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American Studies

Middle Atlantic American Studies Association Newsletter

American Studies

Spring 2008

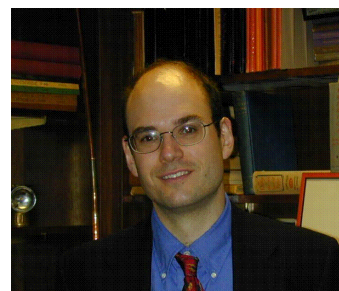
From the Editor's Desk

At the start of "The Wasteland," T.S. Eliot famously declared that "April is the cruelest month." This year, the good people of the Middle Atlantic and Great Lakes regions beg to differ. With MAASA and GLASA partnering up to put on a conference devoted entirely to the theme of PLAY, April has clearly become the *coolest* month. We have a wide variety of panels to offer you, including ones devoted to college sports, fantasy, virtual reality, princess culture, the intersection of play and race, the Olympics, professional sports, and toys and games. We are also pleased to have our keynote address delivered by Gary Cross, who is one of the nation's leading authorities on the subject of toys, play, consumerism, and the American childhood. Last but certainly not least, the conference will be held – where else? – at the Strong National Museum of Play.

These conferences do not run themselves. As is true every year, MAASA has incurred several debts during the organization process, which I would like to recognize now.

First, I would like to thank Susan Asbury and her colleagues at the Strong National Museum of Play both for providing the ideal venue and for being such welcoming and generous hosts. You have truly been a pleasure to work with. MAASA has also benefited tremendously from its partnership with GLASA and its President, Tom Scanlan, Professor of English at Ohio University. In addition, I am elated to state here that the Undergraduate Roundtable is not only back but, thanks to a generous grant, is well-funded: for the eight undergraduate participants, travel, lodging, and registration will be largely covered by a grant. In this endeavor, all of the credit goes to Fran Ryan, of La Salle. Lastly, I would like to offer big thanks to three Penn State Harrisburg graduate students in American Studies: Melanie Steimle, for assisting so ably in conference organization; Cali McCullough, for putting together this handsome newsletter; and Reiko Gibson, for providing it with useful and enjoyable content.

Speaking of the newsletter, it is our hope that by perusing



its page, readers will be inspired to attend the conference if they have not already decided to do so (to reserve a place, please see the Registration Form). That said, the newsletter also has a second function. We have composed it with the idea that it can serve as a portable guide to Rochester and to the conference. So don't forget to pack the newsletter away in your suitcase or valise before you head out. We look forward to seeing you in Rochester!

Sincerely,

John Haddad,
American Studies
Penn State Harrisburg

MAASA-GLASA Conference Registration 2008

AMERICAN PLAY: SPORTS, GAMES, ENTERTAINMENT, AND FANTASY IN AMERICAN CULTURE

April 4-5, 2008 in Rochester, New York, hosted by the Strong National Museum of Play

Name: _____ Institution: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Registration includes all of the following: access to all 16 panels, special registration packet, Behind-the-Scenes Tour of the Strong National Museum of Play's Collections (please check box below), Friday evening Keynote Address, Friday evening Dinner and Reception, Saturday morning Coffee & Continental Breakfast, Saturday Luncheon, and Free Admission to the Museum, including 50% off for the spouses and children of conference registrants (note: The Strong National Museum of Play stipulates that one adult is necessary for each child touring the exhibits).

Early Registration (before March 14). Please check one **BOX**:

- ☐ \$70 General Registration (University faculty, Professionals, Scholars)
- ☐ \$50 Graduate Students
- ☐ \$15 Undergraduate Roundtable Participants (Saturday events & meals only)
- ☐ \$15 Friends & family of Roundtable Participants (Saturday events & meals only)
- ☐ \$50 Undergraduate Roundtable Participants (all conference events, Fri. & Sat.)
- ☐ \$50 Friends & family of Roundtable Participants (all conference events, Fri. & Sat.)

Note: For on-site registration or registrations postmarked after March 14, please add \$10.

Please check any **BOX** that is appropriate:

- ☐ "Yes, I'm interested in taking the Behind-the-Scenes Tour on Friday at 2:00. Please put my name down."
- ☐ "Yes, I will need a computer with projection for my presentation."

