



The Boston Americanist 2013 - 2014

From the Director

We're pleased to bring you news from the past year in the life of the American and New England Studies Program. Big changes were afoot for AMNESP in 2013-2014. Here are some of the highlights.

New Preservation Studies Director

Perhaps the single most important accomplishment for AMNESP this past year was the hiring of Professor **Daniel Bluestone**, an internationally renowned expert in the field of historic preservation, as the new director for our program in Preservation Studies. Professor Bluestone's arrival will greatly enhance the standing of our unique preservation program, and make BU a leading institution in this important field. Having taught in preservation programs at Columbia and the University of Virginia, Daniel Bluestone comes to BU with a wealth of experience and scholarly expertise. He has documented a vast array of sites – everything from working class bungalows in Chicago to slave plantations in the antebellum South to modern skyscrapers and EPA superfund sites. He has traveled to Iraq and China to advise on pressing concerns regarding the preservation of endangered places and structures. Most of all, he is interested in preservation not simply as an exercise in aesthetic appreciation, but as a way to understand memory, decay, and community history, and as a means for making environmentally informed decisions about preserving what we have as opposed to building something new.

At BU, Professor Bluestone will direct and teach classes in the Preservation Studies program and for AMNESP more broadly. He hopes to launch a new introductory course on Boston, designed to introduce BU undergraduates to the city they live in and to a range of disciplines across the university. He will also be an important contributor to the new Initiative on Cities, co-directed by Professor **Graham Wilson** and former Boston mayor **Thomas Menino**.

New Undergraduate Internships Course

During the spring semester, we launched a new course, cross-listed with History,

AM/HI 313 Internships in Public History. Under the instruction of AMNESP Professor **Claire Dempsey**, nine students took up internships across the Boston area, at the Cambridge Historical Commission, the Gibson House, Historic New England, the Massachusetts Historical Society, Old South Meetinghouse, the Museum of African American History, the National Park Service Northeast Office, and NPS's Longfellow House. The course not only sent student interns into public history locales, it also brought them back into the classroom for weekly discussions about the challenges of doing public history. The students' work earned them great praise from the supervisors at the various sites and several students will continue work with their host institution over the summer or in the coming fall. We look forward to continuing these fruitful relationships, and developing others, when the course is offered again next spring.

Endowing a Lecture Series on Fraternalism

Following conversations between AMNESP Professor **William Moore** and James J. Howard III, the current Master of Boston University Lodge A. F. & A. M., funds have been secured that we hope, eventually, will establish an AMNESP lecture series exploring American fraternalism. Boston University Lodge is comprised of Freemasons who are affiliated with Boston University as students, alumni, faculty, or staff. The first donation will allow us to sponsor the first lecture, to be held on Wednesday, April 8, 2015 when David G. Hackett, an associate professor of religion at the University of Florida, will present on his new book *That Religion in Which All Men Agree: Freemasonry in American Culture* published by the University of California Press earlier this year. This lecture series will be free and open to the public and will provide AMNESP students opportunities to interact with the visiting lecturers in both classroom and informal settings.

Lectures and Conference on "New England and the World"

Drawing on funds from a Boston University Center for the Humanities grant, AMNESP will sponsor a series of events next year under the theme of "New England and the World". Three lectures, along with a graduate student conference in the fall, will bring together scholars from a range of disciplines whose work considers the intersection between New England people and/or institutions and broader, global developments. These events will bring attention to the unique regional component of our program – i.e., its focus on New England - not in a narrow and parochial way, but as something with global implications. Next year's programs will also allow us to make connections within and beyond BU to other scholars and students with similar interests and, we hope, raise BU's profile as a place where the New England region receives careful scholarly attention.

We're excited about these new developments in AMNESP and look forward to seeing

how the plans we've made this last year will bear fruit in years to come.

Nina Silber

Director, American and New England Studies Program

Student & Faculty Accomplishments

Our students and faculty maintained an active presence in their scholarly communities, publishing books and articles, traveling to international locations – as well as places closer to home - to give invited lectures and conference presentations, and winning prestigious grants and awards.

