmade necklaces, baskets, and ceramic pieces. On Apr. 17, a fundraising concert, “Rock for Africa”, was held on campus, with the musical acts **Joe Gaber**, **Halfcrash**, **Sam Mumaw**, and **Arbor Reign**. Close to \$20,000 has been raised by the Schoolcraft community so far in this three-year effort.

Nearly 3,000 visitors attended Schoolcraft’s 13<sup>th</sup> annual **Multicultural Fair**, held in the VisTaTech Center on Apr. 3. The fair featured 23 display tables of ethnic dress, artifacts, language, traditional medicine, and other aspects of cultures from around the world, created and staffed by students, instructors, family, and friends; cultural performances by several visiting troupes, from the Ballet Folklorico México Lindo to the Marcus Garvey Academy African Drum and Dance Ensemble; ethnic food samples; henna painting; and more. Kudos to the Fair organizing

committee: **Josselyn Moore** (Anthropology/ Sociology), **Laura Leshok** (Counseling), **Helen Ditouras** (English), and **Todd Stowell** (Student Activities Office).

**Helen Ditouras** (English), **Anna Maheshwari** (English), and **Cynthia Jenzen** (Anthropology) participated in the annual conference of the Midwest Institute for International/Intercultural Education (MIIE), held Apr. 11-12 at Columbus State Community College in Columbus, OH. Helen’s report appears on page 9. **Mark Houston** (Philosophy) participated in an MIIE workshop on “Food, Water, and Global Development”, held August 4-8 at Kalamazoo Valley Community College (Kalamazoo, MI). Each Summer, MIIE provides each workshop participant with support, mentoring, and access to electronic and other resources in order to begin developing an instructional module for infusion in their courses. For information on future workshops, visit <http://www.miiie.org/>.

Thanks to Chef **Shawn Loving** (Culinary Arts) for preparing a delicious Caribbean menu to accompany the seven-hour Focus Caribbean Film Festival, which was held Saturday, Apr. 19 in Lower Waterman.

With the College expanding its for-credit program in English as a Second Language, **Christa Fichtenberg** is now engaged full-time with ESL teaching. Newly added courses include two levels apiece of Reading and Vocabulary, Listening and Speaking, and Grammar and Writing. A language lab is also under discussion. In addition, the College offers a non-credit ESL course sequence through CEPD, geared more to career- rather than academic-oriented customers.

**Josselyn Moore** (Anthropology/ Sociology) and **Ione Skaggs** (Graphic Design) created wonderful new promotional brochures for the College’s Global Endorsement program. One version of the new brochure is aimed toward students, and the other toward faculty. This program, established at Schoolcraft in 2007, has led over 3,000 students to earn a special endorsement for coursework related to international and cross-cultural issues. Roughly 85 courses at the College have been credentialed as “global” for these purposes.

Two Schoolcraft instructors took groups on study-abroad trips this past Spring/Summer:

- During Jun. 14-25, **James Nissen** (Humanities) led his HUM 203 class (Art and Music in Western Civilization: Field Study - Italy) on a trip that included visits to Venice, Ravenna, Florence, Assisi, Rome, and other sites. This was the 16<sup>th</sup> such tour that Jim has led to Europe. Next year’s trip will be to France; for information, contact Dr. Nissen at extension 5719.
- **Anita Süess Kaushik** (Foreign Languages) led a Jun. 19-30 Discover Europe educational tour. A group of 12 travelers from Schoolcraft visited selected sites in France, Monaco, and Spain. This was the seventh overseas study tour that she has led, with logistics handled by Explorica. For information about next year’s trip, contact Dr. Süess at extension 5285. •



# New at Our Neighboring Schools

Last school year, groups of students and teachers from **Saline High School** went on Winter and Spring Break humanitarian trips to Haiti. They worked under the auspices of the Saline-based agency Poured Out, which brings clean water to rural Haiti and maintains a base of operations in the capital, Port-au-Prince. The students, as part of Senior Capstone projects, interviewed impoverished families to understand their health histories, installed water filters for their homes (involving heavy lifting of rock, gravel, and sand), and taught the family members how to use the filters.

As part of a new partnership between **Washtenaw Community College** and Al Quds College in Amman, Jordan, the two schools exchanged 10-day visits by teams of faculty and administrators last January and February. The schools envision assisting one another to develop entrepreneurial-minded elements of curriculum as well as business incubators. There has also been discussion of student exchanges and video projects.

