



The

# Sojourner Truth

Newsletter

VOLUME I, ISSUE III

SPRING 2007

A PUBLICATION OF THE CENTER FOR AFRICANA STUDIES AT CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

## Archaeology Laboratory for African and African Diaspora Studies (ALAADS):

### Broteer Venture Smith Project



Descendants of Broteer Venture Smith and visitors to the site pay their respects at the closing ceremony.

Picture by John Spaulding

In the summer of 2006, the Archaeology Laboratory for African and African Diaspora Studies participated in one of the most innovative interdisciplinary studies ever conducted. The Broteer Venture Smith DNA Recovery Project involved teams of researchers, archaeologists, geneticists, and historians from the U.S. and U.K. in an effort to document the origins of Broteer Furro, the son of a West African prince, who was captured from his home in the 1730s and enslaved for decades in New York and Connecticut.

Broteer, who was named Venture Smith by his captors, used his physical and emotional strength to perform tremendous labor to earn money to reclaim his freedom, that of his family,

and of numerous other captive Africans in Connecticut and New York. Through his unceasing labor, Broteer amassed wealth that included over 100 acres of land in Haddam Neck, Connecticut, and a fleet of over 30 vessels which he used for fishing and shipping.

He became well-known outside of his adopted hometown in 1798, when he dictated an memoir which was published in New London under the title *The Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture, a Native of Africa*. This volume is one of very few first-hand accounts of life under captivity in Connecticut. However, as valuable as this book is, it is not a definitive account of Broteer's life,

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## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Happy New Year! I hope your holidays were gratifying and joyous. As we start the spring semester let us take time to reflect, especially as February is Black History Month, although I believe strongly that every day should be Black History day. We should remind ourselves of the supreme sacrifices and the contributions by many who fought the good fight to ensure that their pain and efforts are not in vain. Let us engage in dialogue and explore means of supporting each other.

History is critical to our existence; it enables us to retrace our ancestry. The Akan word, *Sankofa*, means *go back and fetch it*; it also implies *back to your roots*. But as Gyekye and others argue, a return to the past must be guided by a critical examination to build a better future. The past should keep us in check to avoid desecrations and crimes against humanity.

We are faced with crisis in education for our youth; we cannot be complacent; we have to act and act very quickly. For example, the graduation rate of non-whites in particular African Americans and Latinos on this campus and nationwide, is abysmally low. I appeal to you, especially staff and faculty of the Center, to help our young sisters and brothers. We need you to offer about two hours a week to mentor at least two of our students on campus. The students have already started mentoring young boys and girls from the local elementary schools. Therefore, your support of them reciprocates their efforts to continue to tutor and empower those who attend our after-school programs from the community. If you are interested in mentoring a student please contact us at the Center.

I would like to express my profound appreciation to you for your support of the Center's programs. Please remember, each of you do make a difference in our students' lives. I hope you have a wonderful and prosperous year

C. Charles Mate-Kole

## THE CENTER FOR AFRICANA STUDIES 13TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

### Key Topics Explored at Africana Conference

Dr. Charles Mate-Kole, professor of psychology and director of the center delivered the opening and closing remarks at the conference which had as its theme: the Re-emergence of Pan Africanism and its implications for the empowerment of Black educators and students in the African Diaspora. Among the key topics discussed at the conference were the historical and theoretical foundations of Pan-Africanism and Afrocentrism, Pan-Africanism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the state of education

in the African Diaspora and continuing relevance of Pan-Africanism to our current struggle for empowerment.

Dr. Asa G. Hilliard, III, who bears the title Nana Baffour Amankwatia, II, Development Chief of Mankrasa, Ghana, and is also Fuller E. Callaway Professor of Urban Education at Georgia State University, delivered a lecture on "The Deep Roots Education and the Pan African Imperative." Former New Jersey deputy attorney general Godfrey C. Henry, JD presented a lecture, "The New Jim Crow: African Americans, Civil Rights, and the First

Presidential Election of the 21st Century at the conference. Dr. Horace Campbell, Professor of African American Studies, International Relations and Political Science at Syracuse University, delivered a paper titled "Pan Africanism in the 21st Century." Dr. Marcia Sutherland, Associate Professor of Psychology and Africana Studies, and Director, Graduate Program, University at Albany, SUNY presented a lecture on "Pan Africanism and African Resurgence in the 21st Century". Lawrence Hamm, the chairman of the People's Organization for Progress, New Jersey delivered a lecture on Continuing Relevance of Pan Africanism to Our Current Struggle for Empowerment".