Below is just a sampling of the impressive scholarly accomplishments of AMNESP faculty from this past year:

Kim Sichel: "Lee Friedlander, *The American Monument*, and Eakins Press," *Exposure* 47.1 (Spring 2014): 40-54;

"'Contortions of Technique': Germaine Krull's Montages and the Complexity of Urban Modernism," *OBJECT: PHOTO* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2014)

Anita Patterson: "Work and the Poetry of Sterling Brown: Reclaiming Forced Labor," an essay published on the website for *The Mirror of Race: Seeing Ourselves Through History*, a photography exhibition at the Adams Gallery, Suffolk University.

Keith Morgan: *Community by Design*, published in 2013 by the University of Massachusetts Press for the Library of American Landscape History, was selected to receive the 2014 Ruth Emery Book Award from the Victorian Society in America.

Roy Grundmann: "Experimental Cinema and the Crystals of Time: Matthias Müller's Visual Poems," in *Millennium Film Journal*, No. 58, Summer 2013, pp. 118-123;

"The Tenderness of Scissors in Haircut (No.1)," in *Warhol in Ten Takes*, Glyn Davis and Gary Needham Eds. London: Palgrave MacMillan/British Film Institute, 2013.

Marilyn Halter: *African & American: West Africans in Post-Civil Rights America* with Violet Showers Johnson (New York: NYU Press, 2014);

"Mainstreaming Multiethnic America: Commerce and Culture in the New Millennium," keynote address for the International Symposium on "Selling Ethnicity and Race: Consumerism and Representation in 21st-Century America," American Studies Institute, University of Leipzig, Germany, November 6-8, 2013.

Hunt Howell: "Editing The Garies and Their Friends", colloquium talk at the American Antiquarian Society;

"Deep Background: The Walking Dead" an essay contributed to *avidly.org* (now part of the *LA Review of Books*).

Sarah Phillips: *The Kitchen Debate and Cold War Consumer Politics: A Brief History with Documents* (Bedford Series in History and Culture; Bedford/St. Martin)

Nina Silber: "The Political Identity of Union Women", paper presented at Civil War conference at the University of Mississippi, October 2013;

"The Afterlife of the American Civil War", keynote address for Bowdoin College Alumni event, August 2013.

Doctoral students in AMNESP registered equally impressive accomplishments and passed critical milestones in the PhD program. This includes the following:

Evan Barros: Dissertation prospectus approved.

Rebekah Beaulieu: Awarded fellowship to serve as Assistant Managing Editor of the journal, *Modern Intellectual History*, produced in BU's History department and was offered the position of Assistant Director of Operations for the Bowdoin College Museum of Art.

George Born: Dissertation prospectus approved; delivered conference papers for the Society for American City and Regional Planning (Toronto) and for the IPHS Conference in Florida.

Tessa Croker: Passed her oral qualifying examination.

Michael D'Alessandro: Received an appointment in the History and Literature Program at Harvard University and a Wintherthur fellowship.

Kathleen Daly: Delivered a conference paper at the Eastern American Studies Association (Philadelphia).

Jamie Devol: Delivered conference papers at the Society of Architectural Historians meeting and at the New England Society of Architectural Historians graduate student conference

Paul Edwards: Delivered a conference paper at the Twelfth International Conference on New Directions in the Humanities (Madrid).

Adrea Hernandez: Delivered a conference paper at the Social Science History Association meeting (Chicago).

Paul Hutchinson: Appointed as full-time lecturer for BU's School of Management in the Organizational Behavior Department; and delivered two Conference Keynote addresses at the Association for Experiential Education Northeast Regional Conference and at the Outdoor Orientation Program Symposium.

Neal Knapp: Won a Graduate Research Abroad Fellowship from BU to conduct research in the UK; and delivered a conference paper at the Rural History Conference (Bern, Switzerland).

Rachel Koppelman: Major paper approved; and delivered a conference paper at the Third International Doctoral Students Study Day on the History of Freemasonry and Fraternalism (Bordeaux, France).

Niki Lefebvre: Received a Mellon Foundation John E. Sawyer Seminar Fellowship for the 2014-2015 academic year as part of the BU History Department Seminar on "Reinterpreting the Twentieth Century".

Sarah Leventer: Passed her oral qualifying exam.

