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What's News At Rhode Island College

Rhode Island College

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Faculty of Arts and Sciences —

Jackson, Allen, Coons cited as distinguished faculty

by George LaTour
What's News Associate Editor

Pamela Irving Jackson, professor of sociology and director of the Justice Studies Program at Rhode Island College, was cited at the opening meeting of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences for her "exceptional and consistent commitment" to her students and as a "dedicated and effective classroom teacher."

As such, she was named the Paul Maixner Award winner for distinguished teaching for 2000-2001. Others cited by Richard Weiner, dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, are Peter S. Allen, professor of anthropology, who was named the Mary Tucker Thorp Award winner for distinguished scholarship, and Dix S. Coons, associate professor emeritus of modern languages, who was named the Patrick O'Regan Award winner for distinguished service.

Jackson and Allen, as winners of the Maixner and Thorp awards, will give soror emeritus of modern languages, who was an award winner for distinguished scholar, and master's and doctoral degrees from Brown, all in sociology. In the mid-1980s she served as acting assistant provost at RIC.

Jackson also is an active, published researcher with a book, 14 articles in refereed journals and four chapters in books. She also has served as associate editor of the American Sociological Review, the journal of the American Sociological Association.

"All of this points to a researcher and effective teacher, someone who is indeed representative of the well-balanced academic scholar/teacher for whom this award is named," said Weiner.

Jackson earned her bachelor's degree from Regis College, and her master's and doctoral degrees from Brown, all in sociology. In the mid-1980s she served as acting assistant provost at RIC.

PETER ALLEN

attend a professional meeting or conference of their choice.

Pamela Irving Jackson

"Jackson has been a model of the teacher/scholar from the day she began to teach in the Department of Sociology in 1974, while still completing her dissertation at Brown University" observed Weiner.

He said that by "every measure" the department uses to evaluate classroom performance, including classroom visits, reviews of class materials and student questionnaires, "she is consistently rated very high." The dean said she "continues to be a model teacher: willing to teach new courses, holding high standards for her students but offering sufficient help for them to reach them, and continuing to share her knowledge and expertise in interesting and challenging ways.

In addition to her skills as a teacher, of language pathology services and all of the students were receiving speech language services and all of the diagnoses on the Autism Spectrum. She has published numerous articles, was invited to present at the American Speech Language Hearing Association's annual meeting in San Francisco, and just recently earned her doctorate in special education and cultural foundations from Kent State.

How did she go from the education field to the medical field, from teacher to medical practitioner, from employee to business owner? It really wasn't much of a leap, according to Audet; it was a more of a gradual journey with one thing leading to another. As a special education teacher, she noticed a trend. The majority of her students were receiving speech language services and all of the diagnoses on the Autism Spectrum. She has published numerous articles, was invited to present at the American Speech Language Hearing Association's annual meeting in San Francisco, and just recently earned her doctorate in special education and cultural foundations from Kent State.

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Anthropology/Geography Lesson: In this photo from the early 1970s we find Ruth Barnes, associate professor of anthropology, geography, (center) talking with four unidentified students at a display of Native American artifacts in Adams Library. (file photo)

Note: We had two calls identifying the "Egyptian" dancers in The Way We Were photo for the issue of Sept 25, 2000. Left to right they were Beverly McGreevy '64, Judy Roberts '66, and Barbara Granieri '64.

We had two calls identifying the "Egyptian" dancers in The Way We Were...
Testing kids for word comprehension

by George LaTour
What's News Associate Editor

“How do you test word comprehension in a one-year-old?”

With that intriguing question, the new Infant and Child Lab at Rhode Island College invited the public to its open house Sept. 27.

“We’re getting parents who want to know more about their children and believe research is worthwhile,” says Beverly A. Goldfield, associate professor of psychology and lab director, adding that “occasionally we get a parent who is concerned about something.”

Testing by the five-member lab team — which takes about one hour and a half — tells parents if their child is at the appropriate stage of development as far as comprehension of words is concerned.

This testing of early language development involves two on-going studies. The first is for children at 12 months of age, which requires only one visit; the second requires visits at 12, 18 and 24 months.

The latter, in part, is directed at children whose family members — parent, grandparent, sibling, aunt or uncle — had experienced a problem with language or reading (for example, few or no words until two years of age or difficulties learning to read in school).

Parents may participate in one or both studies. They are asked to complete a check-list of words their child understands and says. Then the parents and child participate in a toy play session and a slide show that measures word comprehension.