Other speakers at the conference include: Dr. Chengiah Ragaven, visiting Professor of Urban Studies at Southern Connecticut State University, Dr. Ghelawdewos Araia, Adjunct Associate Professor of African Studies at Lehman College of the City University of New York, Dr. Signithia Fordham, Susan B. Anthony Professor of Gender and Women's Studies at SUNY-New York, Mukoma Wa Ngugi, M.A, Kenyan Writer, Coordinator of Toward an Africa Without Borders at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and Jennifer Stimpson, M.A., Chemistry Teacher at Yvonne A. Ewell



Dr. Chengiah Ragaven (left) converses matters of interest with Phoebe Milliken (right).



Lawrence Hamm delivers a lecture on Continuing Relevance of Pan Africanism

Townview Magnet Center in Dallas, TX.

CCSU's President Jack Miller, the Provost & Vice President, Academic Affairs, Dr. Carl Lovitt and Frank Schorn, Director, Center for International Education, CCSU gave remarks during the conference. Other CCSU faculty members who participated include: Dr. Peter LeMaire, professor of physics, Sheri Fafunwa-Ndibe, professor of art, Dr. Warren Perry, professor of anthropology and director of the Archaeology Lab for African and African Diaspora studies, and Dr. Evelyn Phillips, professor of Anthropology and director of the International Studies Program and Dr. Olusegun Odesina, associate dean and professor of electronics and graphics technology in CCSU's School of Technology.

Dr. Hakim Salah-Din, CCSU's associate vice president for Academic Affairs and Chief Officer for Planning and Institutional Effectiveness spoke on "Students Success: "Myths and Realities."

The conference also included a student roundtable discussion session, which was chaired by Dr Evelyn Phillips. Students who participated in this roundtable

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Broteer, cont'd

because it was heavily edited by the scribe, Elisha Niles, a New London schoolteacher. Therefore, much of what Broteer could have told us about himself has been omitted from the documents.

Archaeology's *raison d'être* is the filling in of missing histories such as this one. By examining the material evidence of Broteer's life, we can fill in some of Broteer's story omitted in the written account.

Last summer's project focused on the excavation of the graves of Broteer and his wife Marget, his son Solomon, and his granddaughter Eliza Smith Roy. Their graves were opened at the request of Broteer's living descendants, who had long sought to know more about their historically significant ancestor, including where in West Africa he may have been born. ALAADS archaeologists and CCSU students worked with the State Archaeologist, Dr. Nicholas Bellantoni, and geneticists from the Center for Applied Genetics and Technology at UConn. The excavation was attended daily by Broteer's descendants, who played a crucial part in every decision about the project.

The acidic soils of the cemetery had decomposed almost all of the physical remains of Broteer and his family. The only recoverable bones were from the lower arms of Marget, Broteer's wife. These fragments were promptly frozen to preserve them and samples of the bone were taken to the laboratory at UConn for analysis. It is hoped that the chemical and genetic analysis will provide us with information about Marget, who is largely unknown from the *Narrative*.

Although there were few human remains, the artifacts from the family's graves tell us much about their way of life. Three of the coffins (Broteer's, Marget's, and Solomon's) were undecorated but well-constructed, using relatively expensive screws rather than the usual nails. This



A hinge from Broteer's coffin lid

Picture by John Spaulding

corroborates the *Narrative's* portrayal of Broteer as an affluent man who was concerned with quality and substance, rather than flashy display. The coffins were hinged at the top for viewing the face of the deceased before burial.

The fourth coffin, that of Broteer's granddaughter Eliza Smith Roy, dated to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and was far more elaborate than those of her father or her grandparents. The coffin was decorated with beautiful and elaborate metal handles, and was either lined or covered with fine-textured fabric. The interior of Eliza's coffin revealed some interesting artifacts, including her vulcanized rubber false teeth, which had preserved in near-perfect condition. She had been buried wearing earrings, which demonstrated that she had had pierced ears, and her gold wedding ring.

The ring was informative in two separate ways. It was found *in situ* on her right shoulder, indicating that Eliza

had been laid out with her arms crossed and her hands on her opposite shoulders. Secondly, the presence of the wedding ring demonstrates that Eliza held some connection to her husband, despite her burial beside her father instead of her spouse. The inscription on Eliza's tombstone is unusual for a married woman, because it names her as "Daughter of Solomon Smith" rather than "Wife of [Mr.] Roy."