Catherine Martin: Passed her oral qualifying exam and delivered papers at the Mid-Atlantic Popular & American Culture Association meeting (Atlantic City), the Film & History meeting (Madison, WI), and the Society for Cinema and Media Studies (Seattle).

Amanda Mayo: Completed her language requirement.

Channon Miller: Passed her oral qualifying exam and delivered papers at the NEASA conference and the Black Doctoral Network's National Conference (Philadelphia).

Emma Newcombe: Passed her oral qualifying exam; and presented conference papers at the Pioneer American Society conference (Utica) and at the Northeast Modern Language Association meeting (Harrisburg, PA).

Matt Nofieri: Completed his language requirement.

Jordan Pouliot: Major paper approved and won the award for Outstanding Teaching Fellow. Also delivered papers at the Mid-Atlantic Popular & American Culture Association meeting (Atlantic City), at the Northeast Popular Culture Association Fall Conference (Burlington, VT), and at the Eastern American Studies Association Conference (Philadelphia).

Sam Palfreyman: Presented a paper at the Eastern American Studies Association meeting (Philadelphia).

Clare Ploucha: Presented a paper at the Mid-Atlantic Popular & American Culture Association meeting (Atlantic City).

Mary Potorti: Presented papers at the 2014 Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association Conference (Chicago) and at The Fire Every Time: Reframing Black Power Across the 20th Century and Beyond (Charleston, SC).

Robert Ribera: Dissertation prospectus approved; and presented a paper at the Eastern American Studies Association meeting (Philadelphia).

Casey Riley: Won awards from the Peter Palmquist Memorial Fund for Historical Photographic Research, from BU's Graduate School for Summer Dissertation Research, and the Elsbeth Melville Scholarship from BU's Women's Guild. She also presented papers at the Exchanging Photographs: Making Knowledge Conference (Leicester, UK) and will give a paper at the American Studies Association annual meeting (Los Angeles) in November. She has also twice been an invited speaker at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

Karen Robbins: Developed and taught an experimental course in BU's writing program on the Back Bay; participated in an international conference for graduate students focused on the history of education and space (Umea, Sweden), and gave a paper at the Northeast American Studies Association.

George Schwartz: Dissertation prospectus approved. Also won the following awards: a BUCH student award; a summer research fellowship from BU's GRS; and the Francis Malamy Fellowship at the Peabody Essex Museum. Also delivered a paper at the Association of Art Historians Conference (London) and an invited lecture at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York) and published an article in *Brewery History: The Journal of the Brewery History Society*.

Sam Shupe: Passed the language requirement and presented a paper at the Dublin Seminar for New England Folk Life (Deerfield, MA).

Kate Viens: Won the Mary Kelley prize for the best graduate student paper at the New England American Studies Association meeting.



Faculty, undergraduates, PhD and MA students of AMNESP celebrated at the convocation in May.

Graduates of the Ph.D. Program

Four graduate students received Ph.D. degrees this year. **Michael D'Alessandro** defended "Staged Readings: Sensationalism and Class in Popular American Literature and Theater, 1835-1875," completed under the direction of

English Professor **Laura Korobkin**. **Virginia Myhaver** wrote and defended her dissertation, "The 'New American Revolution': Cultural Politics, New Federalism and the 1976 Bicentennial", with History Professor **Bruce Schulman** as supervisor. **Brian Sirman** defended "Concrete Dreams: Architecture, Politics, and Boston's New City Hall" with HAA Professor **Keith Morgan** as director. And **Zachary Violette's** dissertation, "The Decorated Tenement: Working-class Housing in Boston and New York, 1860-1910" was successfully defended, and also written under Professor Morgan's direction.

Graduates of the M.A. Program

Two preservation studies students graduated in January: **Mary Cirbus**, like many preservation studies students, completed a preservation planning project under the direction of faculty member **Eric Dray**, the Falmouth Reconnaissance Report for the Cape Cod Landscape Inventory. This project is part of the Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory Program, sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, which recognizes the importance of preserving the special places of the Commonwealth, and supports work with local constituencies to identify significant community landscapes and to make recommendations about their preservation. The study of Falmouth documented 22 high-priority cultural landscapes, focusing on agricultural and seasonal landscapes and recommending solutions for their preservation. Mary now works for the Massachusetts Historical Commission in the Grants Division, working with the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund. The second graduate, **Gretchen Pineo**, wrote a thesis titled "Forging History: The Creation of the Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site." She is now working as assistant architectural historian at the Public Archaeology Laboratory, a cultural resource management firm based in Pawtucket, RI.