Visits to the lab by parents are scheduled at a convenient time for parent and child. Participants also are given a $10 gift certificate to a toy store for participating in the study. Participation is free of charge.

Funds for the operation of the lab come from two grants received last fall: one for $34,350 from the Spencer Foundation for the study “Parents Perception of Early Word Comprehension.” It concerns studying language development in children from different socio-economic status (SES) households, and for understanding and remedying lower language scores in children from low SES households.

And a grant “Does Comprehension Predict Risk for Language Delay?” which was funded for $46,341 for the first year of a three-year renewal grant by the National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders.

“We had no space (for the lab) and no equipment,” says Goldfield. The grants provided the funds for equipment and College President John Nazarian provided the space. Goldfield credits John Salalesses, vice president for academic affairs, and Richard Weiner, dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, for their continuing support of the project.

“...kids start from being comprehenders to speakers.” — Goldfield

“...there’s been a lot more attention given in just the last 20 years to research on infants,” says Goldfield.

“We now have more interesting methods of getting information from infants since they cannot tell us what they know.”

Goldfield, who holds a doctorate in developmental psychology from Harvard University, is a noted early language researcher whose work has been cited in the national media.

Her earlier work focused on two- and three-year-olds. With the Infant and Child Lab, she’s “moved back” to the study of earlier ages, although one of the studies (noted above) runs to children aged 24 months.

“In the second year, it’s a study of language,” explains Goldfield, “the study of how comprehension relates to production.”

She says by the time children reach two years of age they have “a pretty good vocabulary and will be on the way to being speakers of the language.”

“That’s an important year,” she assures. “It spans a timeframe where kids go from understanding speech to the time of beginning vocabulary and putting together sentences. So they start from being comprehenders to speakers.”

Parents who are curious (or concerned) about whether their children are on the road to learning and speaking may participate in the studies at the Infant and Child Lab.

When the lab has all the data, a letter is sent to the parents summarizing the results of the study and informing them if there is something about which they should be concerned, says Goldfield.

Interested parents should call the lab for an appointment at 401-456-8813.

...
foundation & alumni affairs

foundation news

in this space, we have often talked with you about the value in estate planning and preparing for your future and the future of your family. this week, i'd like to share a very special story about a rhode island college alumna who, through her estate plan, not only remembered her family and friends, but her alma mater as well.

about two years ago, i received a letter from the rhode island college foundation, informing me that the college was a beneficiary of the estate of ruth williams. we were required to return the proper forms and were told that we would be notified at a later date about specific details related to the bequest. this week, i received another letter from washington trust company, informing me that the will of ruth williams, who passed away in 2001, had been settled. this week, i received a letter from the washington trust company, informing me that the will of ruth williams, who passed away in 2001, had been settled.

ever the frustrated journalist, i began to do some research on ruth williams and her motivation to remember her college in such a significant way. the 1933 ricoted lists ruth amelia williams' activities as glee club, swimming, tennis, alpha rho tau, ricoted, and personalities committee. her senior will states that ruth williams bequeaths to someone who will appreciate it her well-used chair in the main library. these clues might indicate that she was athletic and a good student. a long way from a complete portrait.

my research led me to talk with her good friend, mary mcdonald, who turns out to be a 1931 graduate of the college. when i talked with mary, she reminded me that hers was the first class to be offered the opportunity to pursue a bachelor's—"which i am very grateful i did," she added. mary also helped me fill in a few gaps about ruth. she first started teaching at the park avenue elementary school in westerly and then moved to the corner tower street school. she went to uri for her master's and spent the rest of her career at tower street, retiring as principal. mary added, "ruth loved to play bridge and was very active in her church (the central baptist church of westerly where ruth also established a scholarship fund through her will.) mary then directed me to her friend, mary mcdonald, who turns out to be a 1931 graduate of the college. when i talked with mary, she reminded me that hers was the first class to be offered the opportunity to pursue a bachelor's—"which i am very grateful i did," she added. mary also helped me fill in a few gaps about ruth. she first started teaching at the park avenue elementary school in westerly and then moved to the corner tower street school. she went to uri for her master's and spent the rest of her career at tower street, retiring as principal.

ruth was an only child, who was very devoted to her parents. she never left home. as a young girl, she loved to horseback ride. she was very petite and very particular about her clothes and appearance—and she never started anything that she didn't finish.

these last comment struck a chord—here was a young woman who had boarded the train from westerly early every morning, and returned home each evening from providence in the early 1930s. she worked hard at her chosen profession and assisted generations of young women since then. she proudly shared herself for their roles in life. i wonder if she knew on those train rides that her commitment, foresight, and legacy would continue to benefit students long after her life had ended. i think she did.