Hotel Information

MAASA and GLASA have reserved a block of rooms and brokered a special conference rate at the Hyatt Regency Hotel of Rochester (<http://rochester.hyatt.com/hyatt/hotels/index.jsp>):

Single Occupancy – \$110.00
 Double Occupancy – \$110.00
 Triple Occupancy – \$110.00
 Quadruple Occupancy – \$110.00
 Standard One Bedroom Suites – \$220.00
 Standard Two Bedroom Suites – \$330.00

Please note that the same rate applies for rooms housing up to 4 occupants, making the conference more affordable for those wishing to save money by sharing rooms. To secure the conference rate, you must reserve your room by **March 14, 2008** and mention "**American Studies Association**." Please make your reservation by calling: **(585) 546-1234** or **1-800-233-1234**.

Please send completed registration form and payment (check made payable to "**Penn State University**") to the following address:

MAASA c/o Sue Etter
 American Studies
 School of Humanities
 Penn State Harrisburg
 Middletown, PA 17057

***"Man is most
 nearly himself
 when he
 achieves the
 seriousness of a
 child at play."
 Heraclitus***



Conference Schedule



Barbie, 1959

Play, v.

I. Senses relating to movement, exercise, and activity.

1. intr. To exercise or occupy oneself, to be engaged with some activity; to act, operate, work. Now only as passing into other senses.

2. a. intr. Of a living being: to move about swiftly, with a lively, irregular, or capricious motion; to spring, fly, or dart to and fro; to gambol, frisk; to flit, flutter.

Oxford English Dictionary

Friday, April 4

- 1:00-2:00** Board Meeting of the Middle Atlantic American Studies Association
- 2:00** Registration Begins
- 2:00- 3:00** "Behind the Scenes" tour of Strong National Museum of Play Collections (note: please indicate interest on Registration form)
- 3:30-5:00** Session I.
Panel 1. What is Play?: Concepts, Artifacts, and Exhibits
Panel 2. What is Sport?: For Players, Fans, and Media
- 5:30-6:30** Keynote Address from Gary Cross:
"Streetcar Saturnalias, Family Fun, & Cool Rides: Changing Venues of Playful Crowds"
- 6:30-8:30** Dinner & Reception, Strong National Museum of Play

Saturday, April 5

- 8:00-8:30** Registration and Continental Breakfast
- 8:30-10:00** Session II.
Panel 1. *Jewish Women in American Sport* Documentary Film: Ethnicity, Gender, Sporting Culture and Public Culture
Panel 2. Look What's Playing: Song, Story, Stage, Screen
Panel 3. Playing Hard: Working Out, Going Shopping, Letting Go
Panel 4. Playing Grounds: Venue & Spectacle
Panel 5. Playing at College: Sports and American Campus Life
- 10:30-12:00** Session III.
Panel 1. Undergraduate Roundtable
Panel 2. Who's the Fairest at the Mall?: The Meanings of Princess Products and Play
Panel 3. Playing with Boundaries: International Pastimes and Portrayals
Panel 4. We Got Game: Gender, Disability, Power, & Play
Panel 5. Playing for Keeps: African American Dimensions
- 12:00-1:30** Lunch & Awards Presentation
- 1:30-3:00** Session IV.
Panel 1. Watch and Learn: Child's Play and Scientific Study
Panel 2. Playing Around: Dating, Courtship, Sex
Panel 3. Playful Escapes: Fantasy, Role-playing, and Cyberculture
Panel 4. Play on Display: the Material Culture of Toys, Costumes, and Amusements
- 3:00** End of Conference & Time to Tour

*Strong National Museum of Play will remain open until 5:00. Admission is free to Conference registrants. Spouses and children enjoy 50% off admission.

Inside the Panels: Expanded View

Friday

2:00-3:00 Tour of Collections, Strong National Museum of Play

3:30-5:00 Session I.

Panel 1. What is Play?: Concepts, Artifacts, and Exhibits

Rollie Adams, Strong National Museum of Play. Why a National Museum of Play: The Material Culture of Play
 Scott Eberle, Strong National Museum of Play. A Periodic Chart for the Elements of Play
 Carolyn Kitch, Temple University. Playing at Work: Fun Facts and Family Values in Factory Tourism

Panel 2. What is Sport?: For Players, Fans, and Media

Jill Seib, Penn State Harrisburg. Keeping up Morale: Baseball's Contributions and Controversies during World War I
 Jeff Saunders and Sarah Quick, Winthrop University. Thank God for Our Fans: The Culture of American Football Fandom
 Jennifer Lee Evans, Penn State Harrisburg. Photographing Jack: A Counter Narrative Challenging Racist Imagery
 Simon Bronner, Penn State Harrisburg. "This Calls for a Review Upstairs": On the Meaning of Football for Americans

5:30-6:30 Keynote. Gary Cross Streetcar Saturnalias, Family Fun, and Cool Rides: Changing Venues of Playful Crowds"

6:30-8:30 Dinner & Reception, Strong National Museum of Play (included in registration fee)

Saturday

8:00-8:30 Continental Breakfast

8:30-10:00 Session II.