The analysis of the remains and the artifacts is still ongoing, and ALAADS looks forward to discovering more interesting facts about Broteer's life and family. ■

The full text of Broteer's narrative can be read online at <http://www.conferences.uconn.edu/venturesmith/narrative.htm>.

Janet Woodruff,

ALAADS



1.State Archaeologist Dr. Nicholas Bellantoni with Dr. Warren Perry & Gerald Sawyer of ALAADS.  
2. Ms. Florence Warmesley, a descendant of Broteer, leaves a remembrance on the grave before it is refilled.  
3/4. The project opened and closed with ceremonies from both traditional West African and Christian religious leaders.  
Picture by John Spaulding

# FEBRUARY 2007 BLACK HISTORY MONTH

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT						
				1 <b>Open House</b> ALLADS Topic: Understanding the history of captivity through archeology 11-2pm Dr. Warren Perry Janet Woodruf	2	3 NAACP <b>Concert</b> Welte Hall 8:00pm \$10—Students \$15—Adults Reception 6:00pm
4	5	6	7 <b>Video Viewing</b> 12:00am—1:30pm Martin Luther King— Biography 2-4pm The Traveling Griots Venue :CAS	8 4:00 pm —Marcus White Living Room "Reflections of My Life with Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.," by Dr. Ralph Troy, civil rights activ- ist and Freedom Rider— sponsored by African American Studies	9	10 CAS/NAACP <b>Lecture</b> Founders 1:00pm—3:00pm Lawrence Hamm Black Love "Black Love— Keeping our families Happy"
11	12	13 12:00-1:30pm <b>Lunch time discussion</b> Black History Month: Some philosophical and political questions Prof. Ragaven Venue: CAS Lobby	14 <b>Video Viewing</b> 12:00am—1:30pm <i>The Last Grave at Dim- baza</i> Venue: CAS	15	16	17
18	19	20 <b>Panel Discussion</b> 6:00pm—7:00pm Educational value of Hip-Hop Music Venue: CAS	21 <b>Video Viewing</b> 12:00am—1:30pm Quilombo Country Venue: CAS	22 <b>4:00 pm – Founders Hall</b> <b>"The Status of Blacks in Higher Education,"</b> by Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, Senior Re- search Professor of African- American Studies, University of Colorado-Boulder—sponsored by African American Studies	23	24
25	26 <b>Video Viewing</b> 12:00am—2:00pm Amandla Venue: CAS	27	28 <b>Discussion</b> <b>It's all a bunch of Numbers</b> Guest: Mrs Williams 2- 5:00pm Students center			

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Curtsey of: [http://www.history.com/global/exhibit\\_templates/images/blackhist\\_home.jpg](http://www.history.com/global/exhibit_templates/images/blackhist_home.jpg)

### Film Series

Below is a list of films that will be shown at the Center for Africana Studies during Black History Month. Each film would be followed by a discussion.

**Biography: Martin Luther King, Jr (1997).** This movie provides an account of the life of the respected public figure and the thoughtful private man.

February 7, 12:00am-1:30pm

**Last Grave at Dimbaza (1974)** examines the apartheid system and ways in which the west supported that system.

February 14, 12:00am-1:30pm

**Quilombo Country:** Afro Brazilian villages in the 21st century (2006), a documentary film shot in digital video, provides a portrait of rural communities in Brazil that were either founded by runaway slaves or began from abandoned plantations. This type of community is known as a Quilombo, from an Angolan word that means "encampment." As many as 2,000 quilombos exist today.

February 21, 12:00am-1:30pm

**Amandla: A revolution in four-part harmony (2002)** examines the role that music played in South Africa's liberation struggle.

February 26, 12:00-1:30pm

### Annual Conference, cont'd

include: Sharyn Lopez, President of the CCSU branch of the Latin American Student Organization (LASO); Amber Woodward, Black Student Union (BSU); Oliver Samuel, United Caribbean Club (UCC); Cherolle Brown, Africana Students Organization (ASO).

There was a panel discussion on "Challenges in Higher Education in Connecticut." Panelists include Rory T. Edwards, educational consultant and former Dean of Students at Amistad Academy; Elizabeth Horton Sheff, member of the Hartford City Council, and a principal in the landmark Sheff vs. O'Neill landmark civil rights case in 1996; and Ron Davis, President, New Britain Chapter of the NAACP. An art exhibition on Apartheid in South Africa produced by Phoebe Milliken was also on display.

