Welcome to Diaspora, the Department of African American and African Diaspora Studies’ electronic newsletter. We are all connected to AAADS in one way or another, yet we are spread far and wide throughout the university, the community, and even farther afield. We are the AAADS Diaspora.

Events and News of Note

- Yunika Jackson and Carl Darnell have been involved with important outreach work on behalf of AAADS. In October 2013, AAADS held its annual can food drive for the Backstreet Missions, a local homeless shelter. Yunika received approximately 2,000 can goods. Carl worked with the Black Graduate Society to collect toys for children in under-represented communities who may not otherwise receive gifts during the holiday season.

- In November, the Black Film Archive hosted the filmmaker Ava Duvernay for an IU Themester Lecture. Winner of the Best Director award at Sundance in 2012 for Middle of Nowhere, DuVernay directs, writes, and produces her own films, and launched the African American Film Festival Releasing Movement (AFFRM) to support independent filmmakers. Duvernay’s films were screened at the Archive and IU Cinema, and
Michael T. Martin, director of the Black Film Archive, interviewed Duvernay on stage. AAADS co-sponsored this event.

• In December, AAADS hosted its annual pitch-in holiday party in the Gender Studies lobby. Alongside the delicious food and conversation, we enjoyed the Snatch Back Gift Exchange (i.e. Dirty Santa). The event was a welcome respite after a busy semester.

• Professor Wester has been organizing the departmental Living Life Lecture Series. We brought in two scholars last fall: Dr. Komozi Woodward of Sarah Lawrence College and cleric Allan Boesak from South Africa who now directs the Desmond Tutu Center in Indianapolis. Thanks go out to Jakobi Williams and John Stanfield, respectfully, who helped to bring these speakers to campus. We also had an invited conversation with renowned scholar, Dr. Charles Long and we thank our colleague, Dr. Mellonee Burnim, for assisting this collaboration between Ethnomusicology and AAADS. Professors Amrita Myers, IU History Department, and Tim Lovelace, IU Maurer School of Law presented as part of the AAADS’s Spring Colloquium Series on Africana Studies and the Study of Race and Performance in Global communities.
• In 2013, AAADS co-sponsored two national and two campus conferences. The two national conferences were the National Council of Black Studies, which held its meeting in March in Indianapolis and the 58th Annual Meeting of the Society of Ethnomusicology, which met in November in Indianapolis. Locally, AAADS supported Co-producing Health Holistically with Bloomington Campus-Community Partnerships and the IUB 18th Annual Future Faculty Conference. AAADS also co-sponsored 17 on-campus events with units including the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology, Gender Studies, Black Film Center/Archive, Horizons of Knowledge Lecture Series, Indiana University Art Museum, Spanish and Portuguese, French and Italian, African American Dance Company and Workshop, IUB Creative Writing Program, African American Archive of Music and Culture, Neal Marshall Black Culture Center, and the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Multicultural Affairs.

Ongoing and Upcoming Events

• Professor Maisha Wester is organizing a series of brown bag talks in the department, which meet select Wednesdays from noon-1PM. Professor Wester gave a talk “The Racial Origins of the American Zombie” in February. We look forward to upcoming talks by Abegunde, Phoebe Wolfskill, Marsha Horsley, and Tim Lovelace.

• Congratulations to Professor Jacinda Townsend (English/AAADS) on the release of her historical novel Saint Monkey (W. W. Norton, 2014). To celebrate, an event with jazz piano, fifties recipes, and historical photography will be held in the Federal Room of the IMU on February 28, 2014 from 5-7 p.m.

Faculty

• Joining the department in 2014 are two new faculty members: Professor Tyron Cooper, Visiting Director of the IU Soul Review, and Professor Phoebe Wolfskill, who
was formerly a visiting assistant professor in the art history department and an adjunct in AAADS.

- The Soul Revue, directed by Dr. Tyron Cooper, performed at the Society for Ethnomusicology's annual national conference in fall 2013 in Indianapolis. In December 2013, the Revue hosted its first annual "Soulful Holiday" concert in Bloomington. The Soul Revue will continue to perform and recruit for IU in spring 2014. Performances are scheduled at the University of Southern Indiana in February, and the ensemble will travel to Memphis, Tennessee, in March to perform at Stax Music Academy. During this tour, Dr. Cooper will conduct workshops on African American popular music for institutions in the Memphis area including Overton High School, LeMoyne-Owen College, and the University of Memphis. Dr. Cooper has also been commissioned to compose and conduct a musical piece for the University of Southern Illinois (USI), and recently signed on to compose music for an upcoming documentary on former Indiana Pacers coach, Bobby "Slick" Leonard. This PBS documentary is due for national release during the spring or summer of 2014.