Panel 1. Jewish Women in American Sport Documentary Film: Ethnicity, Gender, Sporting Culture and Public Culture

Joanna Zangrando, Skidmore College (Moderator/Commentator)
 Linda Borish, Western Michigan University (Discussant/ Commentator)
 William Simons, SUNY Oneonta (Discussant/ Commentator)

Panel 2. Look What's Playing: Song, Story, Stage, Screen

David Lester, George Mason University. Teaching History with Computer Simulation
 Kevin Snow, Shippensburg University. Can't Sleep, Clowns Will Eat Me
 Mary Clater, Penn State Harrisburg. Playing on the Radio: Nashville's Reflection of Post-9/11 Patriotism
 Kyle Schlett, University of Mississippi. Battleship & Other Attempts to Play War

Panel 3. Playing Hard: Working Out, Going Shopping, Letting Go

Katherine Kunz, Pacific School of Religion. Improvisational Play & American Life
 Shelly McKenzie, George Washington University. Purposive Play: Gyms, Health Clubs, & Working Out, 1950-1990
 Adele Anderson, Empire State College. Retail Therapy or Retail Play?
 Jim Kimball, SUNY Geneseo. Hog-Rassle: Impromptu Fun at Old-Time Square Dances

Panel 4: Playing Grounds: Venue & Spectacle

Todd DeGarmo, Folklife Center, Crandall Public Library. The Life & Legend of Pete Francis, American Indian Resort Entrepreneur
 Jeremy Hockett, Lansing Community College. Play, Performance, & Piercing the Hyperreal: Recess on the Burning Man "Playa-ground"
 Samantha Johnson, Rutgers University. Syn City: World's Fair Motifs on the Las Vegas Strip.
 Karen Canning, Genesee-Orleans Regional Arts Council, and Claire Aubrey, Independent Folklorist. "It used to be a lot of fun; now it's a lot of work": Play and Work at the Attica Rodeo

Panel 5. Playing at College: Sports and American Campus Life

Robert Brown & Jacob Szczygiel, Daniel Webster College. Structured Play in the College Classroom: Fantasy Sport as a Teaching Tool.
 Bryan Sinche, University of Harford. Twenty-Four Hour Fans: The Strange World of College Sports Message Boards
 Angus Gillespie, Rutgers University. Does Big Time Sports Corrupt Research Universities?

10:30-12:00 Session III.**Panel I. Undergraduate Roundtable****Panel 2. Who's the Fairest at the Mall?: The Meanings of Princess Products and Play**

Laura Wasowicz, American Antiquarian Society (Moderator and Discussant)
 Miriam Forman-Brunell, University of Missouri-Kansas City. Producing & Pretending: The Princess, Girlhood, & Cultural Anxieties
 Julie Eaton, Independent Scholar. Pretty as a Princess: Girl Power & the Commodification of Princess Culture
 Susan Asbury, Strong National Museum of Play. "Where's My Glass Slipper?": Princess Play Artifacts from Strong's Collection

Panel 3. Playing with Boundaries: International Pastimes and Portrayals

Jason Jones, Osaka Graduate School of Language & Culture. The Geisha as Costume & Play in Hollywood
 Ellie Sekiguchi, Doshisha Women's College of Liberal Arts. Playing Cute: A Comparative Analysis of Halloween in America & Japan
 Megan Norcia, SUNY Brockport. Playing Empire across America: Nineteenth Century Board Games & Children's Culture
 Ronald Nath, Penn State Harrisburg. Playing the Landed Gentry: English Aristocracy in the Prints of Currier & Ives