the first award from the ruth a. williams '33 endowed scholarship will be made in the fall of 2001. the only requirement for the award is that the student(s) be from westerly.

more information on planning your estate, please visit the rhode island college website at www.ric.edu and click on foundation. many options, including suggested language for bequests, are included on the web pages.

homecoming 2000 offers arrays of events

homecoming at rhode island college is friday and saturday, oct. 13-14, a time when alumni, parents, students and friends are invited to return to the college for a campus-wide series of events consisting of social, artistic, athletic and recreational activities. highlights of this year's homecoming include a parade complete with floats, a 5k race, and a chance to dance the night away with brass attack.

below is a list of highlights. for more information, call the alumni office at 401-456-8086.

- saturday, oct. 14 events continued

- dance performance
  11 a.m. nazarian center for performing arts

- kids' activities fair
  11 a.m. - 1 p.m. outdoors next to soccer field.

- barbecue under the tent
  11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. next to the soccer field. no charge if you pre-register. call 401-456-8086.

- homecoming parade!
  1:50 p.m. floats decorated by students from residence halls, clubs, and athletic teams. monetary prizes based on criteria. the parade will end in front of the john nazarian center for the performing arts where we will take a group photo of all in attendance.

- a midsummer night's dream
  2 p.m. - 8 p.m. ric theatre nazarian center for the performing arts. tickets $11. call 401-456-8144.

- men's soccer
  2 p.m. soccer field.

- athletic reception
  5:30 p.m. intercollegiate athletic building.

- athletic hall of fame induction & dinner
  7 p.m. donovan dining center. reception and dinner $40. call 401-456-8087.

- other saturday highlights -
  - the american band and big nazo puppets
  - tours of campus & the john nazarian center for the performing arts
  - trolley rides
  - recreation center will be open.
October Series continues —

‘Black Like Who?’ is talk Oct. 19

Stephen Nelson, assistant professor of art and art history at the University of California—Los Angeles, will give a talk entitled “Black Like Who? Memory, History and Identity in Contemporary African-American Art” Thursday, Oct. 19 at 4 p.m. in Alger Hall 116 as part of the ongoing October Series at Rhode Island College.

The talk will address diversity in African-American image making and the multiple approaches of African-American artists. It is free and open to the public as are most events in the series.

Nelson holds a doctorate in art history from Harvard University, which he received earlier this year. Prior to his appointment, he was an assistant professor of African and African-American art history at Tufts University.

This year the October Series explores areas of African-American identity with a focus on the works of Edward Mitchell Bannister and his wife, Christiana Carteaux.

RIC’s Bannister Gallery was named after the 19th Century African-American artist. His career and efforts to assimilate his pictorial vision inspired the naming of the gallery in his memory in 1978.

The talk was a businesswoman and activist in the Providence community of the 1890s and the principal founder of the Home for Colored Women.

A number of the October Series essays and events will focus on her role in Edward’s life as an artist and on the significance of her own struggle for an egalitarian society.

Entitled “Relocating Cultural Traditions: The Legacy of Edward Mitchell Bannister,” the October Series is organized under the auspices of Richard Weiner, dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

For more information, call 401-456-8106.

Series Events

Oct. 11 – 12:30 p.m., Alger 116

“Shampoo to Shelters: The Life and Work of Christina Bannister.” Talk by Jane Lancaster, research fellow at John Nicholas Brown Center for the Study of American Civilization.

Oct. 12 – 4 p.m., Alger 116

“Spirit Catcher: The Art of Betye Saar and Robert Colescott: One Two Punch.”

Oct. 13 – 7 p.m., Gallery


Oct. 16 – 10 a.m. & 7 p.m., Alger 116.

“Basquiat.”

Oct. 18 – 12:30 p.m., Gallery


Oct. 19 – noon-1 p.m., Auditorium in Roberts Hall


Oct. 19 – 4 p.m., Alger 116


Oct. 24 – 2 p.m., Lila and John Sapinsley Hall, Nazaritan Center.


Oct. 25 – 12:30 p.m., Alger 116


Oct. 27-29 at the University of Rhode Island, the meeting is expected to attract some 200 geographers and professionals from the New Millennium.”

Sponsored in part by the Rhode Island College geography program and the Rhode Island Geography Education Alliance, which is based at RIC, the meeting is expected to attract some 200 geographers and geography teachers from throughout New England and southeastern Canada. There will be the first jointly sponsored College and Alliance meeting in the region.