On June 16, sociologist and civil rights scholar Jocelyn Benson (right) was named Dean of the **Wayne State Univ. Law School**. At age 36, she is the youngest female law school dean in the U.S. Benson earned her master's degree in sociology at Oxford, conducting research into the sociological implications of white supremacy and neo-Nazism. She interned as an investigative journalist for the



Intelligence Project at the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) in Montgomery, AL, researching white supremacist and neo-Nazi organizations. She has also worked as a Summer associate for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and as a legal assistant to Nina Totenberg at NPR. After earning a J.D. at Harvard Law School, Benson served as a law clerk to the Hon. Damon J. Keith at the Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Detroit. As a law professor at WSU, she has taken groups of students annually on a Spring Break trip to Alabama to retrace steps of the 1965

voting rights marches there. Teaching Tolerance, an SPLC affiliate, offers a free guide to help teachers create a safe, welcoming environment for students (<http://www.tolerance.org/publication/responding-hate-and-bias-school>).

**Eastern Michigan Univ.**'s School of Education and the **Univ. of Detroit Mercy** collaborated with Detroit's Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History to create a new educational website, "Underground Railroad: The Struggle Against Slavery" (<http://ugrronline.com/>). Completed in January after a three-year effort, the site includes "encyclopedias" of colorful articles about people, places, and events involved in the broad struggle against slavery, as well as PowerPoint shows, lesson plans, and other teacher resources. In addition, UDM History Prof. Roy Finkenbine's course on the Underground Railroad is available at the same website as a series of 12 video lectures with accompanying images.

**Univ. of Michigan** Asian Studies Prof. Donald S. Lopez, Jr., who gave a talk on "Buddhism: An Indian Religion" at Schoolcraft as part of Focus South Asia in Oct. 2009, is co-author (with Robert E. Buswell, Jr.) of the pathbreaking *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (2013). The 1300-page work is the most comprehensive and authoritative dictionary of Buddhism ever produced in English, and the first to cover terms from all of the relevant languages and traditions: Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean.

Two sociologists at the **Univ. of Michigan**, Prof. Yu Xie and graduate student Xiang Zhou, have published an important study of "Income Inequality in Today's China" in *Proceedings of the National Acad. of Sciences*, 111:19 (May 13, 2014). They show that at the close of the Cultural Revolution in the 1970s, income inequality in China was well below world norms, but inequality soared as the country began to encourage private enterprise and foreign investment. Regional variations and rural-urban disparities have especially widened. Today, China has one of the widest income gaps in the world, but most residents have been remarkably tolerant of them because they believe, erroneously, that inequality naturally worsens as a country industrializes.

Yuson Jung, an assistant professor of anthropology at **Wayne State Univ.**, was co-editor (with Jakob A. Klein and Melissa L. Caldwell) of the recent collection, *Ethical Eating in the Postsocialist and Socialist World* (Univ. of California Press, 2014). With essays by anthropologists, sociologists, and geographers, the volume offers insight into the origins of alternative food movements and their place in today's global economy. The essays cover discourses on food and morality; the material and social practices surrounding production, trade, and consumption; and the political and economic power of social movements in Bulgaria, China, Cuba, Lithuania, Russia, and Vietnam. Jung also co-authored, with Andrew Newman, a fellow WSU assistant professor of anthropology, "An Edible Moral Economy in the Motor City: Food Politics and Urban Governance in Detroit", an article that appeared in the Spring 2014 issue *Gastronomica: The Journal of Critical Food Studies*. •

# It's a Multicultural World— Right in Our Backyard!

**May 24 – Sep. 14, 2014:** Third and final installment of the decade-long exhibit cycle, “Changing Hands: Art Without Reservation”. This year’s exhibit features contemporary art by Native American, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit artists and designers from the Northeast and Southeast. The exhibit was curated by Ellen Taubman (Museum of Arts and Design, New York) and made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Smithsonian Institution’s Indigenous Contemporary Arts Program, and other agencies. Univ. of Michigan Museum of Art, 525 S. State Street, Ann Arbor. For more info, call 734-764-0395 or see <http://www.umma.umich.edu/>.

**Jun. 27 – Sep. 21, 2014:** Exhibit, “People Get Ready: 50 Years of Civil Rights”. In honor of those who fought for the rights of all citizens to be treated fairly and equally, this exhibition features works of art examining slavery, segregation, and the civil rights movement in the U.S. It includes works by Elizabeth Catlett, David Levinthal, Gordon Parks, Aminah Robinson, W. Eugene Smith, Ernest C. Withers, and others. Hitchcock Gallery, Toledo Museum of Art, 2445 Monroe St., Toledo. For more info, call 419-255-8000 or see <http://www.toledomuseum.org>.

**Jun. 28 – Nov. 2, 2014:** Exhibit, “Jajouka: The Master Musicians of Morocco”. With a lineage tracing back several centuries, The Master Musicians of Jajouka carry on a family legacy in the foothills of northern Morocco’s Rif mountains, creating ritual music imbued with healing powers that is central to village life. Arab-American National Museum, 13624 Michigan Ave., Dearborn. For more info, call 313-582-2266 or see <http://www.arabamericanmuseum.org/>

**Jul. 20, 2014 – Jan. 4, 2015:** “A Theatre of Color: Costume Design for the Black Theatre by Myrna Colley-Lee”. Curated by Shirley Reiff Howarth, this exhibit displays more than 100 original costume designs and over 80 production photographs, including full-scale production images ranging from before WW2 through the works of August Wilson. Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, 315 East Warren Ave., Detroit. For more info, call 313-494-5800 or see <http://www.thewright.org/>.

