

in this issue



President Obama on
National African American
History Month



Alumni News



Spotlight on CCIP



Eccentric English

Alumni **conneX**

THE NEWSLETTER FOR U.S.- S.A. EXCHANGE ALUMNI

■ issue 2 ■ february 2012

National African American History Month, February 2012



"This year's theme, 'Black Women in American Culture and History,' invites us to pay special tribute to the role African American women have played

in shaping the character of our Nation -- often in the face of both racial and gender discrimination. As courageous visionaries who led the fight to end slavery and tenacious activists who fought to expand basic civil rights to all Americans, African American women have long served as champions of social and political change. And from the literary giants who gave voice to their communities to the artists whose harmonies and brush strokes captured hardships and aspirations, African American women have forever enriched our cultural heritage. Today,

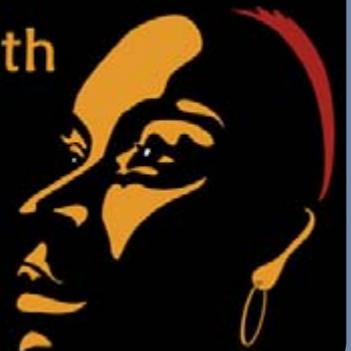
we stand on the shoulders of countless African American women who shattered glass ceilings and advanced our common goals. In recognition of their legacy, let us honor their heroic and historic acts for years to come."

— President Obama, January 31, 2012

**Please click
here for more
information.**

National African American History Month

Black Women in American Culture and History



Rosa Parks American Library in Soweto

The U.S. Government has operated a library in Soweto since 1976: first at the Orlando YMCA and then at its present location in the Ipelegeng Community Center.

We believe it has played an important role in offering information services and resources to the Soweto community. It is well known in the area and often visited by high profile delegations. The library has shifted from its original public library mission to a more specialized emphasis on youth development, business, career and education information and programs. In March 2009, then Consul General Andrew Passen officially launched a business corner at the Rosa Parks Library. This specialized business, entrepreneurial and career collection forms the core of the library's holdings.

Regular Programs at the Library

Rosa Parks Library Book Club

Meets every third Friday of the month to discuss books with a business focus.

Rosa Parks Chess Club

Meets once a week to hone chess and strategic thinking skills. The Chess Club members regularly take part in local chess tournaments.

Science Café

Monthly program in partnership with Marang Center for Math at Wits University and Sci-Bono Discovery Center.

Current Issues Programs

Programs on current issues such as the 2012 Presidential Elections.



Quick Facts

- 10 Public Access PCs with internet
- Video Conferencing Facility
- 2,000 Active members
- Educational Advising Resources
- 6,000 books
- Subscriptions to 20 periodicals and professional databases



Connect with us on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/uslibrariesjoburg

Find us at:

Ipelegeng Community Center, 1283 Phera & Dlamini Sts, White City, Jabavu, Soweto -- Tel. no.: 011 982 5580

Standing up for Freedom

Rosa Parks (1913 - 2005)

"Most historians date the beginning of the modern civil rights movement in the United States to December 1, 1955. That was the day when an unknown seamstress in Montgomery, Alabama refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger. This brave woman, Rosa Parks, was arrested and fined for violating a city ordinance, but her lonely act of defiance began a movement that ended legal segregation in America, and made her an inspiration to freedom-loving people everywhere."

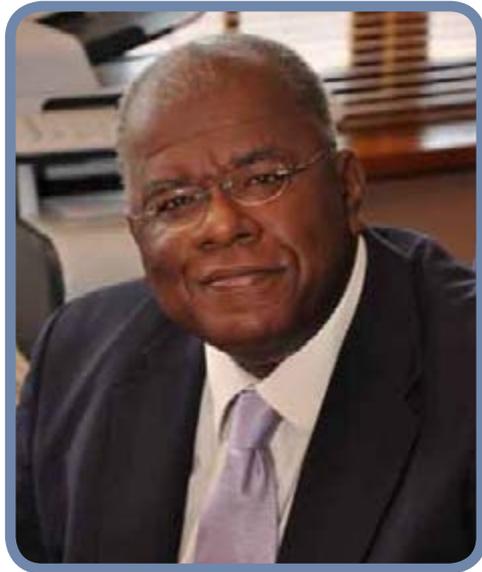
Source: <http://www.achievement.org/>



"I have learned over the years that when one's mind is made up, this diminishes fear; knowing what must be done does away with fear."