The theme is “New England Cities and Towns on the Cusp of the New Millennium.”

Activities planned include a “College Bowl” competition among five colleges, paper presentations and dinner on Friday; field trips and presentations from K-12 teachers on topics ranging from climbing Mt. St. Helens to saving the forests; and a Narragansett Bay field trip to Newport on Sunday. Lesson plans and teaching materials will be available.

The cost of $30 covers all sessions, parking and Saturday coffee and luncheon, and trips. Dinner and some field trips are extra. Call 401-456-8005 or email sedemars@ric.edu.
On a recent New England fall day, a group of Rhode Island College students set off to explore the history of Providence and surrounding areas. No, they weren't history or even geography students. They were students in the methods and materials art class, taught by adjunct faculty member Carole Harman. Their guide was Don Leonard, a retired guidance counselor from the Providence school system and history buff who has become an expert on historical architecture in Providence.

Harman organized the field trip to help her students, most of whom plan to be art teachers, recognize that art is everywhere and can be taught or learned in many ways — not just in a classroom. In the process, they also learned that close examination of art in the real world can reveal a great deal about the culture and society in which it was created.

The group of some 20 students gathered recently on the corner of Huxley and Eaton streets for a living and breathing history lesson. The tour led them from grand Italian villa estates to a utilitarian farmhouse, and to just about everything in between — all within just a few blocks of the College. They learned how the land was developed from...
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RIC, St. Augustine students explore world together

DON LEONARD, retired Providence school teacher, amateur historian and self-described “lifetime student” leads the students on a historic tour of Eaton Street.

THE HARRIS HOUSE, a Queen Anne Victorian Circa 1880s, on Eaton Street.

Common land to farm land to private estates and to its current use.

Part way through the three-hour tour, they met up with elementary school students from St. Augustine School outside of the Zachariah Allen House for shared learning. Along the way, all the students learned a bit about history and social studies, science (plants and animals of the time), mathematics (size and balance of architectural elements), language arts (oral and written history and tour) and, of course, art (design elements in the architecture).

The St. Augustine students had fun learning about the world that surrounds them. The art students gained insights on how to generate and then channel that interest into lessons for their future students.

Each art student had to create four assignments based on the field trip, complete with information on the materials they would need and how they would make the assignment come to be. Of course, each assignment must include art such as painting or drawing.

Here is a glimpse of some of the hands-on learning the students experienced together:

Text by Shelly Murphy
them had been identified as severely behaviorally and cognitively disabled, and who were interested in the connection, the relationship between communications and autism.

After teaching for three years at the Harmony Hill School, she left to explore what she describes as an 'aha' moment. That moment came after she earned her master's in speech language pathology at the University of Rhode Island. "I found myself being drawn to children who were functioning at the lower end of the spectrum in terms of language," she recalls. "I had the opportunity to work with an individual who was very respected in the field and she learned a great deal about Autism.

A couple of years later, she accepted a new position in Ohio and began to build her career. "At that point I had an advanced degree I had to get and I thought I needed to be a school-based therapist," she adds. "I learned that I was comfortable here. I feel like I'm at home,'” Audet says. "My RIC degree prepared me well. I graduated with a degree in special education and early childhood education. It was a four-year degree at that time, given how special education has evolved with all the inclusion issues now. It was cutting edge to have general education and special education combined then (in the early '90s). After I got my master's, I had the education and guidance she received at RIC. I was given a lot of good advice on how to get started in the field."

"For example, I was advised to take a class on how to teach reading, which has been a passion of mine. Like her career as a speech language pathologist itself, the Treatment Center evolved as a natural outcome of noticing a pattern, identifying needs, and building an infrastructure. It's a center that treated many of the same individuals and families. We saw that there was a need for an agency that supported the family as well."

They created the Treatment Center—a place where individuals with Autism and their families can receive a range of services in one stop, and, perhaps more importantly, in a supportive environment. "Our Treatment Center is now comprised by about 12 independent professionals and services 300 individuals with Autism and their families. Although Audet is the co-director, she is still able to spend about 90 percent of her time working directly with individuals with Autism and their families."

"Many families have come into the center after being many places and they say, 'Everything feels so comfortable here, I feel like I'm at home,'” Audet says. That's their goal. The approach is one of education and learning, involving the individual and the family. "No one disempowers them. We empower them to do the work. We take the parent and the child and we include them in all phases of intervention and educate them so we can become advocates for their children," Audet says.