Panel 4. We Got Game: Gender, Disability, Power, & Play

Mark Sawin, Eastern Mennonite University. Playing with the Spirits: "Séances" in Antebellum America
 Kathryn England, Penn State Harrisburg. Young Female Blogger: Adventures in Hockey Media
 Laura Katherine Walters, University of North Carolina at Wilmington. Malibu Barbie: From Savvy Fashionista to California Girl
 Rebecca Edwards, Rochester Institute of Technology. Deaf, Dumb, & Pitching: Exploring the Intersection of Disability and Sport

Panel 5. Playing for Keeps: African American Dimensions

Roxane Pickens, University of Miami. Playing with Race: Charles Chesnutt & Negotiations of Identity in Festive Space
 Thabiti Lewis, Washington State University Vancouver. Playing By Their Own Rules
 James H. Evans, Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School. Playing in the Dark: The Search for Meaning in African American Literature
 Vincent Golphin, Rochester Institute of Technology. Skin Game: Black, White, & Race as Diversion

12:00-1:30 Lunch**1:30-3:00 Session IV.****Panel I. Watch and Learn: Child's Play and Scientific Study**

Maureen Frei, Penn State Harrisburg. Propaganda for the Preemie: The Incubator Baby Side Shows
 Anna Beresin, The University of the Arts (Philadelphia). Recess Battles: Institutional Power & Children's Games
 Daniel Thomas Cook, Rutgers University. The Portal of Play: Corporate Play with & in Contemporary Childhoods
 Andrew Haley, University of Southern Mississippi. Playing with their Food: How Children Eat, Past and Present

Panel 2. Playing Around: Dating, Courtship, Sex

Emily Prior, California State University, Northridge. Sex as Play Behavior.
 Robert Goff, Providence College. Playing through the Sexual Revolution: Alex Comfort & *The Joy of Sex*
 Melanie Steimle, Penn State Harrisburg. Dinner on the Median: Historical Location of Creative Dating in Mormon Folk Tradition
 Anne Marie McDonald, Penn State Harrisburg. Villains, Heroes, & Lots of Leg!: Melodrama & Popular Culture in *The Black Crook*

Panel 3. Playful Escapes: Fantasy, Role-playing, and Cyberculture

Alison Buchbinder, Winterthur Program in American Material Culture. The Danger of Solitary Play in Children's Fantasy Literature
 Danielle Long, Penn State Harrisburg. Secondlife.com: Real Play in Virtual World
 Rebecca Seidel, Penn State Harrisburg. King's Quest to Seventh Guest: The Narrative Development of PC Adventure Games
 Andrew Cocco, Temple University. World of Warcraft: An Exploration of Obsessive Gaming in *World of Warcraft*

Panel 4. Play on Display: the Material Culture of Toys, Costumes, and Amusements

Chris Rasmussen, Farleigh Dickinson University. "Brother, can you spare a nickel?": Coin-operated Games during the Great Depression
 Amy Ogata, Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design and Culture. Museums, Play, & the Postwar American Childhood.
 Ellen McHale, New York Folklore Society. Dressing for Success: Costume & Identity in the Occupational World of the Saratoga Thoroughbred Race Track
 Dona W. Horowitz-Behrend, City of Philadelphia Archives. A Room of My Own: the Child Centered Home, 1900-1960

Strong National Museum of Play



Strong is the only museum in the world devoted to PLAY!

Strong National Museum of Play located in Rochester, New York is an exciting, hands-on, welcoming place to play, learn, and dream; a place to pretend, wonder, and explore; a place to discover the past and imagine the future; and a place to rekindle memories and make new ones. Strong is the only museum in the world dedicated solely to the study of play as it illuminates American culture. [Margaret Woodbury Strong](#), a prolific collector of everyday objects, especially dolls and toys, founded the museum in 1968. The next year, she died and left her considerable estate to help support it. Fourteen years later, the Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum opened in a new, 156,000-square-foot building on 13 acres in downtown Rochester. Because nearly all of the things Mrs. Strong collected were mass-produced, initially the museum used them to examine ways in which industrialization changed everyday life. Within a few years, the museum's focus turned specifically to the consequences of progress, the rise of the middle class, and expressions of identity. However in the 1990s, the museum significantly increased programming for families. This led to major growth in attendance, and in 1997, the museum added a new entrance atrium housing an early-1900s carousel and a 1950s diner as operating amenities. In 2002, the museum acquired the [National Toy Hall of Fame](#) from the A. C. Gilbert Discovery Museum in Salem, Oregon. Strong determined to concentrate fully on its core collections. Combined, these half million objects form one of the most comprehensive assemblages of dolls, toys, and other objects of play in the world. Between 2004 and 2006, Strong nearly doubled

its physical plant, to 282,000 square feet. This made it the second-largest children's museum in the United States and one of the nation's largest history museums. The additions included one large and two smaller wings, two new museum shops, a food court with three restaurants, a new state-of-the-art collections storage facility, and a number of dynamic new exhibits, among them [Reading Adventureland](#), [Field of Play](#), and the [Dancing Wings Butterfly Garden](#). During this same period, in consequence of our refined mission and expanded scope, the museum changed its name to Strong National Museum of Play.