- Rosa Parks

Public Service and Education is Driving Force Behind South African Alumnus



Fulbright alumnus Professor Jonathan Jansen advocates for change through mutual understanding and international partnerships. In 2007 the University of the Free State was rocked by a racial incident wherein white students were videotaped humiliating black staff. Vice-Chancellor Jansen has since worked to make the University of the Free State a leader in confronting tolerance and diversity issues on campus.

Professor Jansen established an institute dedicated to racial reconciliation and in 2010 arranged for more than 70 first year students to take part in a three-week program at various U.S. universities funded entirely by private sector partners. The goal of this program, which took place from September 24-October 7, 2010, was to expose the students to how American campuses work with racial, gender, sexual orientation, and religious differences among their student bodies. In 2011, this program developed even further with 105 students visiting 11 different American universities.

Vice-Chancellor Jansen had the following to say about his Fulbright experience: "Because of the confidence and competence that comes with studying and writing at leading universities in the USA, I learnt to teach and lead in ways that opened

me up to my students and staff, and to begin in the process to confront my own demons (hurts, emotions, and fears) as a black South African."

In addition to his position as Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Free State, Jansen is also President of the South African Institute of Race Relations, and was recently elected Fellow of the American Educational Research Association and The Academy of Sciences for the Developing World.

This article appeared on the State Alumni website. For more alumni news please visit <http://alumni.state.gov>

English Access Microscholarship Program Graduation



On December 13, Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM), Virginia Palmer, awarded graduation certificates to 45 very excited English Access Microscholarship learners from Soweto, Chatsworth (Durban) and Walmer (Port Elizabeth) as part of a three-day event in Johannesburg to honor their achievement in completing the intensive two-year program of English language study.

DCM Palmer expressed the hope that there would be more graduations ahead for learners and reminded them to stay in contact with the Embassy. The event brought the young people together with their peers with fun, dynamic activities and sought to inspire them for their next steps.

Recently Returned Fulbright Alumnus Joins the Competition Commission

Departing for the U.S. in July 2010 was one of the biggest and frightening times of my life. Over and above the fact that I was flying for the first time, I was leaving family, friends, and a life I had known for the last 22 years. Despite the fear, I was also anxious to see what "America" had in store for me. I was keen to explore the education, culture, and social aspects, as well as meet and learn from world renowned professors. Having spent 16 months at Washington State University, I can confidently say I enjoyed my time in the U.S. to the fullest. In addition to the world class education I received, I also had the opportunity to travel and see famous places such as the "Big Apple" (New York City), Philadelphia, and San Francisco amongst many more. I would like to convey my hearty appreciation to the U.S. Embassy, U.S. Government, Fulbright program and all other stakeholders that contributed directly and indirectly to my stay in the U.S. I will forever be grateful.

Before I even returned to South Africa, the benefits of the Fulbright program started paying off and materializing as I secured a job with the Policy and Research Division of the Competition Commission of South Africa in December 2011. Now, I look forward to playing an active role and making a positive contribution to the South African economy. — **By Sifiso Mhlaba**



Fulbright student Sifiso Mhlaba with fellow Washington State University student Jenny Ringwood during a graduation ceremony

Spotlight on the CCI Program



CCIP Alumni Workshop

The Community College Initiative Program (CCIP) provides South Africans with the opportunity to attend one year of community college studies in the United States.

Since 2007, more than 100 South Africans have studied in the United States as part of this program. The subjects they have studied include applied engineering, business management and administration,

information technology, and tourism and hospitality.

For the next academic year in the U.S., beginning in August 2012, we expect 22 South Africans will be selected.