"The integrity of the child is respected. The child is an individual first, an individual who has Autism. We are not trying to 'break' them, but rather to understand and connect with them as human beings."

The Treatment Center uses an approach based on their own intervention model — the S.U.C.C.E.S.S., Approach, an acronym for Strategic Use of Critical Curriculum Elicits Supported Sense-Making. The model is grounded in seven known theoretical pillars. The basic premise is to create an individualized, assessment-driven program for each child and to involve the family. That individualized approach is expanded through Integrative Family Therapy which works in conjunction with specialized education programs for families and professional training programs.

It offers a summer program, a year-long family educational program, center-based preschool programming and comprehensive services to school and residential facilities.

In considering how her career has evolved, Audet says, "I've been laying on my education background." Even though her path has changed dramatically since graduating, she does still find herself going back to the classroom, back to her roots in education. She and her husband, also an Rhode Island a couple of times a year to visit her parents who live in Texas. And her sister who live in Greenville,

Lisa Audet with child at the Integrations Treatment Center.

Vinessa Petisce wins Campbell Scholarship

Vinessa L. Petisce, a freshman this fall who graduated from East Greenwich High School, is the winner of the Frank and Agnes Campbell Scholarship.

The scholarship was established by Agnes and the late Frank Campbell, a former academic dean at URI who passed away June 1 at age 78, both graduates of the Class of 1946, to provide assistance to the "first man who plans to pursue a career in teaching."

Vinessa's parents are both school teachers, who hold RIC degrees. In the column "Keep the Flame Burning" in this week's News, Vinessa was inadvertently named the winner of both the Campbell scholarship and the Women's Scholarships for men. Winner of the Andreoli Scholarship, named for past alumni president Noreen Andreoli '90, is Mary Callahan of Middletown, a communications major.

Both scholarships are administered by the Office of Alumni Affairs.

LISA AUDET with child at the Integrations Treatment Center.

Bond issue

for a new CCRi campus.

The Office of Higher Education has organized a campaign team among the three institutions to coordinate marketing, media relations and fundraising efforts. The campaign will include media briefings with editors of newspapers across the state and other targeted communications efforts. A campus-wide effort, led by Michael Smith, assistant vice president for media relations, will seek to reach audiences across the state and other targeted media across the state and other targeted media.

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The project is anticipated to be completed in 2005.

UHI renovating 14 halls

The University of Rhode Island is in

the midst of a $64 million renovation project of 14 of its oldest residence halls, of which $22 million would be made available through this proposed general obligation bond and the remainder through a variety of other sources.

UHI plans new campus

The Community College of Rhode Island plans to construct a new, 65,000-square-foot building near South End of Newport on a 15-acre site donated by the U.S. Navy. The College acquired the property this year for about $1 million and plans to begin construction in early 2006. The new full-service CCRi campus will replace the college's current academic and cultural facilities in the Old Town area, and which have been able to offer only limited educational programs.

Over 900 students are enrolled at the college. Many current enrollment at the new campus will reach 2,000 within two years of its opening.

The new facility will offer state-of-the-art technologies for the College and learning that cannot be replicated at leased sites, and will also offer a full array of services. The facility's location in northern Newport will be especially convenient for many of the low and moderate incomerecipients of the area.
Men’s Soccer
The Rhode Island College men’s soccer team is off to a great start in 2000. With 10 games under its belt, the Anchormen are 6-0-4 overall and 0-1-1 in the Little East Conference. RIC is currently in second place in the LEC.

As Head Coach Len Mercurio’s team enters the second half of the season, each game will present a new challenge for the Anchormen. “We are very pleased with where the season has gone so far, especially since we strengthened our schedule considerably this fall. There are promising signs for the future. We have built a competitive team. It’s just a matter of winning the close games,” says Mercurio.

RIC needs to finish in the top six in the Little East in order to qualify for the post-season conference tournament. The Anchormen had a big game at Keene State on Oct. 7 and will face perennial powerhouse Plymouth State College, at home during Homecoming, on Oct. 14. “We’re hoping to have a big crowd here since the LEC championships are being held on Homecoming weekend,” Ernst says. “The more people that cheer us on, the better!”

Although injuries have tripped the Anchormen up here and there, the team has continued to play well.

When junior goalkeeper Carlos Pajuelo, a First Team All-LEC selection in 1999, went down with a torn anterior cruciate ligament, senior Peter Gallo, an outstanding defensive player, stepped in and played very well. The two keepers have combined to post a 1.33 goals against average with three shutouts on the year.