Incoming American Studies Students

Aaron Ahlstrom holds a BA in American Studies from Bard College where the quality of his senior thesis on the landscape history of Montgomery Place, a historic estate in the Hudson Valley, won him the Open Space Institute Barnabas McHenry Hudson River Valley Award. In his doctoral studies, he plans to continue his focus on American landscape history and historic preservation, concentrating on the nineteenth century. Aaron has served as a historic interpreter for the Cape Cod National Seashore and for Great Camp Sagamore as well as worked as a research associate for the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation.

Christine D'Auria received her BA in English, *cum laude*, from Washington & Jefferson College and an MA in English from Carnegie Mellon University. She is interested in American literature and cultural studies from the 1850s through the 1930s particularly with regard to the influence of the evolving professional managerial class on literary representations in this period. Christine already has considerable teaching experience, having worked as an adjunct instructor of English composition and writing at Washington & Jefferson College, Duquesne University and the Community College of Allegheny College.

Daniel DeFraia received his BA in TV/Video and Writing/Literature from Emerson College and an MLA in English from the Harvard Extension School where his thesis on the ideology of land speculation from colonial America to the 1920s won the Dean's Prize for Outstanding Thesis in the Humanities. He plans to pursue his interests in the relationship between American literature and economics particularly at times of financial crisis. This year Daniel was a Paul Steiger Fellow for the Committee to Protect Journalists, investigating issues of freedom of the press and assisting threatened journalists in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Jason Michelitch holds a BA in Film and Electronic Media from Bard College and an MFA in Film Studies in the Department of Film and Television from Boston University where he has specialized in film theory and history. He is particularly interested in the intersection of avant-garde cinema and experimental non-fiction film. Last year, Jason held a programming internship at the Harvard Film Archive and published his first peer-reviewed article, "The Sublime Wisdom of Not Understanding: The Role of Knowledge in Preston Sturges' *The Lady Eve*," in *The Cine-Files*. He is also a regular contributor to *Wired.com*, *Cineaste*, *Hooded Utilitarian* and *Splice Today, LLC* among other publications.

Ian Stevenson received his BA in History, *cum laude*, from Bates College and his MA in Preservation Studies from right here at BU with interdisciplinary interests in architectural, environmental and social history, especially of the nineteenth century. He has an article forthcoming in the peer-reviewed journal, *Future Anterior*, entitled "Proving Preservation: Boston Subway Construction Photography, 1894-1897," as well as having published a series of essays in the *Westchester Historian* based on earlier research on the landscape and environmental history of that region. Ian currently works as Assistant Editor for the Humanities at Harvard University Press.

Christopher Stokum holds a BA in English Writing and Philosophy, *summa cum laude*, from the University of Pittsburgh, where he was awarded the Brackenridge Undergraduate Research Fellowship. In his graduate studies, he plans to pursue his scholarly interests in the history of American education, educational theory and religious thought, especially as these dynamics played out in the colonial period. Christopher is currently spending the year teaching English, science and art classes at a bilingual school in Spain.

Incoming Preservation Students

The Preservation Studies Program will welcome two new students this fall. **Jessica November** is a cum laude graduate of Northeastern, who received her BA in political science. After a semester in Scotland and a course on gentrification, Jess became interested in preservation and has undertaken internships at Skinners, Historic New England, and the South End Historical Society. **Carmen DeLucia** is a graduate of California State University, Sacramento, with a major in interior architecture. She has recently been an intern of the California State Office of Historic Preservation.

Preservation Projects

With the generous support of the BU Center for the Humanities, the Preservation Studies Program was able to provide crucial support to reenergizing the Massachusetts Historic Preservation Conference, held in Lexington MA on 18 October 2014. BU faculty, students, and alumni provided planning assistance and content development, and the BU students who attended the conference had an excellent opportunity to see preservation as it is practiced, in the real world, outside the classroom.