As part of the Department of State's continuing support for alumni, 72 CCIP Alumni gathered in Johannesburg on the weekend of December 2-4, 2011 for a workshop. This workshop covered

topics such as job seeking, career building, volunteerism and community engagement. It also gave alumni the opportunity to network with one another as well as visitors from a Community College Consortium from the United States.

More Alumni events are planned for larger groups in the near future. Please keep an eye out for announcements in this newsletter and by e-mail.

One Company Hires 8 Alumni

The following is an excerpt from a letter by SNC-Lavalin management:

The selection of potential learners is obviously critical to the success of the programme and for the Project Management Learnership in 2011, 9 of the learners referred by the United States Embassy in Johannesburg were selected and 8 received permanent offers of employment at SNC-Lavalin (Pty) Ltd. We are extremely thankful and grateful for the Embassy's ongoing interest and encouragement of their alumni and their assistance with the selection of 6 of the 14 Project Management Learners for 2012.

We are also dedicated to the upliftment and training of Hearing Impaired and Mentally Challenged

Learners and have started with a Business Practice and Domestic Learnership respectively for another 9 Learners for 2012.

We believe these initiatives have not only been successful for the individual learners who displayed huge courage



SNC • LAVALIN

and commitment to the programme, but also for SNC-Lavalin as a whole as we have made a positive contribution to addressing the problem of skills shortages in the industry and in South Africa.



CCI Alumni Say

Rose Rahube, CCIP Alumna, 2008



Since my return to South Africa, I have been involved in distribution of fresh food for nutrition of school learners, teenage pregnancy awareness in schools, distribution of food parcels to the local community's Orphaned and Vulnerable Children and training food preparers at schools in Limpopo province about Nutrition, Hygiene, Disease.

The CCI Program influenced my personal life in amazing ways. I am now more confident to speak my mind and stand up for myself. I now have the ability to cope under pressure and I am unafraid of challenges. My time as a student in Hawaii has taught me to plan, lead, organize and analyze any situation in a critical and creative way.

Crystal Fortune, CCIP Alumna, 2010

"The CCI Program has impacted my life in a really big way. I have gained certain skills and life experiences in a short period of time (10 months) that would have taken me much longer had I not been selected for this program. I try and assist the students (at the college that I volunteer at) and show them some of the computer and CV writing tips that I have learnt. I feel that knowledge should be shared, not kept to oneself."



Share your news, stories, projects and thoughts with us.
Please e-mail Jacques at WieseJ@state.gov

CCIP Student Receives Prestigious Scholarship

Zama Mofokeng, from Durban, is currently studying Tourism and Hospitality at Highline Community College in Des Moines, Washington State. On her return from her Christmas vacation she received the good news that she had been selected for the Community Colleges for

International Development Scholarship Fund. The selection gave her the opportunity to attend a conference of her choice in any State in the U.S. She decided to attend a conference in Monterey, California on Sustainable Hospitality and Tourism, where she gained knowledge and made many

contacts. She felt that the opportunity was a reward for her hard work and her good grades. She said "I started out my year with a bang and I love it, but for now it's back to school and back to loads of work."



Opportunities

Exchange Program Opportunities

Fulbright South Africa Post-Graduate Studies Program - Deadline: April 20, 2012

The Fulbright South Africa Post-Graduate Studies Program will be accepting applications for the 2013-14 U.S. academic year until April 20, 2012. This program provides South Africans the opportunity to pursue Master's or Ph.D. degrees at U.S. academic institutions. South African Ph.D. students can also use this program for a one-year non-degree program to conduct research and/or take courses at a U.S. academic institution. The program is open to South African residents and permanent residents who have a four year Bachelor degree or Honours degree for the

Master's program or a Master's degree for the Doctoral program. The study grants are competitive and awarded for a period of two years. For more information, please contact Mareka Chabedi at ChabediMM@state.gov or visit our website at <http://southafrica.usembassy.gov/postgraduate.html>



OneBeat - Deadline: February 24, 2012

OneBeatSM is an international music exchange that celebrates musical collaboration and social engagement through innovative people-to-people diplomacy. In the fall of 2012, 30 musicians from around the world will come together in the U.S. for four weeks to collaboratively write, produce, and perform original music, and develop ways that music can make a positive impact on our local and global communities.