Despite the injury-riddled season, senior midfielder/forward Jeff Kelly has been the team’s top offensive force with six goals and four assists for 16 points. Kelly leads the club in goals, points and game-winning goals. He has already reached a career high in goals and points.

Senior forward Tim Brown has chipped in with four goals and one assist for nine points. Brown is currently tied for first in a goal-scoring tie with a team-high eight assists on the year.

Sophomore J.P. Calci has been the squad’s primary playmaker with a team-high eight assists on the season.

Senior midfielder J.P. Calci has been the squad’s primary playmaker with a team-high eight assists on the season.

Sophomore Donna Vongratsavay, who competes at number four singles, owns the team’s best singles record at 7-2 (.771). She also leads the team with 9-5-0 (.667) in doubles.

“We have played very well in the early going,” adds Ernst. “We need to continue that trend heading into the LEC Championships.” In addition to the Little East Championships, the Anchormen also compete in the New England Women’s Intercollegiate Tennis Tournament, hosted by Smith College, on Oct. 20 and 21.

CARMINDA ROCHA

Sports Roundup

Women’s Soccer
Head Coach Nicole Barber’s team is 6-4 overall and 2-1 in the Little East Conference. Jen Danielian leads the team in scoring with nine goals and four assists for 22 points.

Women’s Volleyball
Head Coach Kristen Norberg’s team is 7-7 overall and 1-3 in the Little East Conference. The Anchormen won the annual RIC Invitational on Sept. 29 and 30, going 4-0 over the weekend. Brandee Trainer was the MVP for the second straight year.

Men’s Cross Country
Head Coach Dick Hoppman’s team placed eighth at the Tri-State Championships on Sept. 30. Tim Short was RIC’s top runner, placing 17th with a time of 28:29.

Women’s Cross Country
Head Coach Matt Hird’s team placed third, out of 11 teams, at the Tri-State Championships on Sept. 30. Janine Sagilardich placed ninth with a time of 29:22.

“Obviously, Southern Maine is a good team,” Ernst says. “We played them tough down here and every one of our players made it to the championship match at that institution. The next one we need to beat down and win our matches at the Little East Championships if we want to be successful.”

Experience is a vital asset, and RIC has five returning starters from 1999 on this year’s team.

Senior Lisa Vinacco teamed with Murray to win the championship at number two doubles in 1999. The two are 6-2 (.750) at number one doubles this fall. Vinacco is 6-3 (.667) at number two singles in her own right.

Sophomore Erica DiNuccio, last year’s LEC champion at number five singles, has moved up to compete at number three singles. DiNuccio is 4-3 (.571) in doubles.

Sophomore Donna Vongratsavay, who competes at number four singles, owns the team’s best singles record at 7-2 (.771). She also leads the team with 9-5-0 (.667) in doubles.

“We have played very well in the early going,” adds Ernst. “We need to continue that trend heading into the LEC Championships.” In addition to the Little East Championships, the Anchormen also compete in the New England Women’s Intercollegiate Tennis Tournament, hosted by Smith College, on Oct. 20 and 21.

CARMINDA ROCHA

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by George LaTour
What’s News Associate Editor

“No company better embodies the idea of black dance in Africa and beyond than the vibrant Bale Folclorico da Bahia, from Brazil,” noted the New York Sunday Times.

The 32-member troupe of dancers, musicians and singers will perform a repertory based on “Bahian” folkloric dances of African origin in the Polpouri segment of the Rhode Island College Performing Arts Series at 8 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 12, in the Auditorium in Roberts Hall.

The population of Salvador, in the state of Bahia, is mainly descended from slaves brought by the Portuguese from Benin, in West Africa. The link is so direct that as the troupe’s founder, Walson Botelho, put it, gods no longer worshiped in Africa are acknowledged in Bahia. “African culture is stronger in our part of Brazil than in some parts of Africa,” he said.

The route from Africa is just as visible in the company’s repertory, which draws repeatedly from the basic idiom and stance (feet flat, knees bent) found today in African dance.

The Bahia company shows how African traditions have been affected in the New World. There is a lilt that even Africa’s most lyrical dances do not have. With the feet on the ground, African dancers connect the earth and the sky. But men in Bahia often show off an aerial aspect in the Capoeira, the high-kicking dances that are also a form of martial art.

Above all, there is the gaiety of the samba that has subsumed its African influences into something uniquely Brazilian.

Based in Salvador, the Brazilian company made its debut in July 1988 at the Joinville Dance Festival where an audience of 20,000 enthusiastically greeted its performance. The troupe’s immediate success brought invitations to perform at other festivals.