- In October 2013, Professor Phoebe Wolfskill gave a noon talk at IU Art Museum entitled “The Politics of Place: Alienation in Post-World War II American Art,” to accompany the exhibition "Art Interrupted: Advancing American Art and the Politics of Cultural Diplomacy." The talk included discussions of works by Jacob Lawrence and Ben Shahn, among others. Professor Wolfskill gave an invited talk "The Art of Carrie Mae Weems: The Sea Island Series and Other Investigations” at Kenyon College in January 2014. She has recently submitted preliminary materials for two book manuscripts to academic publishers. Professor Wolfskill’s article, “Exploring Christianity in Contemporary African American Art” is forthcoming in SEEN Journal in 2014. In March, she will give an invited talk on caricature and stereotype in the work of
Archibald Motley, Jr. at a symposium based on the traveling exhibition “Archibald Motley: Jazz Age Modernist” at Duke University’s Nasher Gallery.

• In November 2013, Professor Iris Rosa premiered a new piece entitled “Death in Harlem” with original composition by Kenneth Ware (former AAAI executive director and Soul Revue director) at the 20th Potpourri of the Arts concert. The entire piece will be presented at the African American Dance Company’s (AADC) 40th concert celebration in April. Kenneth Ware came to work with students in the AADC in October to engage in the process of merging dance and music collaboration. In December, AADC’s Studio Concert included performances by the AADC, Professor Rosa’s class A221-Dance in the African Diaspora, Sancocho: Music and Dance Collage, and Raas at IU. In January, Professor Rosa was invited to be a guest choreographer by IU’s Department of Theatre, Drama and Contemporary Dance for “Moving Into Focus.” In February, the AADC’s 16th Annual Dance Workshop will include guest artists Sheila Ward, PhD (Associate Professor at Norfolk State University will teach modern dance), Rogelio Kindelan-Nordet (Professional singer, dancer and percussionist from the Afro Cuban/Haitian traditions will teach Afro Cuban dance), Alfred Baker (Director of the West Indian Folk Dance company will teach West Indian dance traditions) and Evelyn Yaa Bekyore (professional dancer and teacher and senior member of Saakumu Dance Troupe). The AADC’s 40th Concert Celebration will be held on April 12, 2014 to celebrate the 40-year legacy of the AADC and Professor Rosa’s directorship since the dance company’s inception. AADC will be performing at Ivy Tech for Black History Month, Stonebelt, and other community organizations.
• Professor Carolyn Calloway-Thomas delivered the keynote speech at the Chinese Intercultural International Conference in Hainan Island in November 2013. Her article “Mary Ann Shadd Cary: Crafting Black Culture through Empirical and Moral Arguments” appeared in Howard Journal of Communications (July 13, 2013). She delivered an online talk titled, “Learning what it is like to live by Someone Else’s Light: Developing Intercultural Competence and Understanding” for vhs. Boblingen-Sindelfingen, one of the major adult education centers in Germany in December 2013. Dr. Calloway-Thomas attended and delivered speeches at the World Communication Association conference in Seoul, Korea in her role as president of the organization in August 2013. Also in 2013, she won an IU Scholarship of Teaching Research grant for Innovative Teaching and Learning to study notions of cultural integrity among graduate students.

• In 2013, Professor Maisha Wester gave lectures in Switzerland, and Professor John Stanfield gave invited presentations in Brazil and Botswana.

December 7, 2013), and “Indiana University experts comment on 50th anniversary of March on Washington,” (Indiana University News Room, August 23, 2013). Professor Williams also served as a chair and commentator for two conferences: “Struggle for Diasporic Empowerment” panel at Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora Annual Meeting (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, November 1, 2013), and “Documenting the Civil Rights Movement: New Approaches” panel at Association for the Study of African American Life and History Annual Meeting (Jacksonville, Florida, October 4, 2013).

• Professor Valerie Grim was named a Distinguished Alumni graduate of Iowa State University in 2013. She also participated in an invited panel concerning African American Land Loss at the Southern Historical Association Meeting in St. Louis, November 2013. The book, Beyond Forty Acres and a Mule: African American Landowning Families since Reconstruction (University Press of Florida, 2012), in which her chapter, “Between Forty Acres and a Class Action Lawsuit: Black Farmers, Civil Rights, and Protest Against the U.S. Department of Agriculture,” is receiving positive reviews in academic journals including Agricultural History, Southern History, American History, and American Historical Review.

• Professor Fred McElroy teaches the largest number of students in AAADS and contributes the greatest number of Credit Teaching Hours through the department. Dr.
McElroy makes teaching his primary focus and continues to carry more than a giant’s share of this responsibility.

- Professors Vernon Williams and Fred McElroy continue to edit and publish the noteworthy *Black Diaspora Review*.