**Aug 23, 2014:** Free music performance and dance party by the band Dakha Brakha from Kiev, Ukraine. Lively pop-punk music fused with Indian, African, Arabic, Russian, Australian, and traditional Ukrainian sounds. 8:00 pm. New Center Park, 2990 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. For more information, see the website <http://www.newcenterpark.com>.

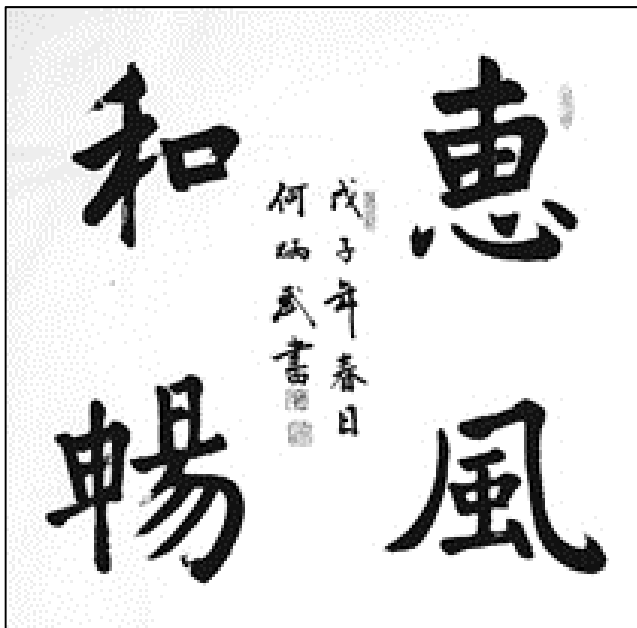
**Aug. 25, 2014:** Michigan Hiryu Daiko performance. A free community concert of traditional Japanese *taiko* drumming, featuring Michigan Hiryu Daiko Flying Dragon Drummers of Kalamazoo. Celebrating 30 Years of Friendship between Marshall and Koka City, Shiga, Japan. 7-8 pm. Marshall Performing Arts Center, 701 N. Marshall Ave., Marshall (Marshall High School). For more info, see <http://www.marshallmi.org/events/498>.





**Sep. 6, 2014:** Bollywood Musical Extravaganza. Presented by the Foundation of Michigan Assn. of Physicians of Indian Origin (FOMAPI), in cooperation with the Geetmala Foundation of Michigan. 7:30 pm. Ford Community & Performing Arts Center, 15801 Michigan Ave., Dearborn. For details and tickets, see <http://www.miindia.com>.

**Sep. 12, 2014:** Concert, "The Sounds of Babylon". Join the Chaldean Community Foundation for a special evening of music and culture featuring the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Chaldean Musicians. Oriol Sans, conductor; Majid Kakka, singer and composer. 8:00 pm. Detroit Symphony Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. For details and tickets, contact Yusra at 248-996-8340 or e-mail [yusra.shamoun@chaldeanfoundation.org](mailto:yusra.shamoun@chaldeanfoundation.org) or see <http://www.chaldeanfoundation.org>.



**October 2014:** Traveling exhibit, "The Genesis of Chinese Writing and the Art of Calligraphy". This 12-panel display created by Dr. SuiWah Chan shows how Chinese writing is critical in understanding a culture that spans over 5000 years and continues to flourish. It displays accurate examples of the various scripts used in Chinese writing over the last three millennia, and traces the history of development of written language from pictographic forms. Original works of traditional Chinese calligraphy are displayed alongside carefully researched and visually interesting informational material. Dr. Chan, a distinguished scholar at the Univ. of Michigan, will also give a lecture at Schoolcraft in conjunction with the exhibit. For specific dates and locations of the exhibit and lecture, or other info, contact Prof. Helen Ditousas at 734-462-4400 extn. 5647, or e-mail [hditoura@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:hditoura@schoolcraft.edu). VisTaTech Center, Schoolcraft College, 18600 Haggerty Rd., Livonia.

**Sep. 19, 2014:** Makiko Sakurai performs Shōmyō and Shirabyōshi. Sponsored by UM Center for Japanese Studies. 5:30 - 7:30 pm. Helmut Stern Auditorium, Univ. of Michigan Museum of Art, 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. For more info, visit the website <http://www.ii.umich.edu/cjs>.