At the Bahia International Dance Festival later that year, Bale Folclorico da Bahia was awarded “Best Performance of the Year” by the Ministry of Culture.


Carnaval 2000, the newest program of the Bale Folclorico da Bahia under the artistic direction of Jose Carlos Aranibar, includes elements such as the Capoeira and the Samba de Roda, a precursor of the samba as we know it which survives only in Bahia. There’s also the Maracatu, a dynamic dance which originated in the sugar cane plantations of northeastern Brazil, and a finale of Samba Reggae from the songs of Bahia’s carnaval.

“At the end of the Bale Folclorico da Bahia’s intense, non-stop extravaganza, a medley of carnaval songs spilled over across the floodlights and got the audience up and dancing in the aisles. It was a big, loud, sweaty and rambunctious finale to a slick, often surprising show,” said the San Francisco Chronicle.

Reserved seating is $20 with discounts for RIC faculty and staff, students, senior citizens and children. Tickets may be purchased by telephone using MasterCard or VISA by calling 401-456-8144 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. For in-person sales, the Roberts box office will be open from 10-4 weekdays and up to the performance time on the day of the event.

Muir String Quartet
Rhode Island College Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of Edward Markward, will continue its 20th Century: A Retrospective this season by showcasing the works of five American composers as well as several large Romantic works for orchestra.

For the season opener Monday, Oct. 23, flutist Susan Thomas (photo at right) will join the orchestra for Arthur Foote’s “Night Piece” for flute and chamber orchestra and Charles Thompson Griffes “Poem for Flute and Orchestra” in the Lila and John Sapinsley Hall in the Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts at 8 p.m.

Foote and Griffes were among the first native American composers to attain world-wide prominence, says Markward.

Opening the program will be Beethoven’s “Consecration of the House Overture” in honor of the orchestra’s first appearance in the recently dedicated Sapinsley Hall.

Brahms’ Symphony No. 2 in D Major will close the program.

Thomas, an adjunct member of the RIC music faculty, is a prize winner in various competitions, including those of the Concert Artists Guild where she won prizes as both a soloist and as a member of the Block Ensemble; the Performers of Southern Connecticut, and the American Wind Symphony Orchestra.

She is principal flutist of the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra, and a founding member of the Block Ensemble, a woodwind quintet.

Recent solo appearances include concerts with the Ocean State Chamber Orchestra, the Portland (Maine), Cape Ann and Vermont symphonies, and the American Band.

Other American works to be presented this season include the Rhode Island premiere of Men and Mountains” by the early 20th century iconoclast Carl Ruggles on Dec. 8 and Samuel Barber’s romantic First Essay for Orchestra at the Samuel and Esther Chester Performance Concert March 19.

The season finale will feature the RIC College Chorus, conducted by Teresa Coffman, and symphony orchestra in the Rhode Island premiere of Leonard Bernstein’s Symphony No. 3 the “Kaddish” at the Bicho Family Scholarship Concert April 30.

General admission tickets are $7 with discounts for students and senior citizens. RIC students admitted free. For more information, call the music, theatre and dance department at 401-456-9883.
The Parsons Dance Company with Elm City Ensemble —
Caught in the act in RIC’s Performing Arts Series

by George LaTour
What’s News Associate Editor

There are no choreographers or dance companies as full of invention, fun and theatrical chic as David Parsons and his Parsons Dance Company. For Parsons is the uncontested wit and wizard of modern dance, according to the arts critic of the Chicago Tribune. Parsons’ troupe, along with the Elm City Ensemble, cited as one of America’s top 10 leading young chamber ensembles comprised of “generation X-ers,” will take the stage for an 8 p.m. performance in the Auditorium in Roberts Hall as part of Rhode Island College’s Performing Arts Series Wednesday, Oct. 25.

Parsons received rave reviews for his choreography of the performance elements for the Times Square 2000 Millennium Celebration, and for his signature work “Caught.”

The classic “Caught” finds the solo dancer seemingly flying through the air thanks to the shrewd use of a strobe light. Radiant with a circus-like thrill, “Caught” nevertheless exudes grace and joy at the same time, the magic essence of dance itself, the uncontested wit and wizard of modern dance.

At 14, he choreographed a dance set to rock ‘n roll music while jumping on top of a trampoline. At 17, he decided to become a professional dancer and a year later was dancing with the Paul Taylor Dance Company.

Parsons founded his own company in 1987 and has performed widely in the United States. International engagements have included those in Japan, Australia, Greece, Switzerland and Israel.