The museum explores play because it is critical to learning and human development and offers a unique window into American culture. Understanding play helps people know who they are and what they value. Some people call Strong a children's museum; others call it a history museum. Strong collects and preserves artifacts and records that illuminate the history of play. The museum owns and cares for hundreds of thousands of objects, books, photographs, documents, and other materials. These enable and support our many educational and interpretive activities and serve students, educators, scholars, collectors, and others who study play. In fact, it blends the best features of both – high interactivity and extensive collections – to serve a diverse audience. To these and other users, the museum offers engaging exhibit experiences, fun-filled educational programs, exciting guest amenities, annual memberships, standards-based school lessons, teacher development opportunities, an innovative preschool, a circulating library, a research library and archives, scholarly publications, and more.

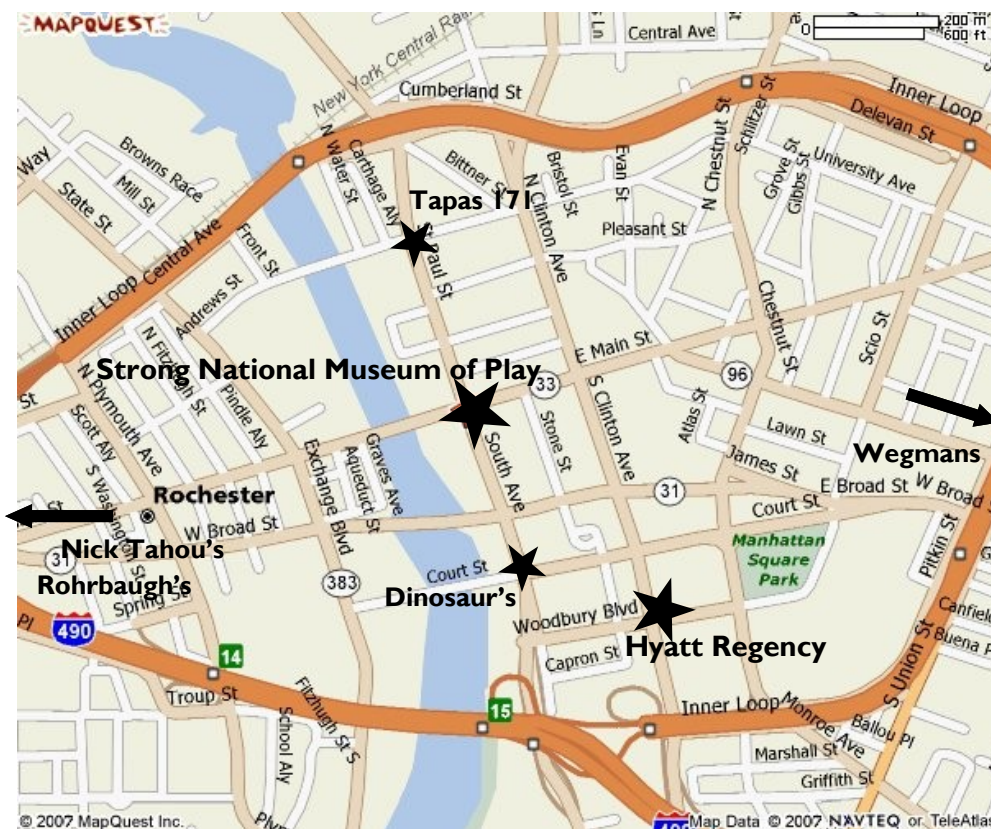
Strong National Museum of Play's more than 500,000 objects and its 90,000-volume Library and Archives include, among other materials, the world's most comprehensive collection of dolls, toys, games, and other play-