- Dr. Raymond Wise’s Choral arrangement of the Ghanaian Folk Song Daa Naa Se for SAT Choir was published by Hinshaw Publications, one of the leading publishers of choral music in the nation. The song is scheduled for performance by a National Honors Choir concert at Carnegie Hall in March 2014. “The Essence of Christmas,” composed by Dr. Wise, received its world premiere at “Winterfest ‘13” at Penn State University in December 2013 by the Essence of Joy Singers under the direction of Dr. Anthony Leach. The concert was broadcast live on WPSU, Penn State University's PBS affiliate station.

- Emeritus faculty Dr. John McClusky’s essay "Frederick Douglass and Colored American Day, August 25, 1893" and two chapters from his manuscript, "Chicago Jubilee Rag" were accepted for publication in the 2015 collection, *Root, Branch, and Blossom: Social Origins of Chicago’s New Negro Artists and Intellectuals*, co-edited by Richard Courage and Christopher Reed. Professor McClusky also served as a faculty interviewer for the Wells Scholars Program in December 2013, an alumni interviewer for Harvard University Schools Committee in January 2014, and was re-appointed to the Visiting Committee for the Libraries, Harvard University Board of Overseers.

- Emeritus faculty Dr. Audrey McCluskey’s *A Sisterhood Like No Other: Black Women School Founders of the Early 20th Century* is forthcoming from Rowman-Littlefield Press.

**Staff**

- Robin Canfield joined the department and staff as fiscal officer and office manager in the fall. Welcome, Robin, and thanks for all that you do!

**Graduate Students**

- In September 2013, Abegunde, Ife-Chudeni Oputa, and Nandi Comer presented their poetry as part of the IU Art Museum's program, “From Visual to Verse: An Evening of African Art and Poetry with Art Exhibits and Spoken Word,” which was co-sponsored by AAADs. This event was one of the most heavily-attended gallery events the IU Museum has ever had! In November, Abegunde also presented an interactive talk, “Healing the Ancestral Way: Going Where Past and Present Lead” at the IU Art Museum.

- Abegunde was awarded a College of Arts And Sciences Dissertation Completion Fellowship for 2013-14.
• In January, Nandi Comer, a dual MFA/MA student in Poetry and AAADS was a featured reader at the “Last Sunday Poetry Reading and Open Mic” presented by the Writers Guild at Bloomington. Nandi is the winner of Crab Orchard Review’s 2014 Richard Peterson Poetry Prize. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Callaloo, Spoon River Poetry Review, Sycamore Review, and Third Coast*. She also serves as the poetry editor of *Indiana Review*.

• In March 2013, AAADS graduate students presented a student research panel as part of the Tenth Year Celebration of the *Herman C. Hudson Symposium* and organized AAADS’s *spring colloquium* series “Africana Studies and the Study of Race and Performance in Global Communities.”

• Congratulations to Roberta Radovich, Malaika Baxa, and Floyd Hobson who successfully defended their theses in 2013. Floyd and Malaika are currently enrolled in PhD programs at IU and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, respectively. Congratulations also to Nana Amoah, Katie Dieter, Marsha Horsley, and Ade Doss who passed their qualifying examinations in 2013.

• Thank you Floyd Hobson for diligently photographing the department’s many events and working with the AAADS staff to post images to the departmental page and Facebook.
• **Ciara Miller**, a dual MA/MFA student in African American and African Diaspora Studies and Creative Writing, published poems and other writings in *Pluck: The Journal of Affrilachian Arts & Culture, African American Review*, and *Callaloo*. Additionally, she was selected as the GSAC representative for the Susan D. Gubar chair in African American Literature. Within this context, she helped organize and promote events that assisted with the selection of a new African American literature professor. Ciara concluded the 2012-2013 school year as president of the Black Graduate Student Association, bringing in hundreds of members from the Indiana University community to discuss arts, entertainment, and politics. Ciara recently hosted a poetry slam at Rachael's Cafe which brought in over 200 attendees—it is becoming one of the most talked about events at the university and a space for artistic expression.

• Many of our graduate students teach and are acclaimed by their students. Summer teaching by **Abegunde, Marsha Horsley, Ade Doss, and Caralee Jones** has been especially been noted by the students. Last fall, **Nandi Comer** and **Marsha Horsley** taught courses in the subfield of African American literature and African American film. AAADS is a department that has been known for strong teaching and care of students. Those of you who teach and have taught your own courses help to continue this legacy. AAADS appreciate as well the work that is being done by Associate Instructors **Carl Darnell, Nana Amoah, Yukari Shinagawa**, and **Floyd Hobson**.

All faculty, graduate students, undergraduate students, staff, alumni, and friends of the department are invited to send your comments, suggestions, and information on your activities and interests to Phoebe Wolfskill pwolfski@indiana.edu or to the department in care of Yunika Jackson at ytjackso@indiana.edu. Digital photos may be accepted if appropriate.
Diaspora is published bimonthly through the fall and spring semesters. Following the contours of the academic calendar, the usual schedule of issues is August/September, November/December, February/March, and April/May.