He has created over 50 works for his dance company and has received numerous commissions over the years from eminent presenters such as the Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival.

The Elm City Ensemble was formed in 1996 in New Haven, Conn., (the Elm City). It consists of graduates of Juilliard, Eastman, New England Conservatory, SUNY at Stony Brook, Yale and the Mozarteum in Salzburg.

The broad range of repertory for the piano-clarinet quartet spans the traditional era of classical music from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries to the music of today.

Reserved seating is $21 with discount sales, the Roberts box office will be open from 10-4 weekdays or VISA by calling 401-456-8144 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. For in-person purchases, the Roberts box office will be open from 10-4 weekdays and up to the performance time on the day of the event.

RIC THEATRE

RIC TRINITY MFA CANDIDATES gather for a luncheon in the President’s Dining Room in Donovan Dining Center on Sept. 22. Standing from left are: Paul Ricciardi, Troy Miller, Kerry Doyle, Andy Gaukel, Neil Hellegers, Eric Greenlund, Sarah D’Muro, J. Fitz Harris, Maya Parra, Melissa D’Amico and Alexa Polmer. Seated from left are: P. William Hutchinson, chair of music, theater and dance department; Stephen Berenson, co-director of Trinity Repertory Conservatory; College President John Nazarian, and William Wilson, assistant professor of theatre. (What’s News Photo by Gordon E. Rowley)

Renowned short story writer to read from her work

Renowned short story writer and novelist Amy Hempel will read from her work Thursday, Oct. 19 at 8 p.m. in Rhode Island College’s Forman Center.

Hempel’s award-winning collection of short stories, Reasons to Live, established her as one of America’s leading writers of short fiction.

Her work has appeared in Vanity Fair, Harper’s and various quarterlies, and also has been selected for such prestigious anthologies as The Best American Short Stories, the Pushcart Prize Anthology and the Norton Anthology of Short Fiction.

Hempel is a contributing editor to Bomb Magazine. Her non-fiction has appeared in the New York Times Magazine, Esquire, Elle, Vogue and Mirabella, among others. She has taught at New York University, the New School, and is currently a member of the Core Faculty of the Graduate Writing Program of Bennington College.

Additionally, she has taught at many conferences and has held residencies at many universities. She was a visiting professor at Beloit College in 1997, and was Blackburn Professor at Duke University last spring.

A native of Chicago, Hempel now lives in New York City.

Sponsored by the College Lectures Committee, the reading is free and open to the public.
Tuesdays

11 a.m. to noon—Stress Management. This group introduces students to the basic stress management principles and a variety of relaxation strategies, emphasizing the use of biofeedback. This may be useful for students with stress and anxiety problems, as well as those who would like to enhance their performance and well being. No appointment or intake is required, and students, faculty, and staff may attend as often as they wish. Meets in Craig-Lee 130. For further information, call the Counseling Center, 401-456-8094.

4 p.m.—Film: “Spirit Catcher: The Arts of Betye Saar and Robert Colescott: One Two Punch” in Alger Hall 116.


18 Wednesday

12:30 p.m.—Discussion: “Relocating Cultural Traditions: Reexamining Issues in Regional African-American Art***” in the Bannister Gallery.

18-20 Wed.-Fri.

Dance: RIC Dance Company Annual Mini-Concert Series for RI school children in The Auditorium, Roberts Hall 9:30-10:45 a.m. daily.

21 Thursday

Noon to 1 p.m.—Dance Colloquium: “African-American Influences on Contemporary Dance Forms” in The Auditorium, Roberts Hall.


16 Monday

4 p.m.—Film: “Basquiat” at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. in Alger Hall 116.

8 p.m.—President’s Music Series: The Muir String Quartet.** Part of the Performing Arts Series in the Lila and John Sapinsley Hall in the Nazarian Center. Reserved seating $30.

22 Friday


23 Monday


Performing Arts General Information: 401-456-8194.

Box Office: 401-456-8144.

** Admission Free
*** Admission discounts for senior citizens, faculty/Staff, RIC and non-RIC students.

Notice of Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination
Rhode Island College is committed to equal opportunity and affirmative action. No student, employee, or applicant will be denied admission, employment, or access to programs and activities because of race, sex, religion, age, color, national or ethnic origin, handicap/disability status, sexual orientation/preference, or veteran status. This College policy is in accord with state and federal nondiscrimination laws. Inquiries concerning the College’s administration of the nondiscrimination laws should be addressed to the College Director of affirmative action. Reasonable accommodation upon request.

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