OneBeat is open to musicians ages 19-35, who demonstrate both an advanced proficiency in their musical work, an interest in cross-genre collaboration, and experience with

or interest in developing strategies to use music as a way to improve their communities.

One BeatSM is an initiative of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, administered by Bang on a Can's Found Sound Nation. OneBeat builds on Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's vision of "smart power" diplomacy. It embraces the use of a full range of diplomatic tools, including music, to bring people, especially youth, together for greater understanding. Click on the apply button below.



Employment Opportunities at the U.S. Mission

The Fulbright South Africa office has a staff vacancy in a full-time position. The position involves work with U.S. scholars, students and specialists coming to South Africa. Experience with educational exchanges and a good knowledge of both the U.S. and South African higher education systems is desired. Watch for the formal announcement for applications for this position at <http://americanembassy.pnet.co.za>.



U.S. MISSION
SOUTH AFRICA

The 2012 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund is Coming this Month!

The second annual Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF) project competition will launch on February 27, 2012 so stay tuned!

Please visit <https://alumni.state.gov/> for more info.





The English language draws from the words of many cultures and tongues to create the strange styles we use today. I hope this column helps you understand some of our more unusual expressions, and the odd history of our English.

Alumni: one of those darn confusing plurals in English. A male graduate of a college or school is an alum and a group of them are alumni (pronounced “ah-lum-nee” in proper Latin), while a female graduate is an alumna. A group of female grads are alumnae (pronounced “ah-lum-nye,” which is how most people mistakenly say alumni). The word itself means “foster child” in Latin, and was first used in Britain to mean any boarding school pupil, not just a graduate; in America the term is only used for those who have already left the nest of their Alma Maters.

Alma Mater: the first place most people go when they leave their childhood homes is to university, so I suppose it’s natural that some regard their college as a surrogate mother. That’s what alma mater means in Latin: “nourishing mother.” How nourishing she is depends on how much you want to learn (and the quality of the cafeteria food).

Academy: the first academy was a garden near Athens named for the Greek hero Akademos. The philosopher Plato taught his students in the tranquil gardens, and before long any institution that promoted the advancement of the arts, science or literature borrowed the name. The followers of Plato did a lot of wandering in gardens, so they are called academics. Some still wander gardens today, but most academics are found inside ivory towers or buried under paper.

Africa: the name of the oldest continent is not a word found in any African language. In Ancient Greek, Aphrike meant “not cold;” similarly, in Latin, Africa meant “sunny.” The Romans used the name to refer to Tunisia and the northern parts of Algeria and Libya, the parts of the continent they knew best. In those days, everything east of Africa was called Egypt and everything south of the Sahara Desert was called Nubia or Ethiopia. Later European explorers misnamed the entire continent Africa. But while we gave the continent an eccentric name, the African people gave English many words, including banana, banjo, chimpanzee, cola, gumbo, jazz, jive, jumbo, marimba, safari, tango, trek, ubuntu, voodoo, yam, zebra and zombie.



America: maybe it’s fitting that many Americans are bad at geography, since the name of our country was a mistake. Amerigo Vespucci (in Latin, Americus Vesputius) was an obscure Italian navigator who made four trips to South America in the early 1500s. He did not discover much on his trips, but a German map-maker (Martin Waldseemüller) who had never heard of Columbus thought that Amerigo was the first to reach the new continents. He made a map from Amerigo’s travel notes and named the new land “Americus” in his honor. When Waldseemüller realized his mistake, he changed the land’s name to Mundus Novus (“New World”) on his later maps, but it was too late. Other map-makers copied his original chart, and we’ve been living on the wrong Italian’s continent ever since. Even the expression as American as apple pie is not truly American: apple pie and other fruit pies were baking in Europe for centuries before they came to America. While



many in Commonwealth countries prefer their pies with meat, German immigrants to America brought their recipes for apple strudel and apple pie with them, and then Moms did the rest. Oh well, at least baseball and Chevrolets are (mostly) all-American.