**Oct. 1, 2014:** Nancy Sojka, Detroit Institute of Arts curator of prints and drawings, presents a talk on "Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Prints and Drawings". 11:00 am. Room K130, Albert L. Lorenzo Cultural Center, 44575 Garfield Rd., Macomb Community College, Center Campus, Clinton Township. For more info, call 586-445-7348 or e-mail [CulturalCenter@macomb.edu](mailto:CulturalCenter@macomb.edu) or see <http://www.lorenzoculturalcenter.com/>.

**Oct. 5, 2014:** Annual Japan Festival. A celebration of Japanese culture for the whole family, organized by the Consulate General of Japan in Detroit. 1-4 pm. Novi High School, 24062 Taft Rd., Novi. For more info, see <http://us-japan-canada.org>.

**Oct. 10-12, 2014:** International Festival, featuring food, music and dance performances, children's activities, and authentic handmade crafts and goods sold from around the world. Sponsored by the City of Southfield and the International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit. Southfield Pavilion, 26000 Evergreen Rd. For more info, call Ann Clark at 313-871-8600 ext. 229 or visit the website <http://www.iimd.org/?q=node/1775/>.

**Oct. 18-26, 2014:** Richard Strauss's opera, "Elektra". Maddened by her father's murder at the hands of her mother, Elektra seeks revenge. The work calls for a large orchestra and rare voices powerful enough to carry it; opera superstar and Grammy Award winner Christine Goerke (American soprano) is up to the task. Sung in German with English supertitles. Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway, Detroit. For details and tickets, call 313-961-3500 or visit the website <http://www.michiganopera.org/>.

**Oct 23-26, 2014:** "The Color Purple" starring Jennifer Holiday. Based on Alice Walker's acclaimed novel of the same name. Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts, 350 Madison St., Detroit. For info and tickets, call 313-887-8500 or visit the website <http://www.musicHall.org/>.

**Nov. 15-23, 2014:** Puccini's opera, "Madame Butterfly". An unwary *geisha* abandons her culture to wed an American naval officer, not realizing that she's a temporary amusement to him. "Butterfly" then faithfully awaits her husband's return from a long mission, only to discover that he has remarried. The role of Cio Cio San (Butterfly) is among the most heartbreaking in the soprano repertory; Inna Los and Yunah Lee will alternate in the title role. Sung in Italian with English supertitles. Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway, Detroit. For details and tickets, call 313-961-3500 or see <http://www.michiganopera.org/>.

*continued on next page*

## Multicultural Calendar *continued from page 39*

**Nov. 17, 2014:** Symposium on “Crusade, Jihad, and the Multi-sectarian State”. Organized by UM Center for European Studies. 9 am - 4 pm. East Conference Room, Rackham Bldg., Univ. of Michigan, 915 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor. For more info, call 734-764-0351 or see <http://www.ii.umich.edu/ces/events>.

**Nov. 23, 2014:** The Ark’s 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Fundraiser featuring An Evening with Los Lobos. A powerhouse mix of rock, Tex-Mex, country, folk, R&B, blues and traditional Spanish and Mexican music, sometimes called “the soundtrack of the barrio”. 7:30 pm. The Ark, 316 S. Main Street, Ann Arbor. For more info, call 734-761-1800 or see <http://www.theark.org/>.

## Yiddish Film Series

These U.S.-made films represent an aspect of the now-threatened Yiddish cultural tradition in America. All films are free, begin at 5:00 pm, and are screened in Room 2022 at the Univ. of Michigan’s Frankel Center for Judaic Studies, 2111 South Thayer Building, 202 S. Thayer St., Ann Arbor. For more info, call 734-763-9047 or see <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/judaic/>.



A scene from “Green Fields”

**Sep. 3, 2014:** “Tevye” (1939), based on Sholem Aleichem’s work, touchingly depicts a traditional Jewish father’s anguish as he faces his daughter’s marriage to a non-Jew.

**Oct. 15, 2014:** “Green Fields” (1937), based on Peretz Hirshbein’s play, follows an ascetic young scholar who ventures into the Lithuanian countryside.

**Nov. 18, 2014:** “Uncle Moses” (1932), based on Sholem Asch’s novel, depicts the personal and political dramas of a Lower East Side sweatshop.

## University Musical Society

Diverse cultures are reflected in the following selections from the UMS season, scheduled at various venues in Ann Arbor. For info and tickets, call 734-764-2538 or see <http://www.ums.org/>.



Photo: Merri Cyr

Hawaiian ukulele wizard Jake Shimabukuro

**Sep. 28, 2014:** National Theatre Live: Euripides’ *Medea*

**Oct. 10, 2014:** Kiss & Cry (Charleroi Danses, Belgium)

**Oct. 24, 2014:** Théâtre de la Ville: Pirandello’s *Six Characters in Search of an Author*

**Nov. 19, 2014:** Jake Shimabukuro, ukulele