This conference, a common state-wide advocacy and training effort, had not been held in Massachusetts for six years. A coalition of preservation agencies and advocacy groups came together to revive it, and BU played an important role in its planning and eventual success. Because of this cooperative effort, the conference was bigger, better, and more varied than in the past: 23 sessions, nearly 90 speakers, tours and round-tables as well as general sessions. The conference was attended by over 300 Massachusetts preservationists.

Preservation Studies Program faculty, students, and alumni all made significant contributions as planners and presenters at this conference. The director of Preservation Studies, **Claire Dempsey**, served on the steering committee and on the conference content subcommittee. Our faculty and our wide network of alumni served as effective and engaging speakers. A Preservation Studies graduate student assisted with planning over the summer and during the weeks leading up to and after the conference, working with Professor Dempsey and the conference planner. **Mary Cirbus** developed content for the conference web site, contacted organizations and firms for the resource room, and worked on the logistics committee with BU Preservation Studies alums working at the Massachusetts Historical Commission, including **Elizabeth Sherva**, **Barbara Kurze**, and **Erin Donahue**. Among the speakers that day, over a dozen had a BU affiliation, including session organizers and participants; BU was well represented among conference participants as well. We

hosted a table in the resource room, providing literature about our programs and a copy of the Preservation Alumni Directory; small stickers for badges identified those with BU affiliations.



Professors Keith Morgan and Will Moore, along with other AMNESP folks, turned out to cheer on the Paw Sox at last year's "AMNESP at the Paw Sox" day.

Building Our Community

In 2013-2014, AMNESP sponsored several events that helped us strengthen our own community and build connections with faculty and students across the university. Foremost along these lines were the lectures associated with our "American Conversations" series that focused on "Cultural Politics/Political Culture". Faculty from UMass-Boston, Harvard, Tel Aviv University, and BU spoke on topics such as the left and homosexuality in the mid-twentieth century; Reconstruction and African-American novelists; and censorship in early American television. These talks, along

with the receptions and meals that followed, brought together faculty and students from a variety of departments.

AMNESP graduate students have been making their presence known in a variety of ways. Last fall, **Karen Robbins**, **George Born**, and **Brian Sirman** led walking tours for BU alums and for groups of BU freshmen, a practice we hope will continue this year. Graduate students also continued to meet regularly in the Graduate Student Association and sponsored their own events in the form of the Americanist Forum as well as workshops dedicated to various aspects of the PhD experience. Papers at the Americanist Forum included **Matt Noferi's** presentation on "The Trucker in Popular Culture and the Southernization of America"; **Catherine Martin's** "Playing the Sidekick to Get Ahead in Remington Steele"; **Emma Czaja's** "Curling Trophies and the Nineteenth Century Anglo Canadian Elite"; and **P.J. Carlino's** "Working Class Sporting Leisure in a New England Mill Town". The GSA also launched *Confluence*, a blog with reviews of books, films, and exhibits, as well as interviews with authors and artists. *Confluence* continues to seek contributions from graduate students and will appear regularly next year.

AMNESP continues to take its parties seriously, finding ways to introduce our students and faculty to the rich historic landscape of greater Boston. A highlight in this regard was our holiday party, held at the historic African Meeting House on Beacon Hill. Look for invitations to more parties this coming year, including a holiday party at the Massachusetts Historical Society.