related artifacts; the Olin Collection of some 10,000 toy catalogs, largest in the nation; and the personal library and papers of Brian Sutton-Smith, America's most celebrated play scholar. Founded on the personal collection of [Margaret Woodbury Strong](#), the museum's holdings reflect her innate sense of fun and fascination with the commonplace objects of daily life and her love of play. A golfer, archer, bowler, and competitive flower arranger, Mrs. Strong also played at collecting, and no objects intrigued her more than dolls and toys. The artifacts she collected and those acquired since her death enable scholars and others to observe American cultural history through the window of play. These materials embody, illustrate, illuminate, preserve, and enable understanding of the attitudes, beliefs, values, customs, tastes, and traditions that Americans have held individually and collectively over the last two centuries and have passed, or are passing, to subsequent generations. These personal, everyday objects help Americans to understand who they are and who they believe they are and why.

Through dozens of community partnerships and numerous outreach programs, the museum is accessible to financially challenged families, children, and other guests with special needs. These programs include Summer SUN (Strong's Urban Neighborhoods), Passport to Family Fun, Foster Family Admissions, Refugee Family Admissions, and Play Therapy Access for Children with Disabilities. The museum also provides a Pediatric Residency Play Observation Program.

Courtesy of strongmuseum.org

"It is a happy talent to know how to play."
Ralph Waldo Emerson



Rochester Eats

The best BBQ in New York can be found at the **Dinosaur Bar-B-Que**. Folks say the ribs are finger lickin' good and well worth the wait (don't forget your bib).

99 Court St
Rochester, NY 14604-1824
(716) 325-7090

If you're looking for a great drink menu, **Tapas One Seventy One** is where it's at. Exotic latin fare with wine pairings and live music, what more could you ask for?

177 Saint Paul St
Rochester, NY 14604
(585) 262-2090

Head over to **Nick Tahou Hots** for a late night "Garbage plate." Tahou's is known for its cheap eats, enormous portions, and infamous nighttime crowd of college students and the occasional riffraff. Tip from the locals: Don't eat off the floor....

320 W Main St
Rochester, NY 14608
(585) 436-0184

Western New York is famed for a serious contribution to the culinary world: *Buffalo wings*. Another regional specialty, however, is the **Beef on Weck** sandwich. A kimmelweck (or kummelweck) is a Kaiser roll brushed with water and topped with caraway seeds and pretzel salt, then baked till' crispy and golden. Add a few slices of rare roast beef, a generous quantity of horseradish, then dip in the beef juices...scrumptious! You can find a traditional Beef on Weck at **Rohrbaugh's Brewing Company** (3859 Buffalo Road, 14624) or at the native supermarket giant, **Wegmans** (1750 East Avenue, 14610).

Announcements

Matt Singer, M.A. American Studies, Penn State Harrisburg 1992

Matt Singer, Philadelphia Museum of Art, was featured in the Fall 2007 issue of Philadelphia Magazine in the Home and Garden section: "Cool & Collected."

Oscar D. Beisert, Jr., M.A. American Studies, Penn State Harrisburg 2007

Beisert is currently an architectural historian for URS Corp. in Gaithersburg, MD.

Irwin Richman remains active as a speaker. He spoke at "Painting Rural America," a four day seminar at Institute of Pennsylvania Rural Life & Culture in Landis Valley this past June. He also spoke on "The Catskills" at the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco. In August, Richman conducted a tour entitled "Ellenville: the Town and the Mountain," for the Catskill Institute. His book, *Seed Art: Seed Catalogues, Seed Packages, and More*, is in press and is due out this spring.

Joe Conti M.A. American Studies, Penn State Harrisburg 2000

Conti is currently the CEO of the Penna Liquor Control Board. His essay, "The Last of the New Hope Crowd: Faye Swengel and Bernard Badura," was featured in *Pennsylvania Heritage*, Fall 2007.

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. Discrimination or harassment against faculty, staff, or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Director, The Pennsylvania State University, 328 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802-5901; Tel 814-865-4700/V, 814-863-1150/TTY. U.Ed. HBO 08-243.

Middle Atlantic American Studies Association Newsletter, Spring 2008

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**MIDDLE ATLANTIC AMERICAN
STUDIES ASSOCIATION**

The Middle Atlantic American Studies Association (MAASA) is a regional chapter of the American Studies Association organized to promote and encourage the study of American Culture in the Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania areas. The MAASA sponsors an annual conference, special lectures and events, and publishes the newsletter twice