Valentine’s Day:

February 14 has been the Holiday of Love for almost 1,700 years. The birthday of Saint Valentine (a Christian martyred in Rome in the 3rd Century) was not chosen because he was associated with romance, but because in earlier, pagan tradition, mid-February was the time when birds choose their mates and begin to build nests just before the start of spring. The original Valentine custom was for all the bachelors in town to draw the name of an unmarried woman from a box or hat; the maiden selected would become the bachelor’s “valentine” for the following year (an early version of “Personals” ads, I guess). Some more romantic men and women became infatuated with their “valentines,” wrote the name of their beloved on a heart-shaped piece of paper, and pinned it to their shirts, which is the source of both the modern tradition of Valentine’s Day cards and the phrase “wearing your heart on your sleeve.”



Karl Stoltz is the Country Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy

We are the Rainmakers (Inspired by Mphela Makgoba)



By Edwin Smith, Director,
University of Pretoria -
Mamelodi Campus

Abdullah thumbs me a mellow tune
Carrying me across the waters I had
not seen

Gwangwa blows me his horn
Playing me Africa's tune high above
the vultures

Can pens my story on newsprint in
Johannesburg
And pours me my life in fine crystal on
the rocks

Makgoba bursts with tears and the
voice of Qamata
Awakening me to the conniving of
serpents

Wally and Keorapetse tell of battles of
ancients,
Mothers never forgotten, and long
roads traveled in dusty garb

Mandela and Sisulu tell me of the new
day
They saw through the window of the
island

And I write you my thousand lives
In double spaced and lonely lines

We are the rainmakers
Of Makgoba and our tomorrows

Footnotes:

Abdullah = Abdullah Ibrahim, South African musician
Gwangwa = Jonas Gwangwa, South African musician
Can = Can Themba, South African writer who died in
voluntary exile in 1968

Makgoba = Mphela Paul Makgoba, formerly exiled
South African performer/poet

Qamata = African deity

Wally = Wally Serote, South African poet

Keorapetse = Keorapetse Kgositsile, South African
poet

National African American History Month

Who Said That?

1. "Darkness can not drive out
darkness; only light can do that. Hate
cannot drive out hate; only love can
do that."

- Frederick Douglass
- Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Mary Church Terrell
- Ella Baker

2. "In my music, my plays, my films I
want to carry always this central idea:
to be African. Multitudes of men have
died for less worthy ideas; it is even
more eminently worth living for."

- Spike Lee
- Oscar Micheaux
- Paul Robeson
- John Singleton

3. "You may shoot me with your
words; You may cut me with your

eyes; You may kill me with your
hatefulness; But still, like air, I'll rise."

- Maya Angelou
- Gwendolyn Brooks
- Amiri Baraka
- Rita Dove

4. "Racism is not an excuse to not do
the best you can."

- Jackie Robinson
- Wilt Chamberlain
- Arthur Ashe
- Tiger Woods

5. "I'm sick and tired of being sick
and tired."

- Daisy Bates
- Julian Bond
- Jesse Jackson
- Fannie Lou Hamer

Adapted from: <http://www.pbs.org/>

ANSWERS:
1: Martin Luther King, Jr., 2: Paul Robeson,
3: Maya Angelou, 4: Arthur Ashe, 5: Fannie
Lou Hamer



**U.S. BLACK HISTORY MONTH
POETRY
COMPETITION**

**LEARNERS, WRITE A POEM NO LONGER
THAN 300 WORDS INSPIRED BY ONE WORD
ONLY ... HERO ... AND STAND A CHANCE
TO WIN GREAT PRIZES!**







**E-mail your poem to bhmpoetry@gmail.com
by February 29, 2012.**

Please include the following with your entry:
your **name**, your **grade and age**,
the **name of your school**,
the **city or town and province**
where you reside, and a **contact number**.

*You must be enrolled in secondary school to enter this contest.
Poems will be judged in 2 age categories: 12 - 14 and 15 - 18.
Poems must be in English.*