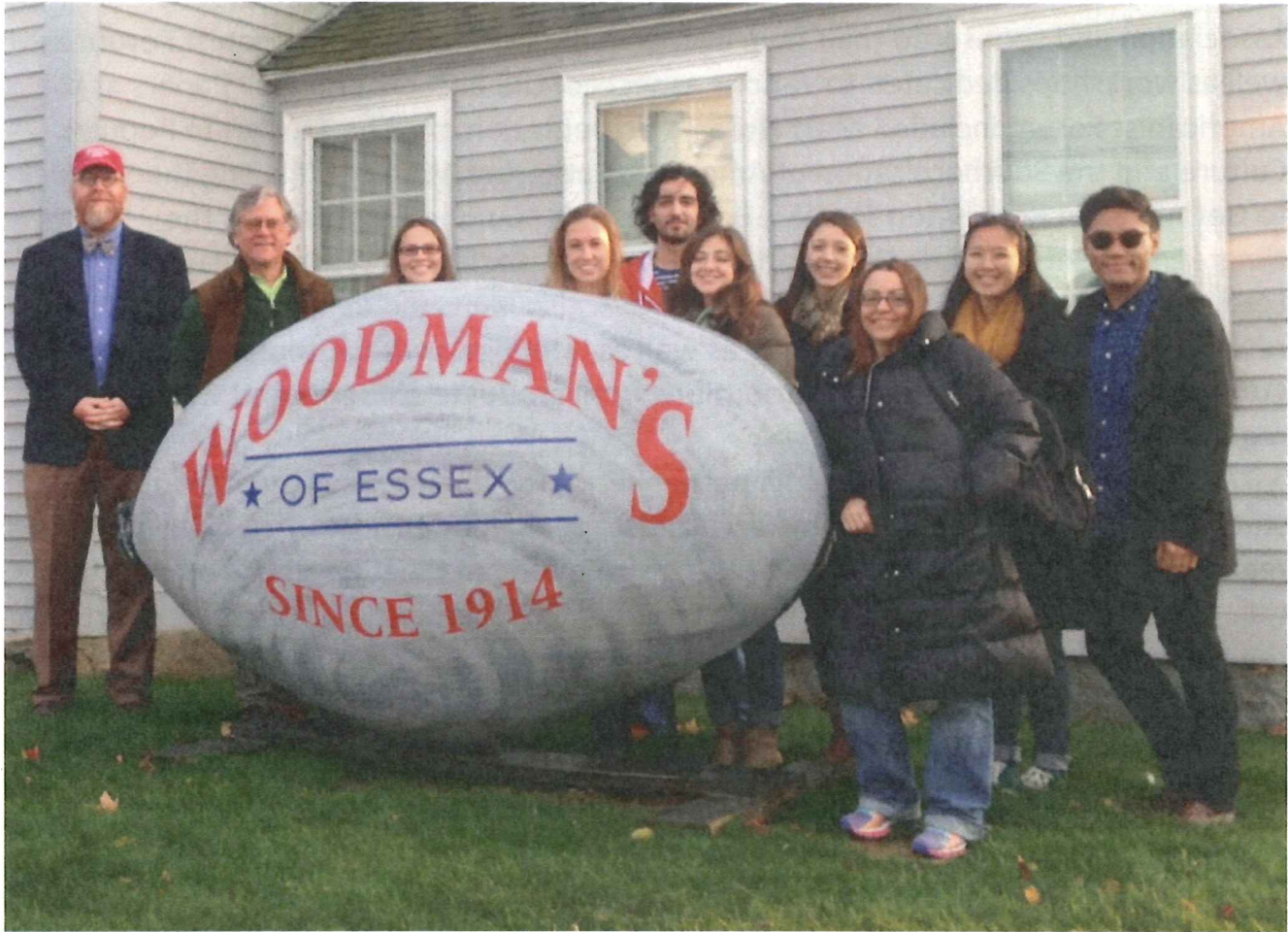
We continue, too, to have an active presence on Facebook and regularly post notices about student accomplishments, job announcements, and upcoming conferences. Be sure to look for us there!

Looking Ahead

The coming year promises to be filled with an array of intellectually vibrant activities, including the lectures, and graduate student conference, that will be part of our series on New England and the World. Please mark you calendars now for the first lecture, to be presented by Professor Peggy Levitt of Wellesley College, on September 30. Professor Levitt will discuss her work on museums and the creation of global citizenship. October 24-25 are the dates for the graduate student conference; and Wednesday April 8 marks the date for the first lecture in what we hope will be an annual offering on American fraternalism. And once again, AMNESP will have its "day at the Paw Sox". Be sure to join us when the Paw Sox play the Rochester Red Wings on Sunday, August 31. We'll be gathering at around 5:30 pm in the unreserved seats above section 4 along the first base line.

Stay Connected

Please keep AMNESP in the loop about your own activities – whether you’re a BU faculty member, an AMNESP student, or an AMNESP alum. And make sure, too, we know the best way to stay in touch. Be sure to check our website regularly (www.bu.edu/amnesp) for the latest information about upcoming events.



Professor Will Moore and the American Folk Art class pose with the Woodman's Clam Shell on a field trip.