The conference was sponsored by CCSU's Office of Multicultural Affairs; the Center for International Education, African Studies Committee, the School of Technology; the Africana Student Organization, the Office of the Provost, and the African American studies program. ■

Chinekwu Obidoa, CCSU Graduate Student



Curtsey of: <http://>

## Apartheid: An Exhibition of a Crime Against Humanity

At this year's Africana Studies conference, the corridor outside Torp Hall was lined with photos and quotations about apartheid. Apartheid was South Africa's notorious system of racial oppression that allowed a small white minority to have the highest standard of living in the world, while the black majority was disenfranchised, lived in poverty, was subjected to constant violence, and had no rights to the land that was originally theirs. The roots of apartheid reach back to the seventeenth century, though its most vicious and dogmatic phase lasted from 1948 until it was officially abolished in 1994. Throughout that phase, the U.S. government supported the apartheid regime, despite the burgeoning civil rights movement in this country.

South Africa is rich in minerals coveted by the United States, and positioned itself as a capitalist ally during the cold war. Thus the United States supported the apartheid government by loaning it money, selling it military technology through loopholes in an international arms embargo, assisting South Africa in a war against a democratically elected but nominally Marxist government

in Angola, using its UN security council veto to prevent UN action against South Africa, and by ultimately enacting only very weak sanctions against South Africa. In these actions, American policy was dominated by economic and strategic concerns, without regard for the vast majority of South Africans who suffered under the apartheid system. The exhibit that was up outside Torp, and now hangs in the Africana Center Lobby, seeks to show both the horrors of apartheid, and clarify the American role in sustaining it.

But if apartheid came to its official conclusion thirteen years ago, why is it worth considering now? This is the question that will be addressed as the exhibit continues to grow. As the exhibit enters its next phase, one additional section will look at the parallels between apartheid and America's own history of enslavement, lynchings, and disenfranchisement. Another section will examine how the American policies towards Africa continue to further our own economic and strategic concerns regardless of the human cost of those policies.



Images from of Apartheid exhibit on display at the Center for Africana Studies lounge area

As we work to expand the exhibit, the existing portion will move to the Burritt library this spring. Additionally, a film series on apartheid will begin in February and continue through the semester. The expanded exhibit will go up on campus during the 2007-2008 academic year. Ultimately, our aim is to educate Americans about apartheid and ask them to question ongoing policies towards Africa. ■

For more information on the exhibit, please contact Phoebe Milliken at [phoebe@richard-reed.com](mailto:phoebe@richard-reed.com) or Janet Woodruff at

[woodruffj@mail.ccsu.edu](mailto:woodruffj@mail.ccsu.edu) .

Phoebe Milliken

## ConnCAS: A Student Review

My experience in the ConnCAS Program was not only a lot of fun but also educational. As a result of participating in ConnCAS I knew what to expect from classes and teachers and also what teacher expected from me. I learned how to balance my time and set my priorities. I was more aware of possible distractions which would face me in the up-coming fall semester. By the end of the summer, I knew my way around the campus, allowing me to confidently navigate my way to my classes the first week of school. Through ConnCAS, I gained new friends and I became affiliated with the Africana Center. This was important because during the fall the Africana Center would become my refuge, social

center, and study corner. Not only was the five week session of ConnCAS worth it for these reasons but I also received four credits and a GPA before many of my fellow freshmen. ConnCAS was definitely a worthwhile experience and I hope that it continues to run as successfully as it has in the past so that many other students can reap the benefits just like I have this past summer

Cherolle Brown  
Freshman, CCSU

## Africana Student Organization: save the date!

This semester for the ASO, our plans are as follows;

- **Video Tuesdays.** Videos will be shown through out the day and will be discussed during the Empowerment Discussion group on Tuesdays, 7:00 pm at the Center for Africana Studies.
- **On February 13,** Guest speaker, Lisette Cruz from the Girls Scouts will give an introduction on internships at the Girls Scouts.
- **March 13<sup>th</sup>**- Empowerment discussion – “Dissent within the Diaspora”.
- **April 19<sup>th</sup>** 2nd Annual Culture Shock. Alumni Hall, student center



For more up to the minute event information visit

[clubs.ccsu.edu/aso](http://clubs.ccsu.edu/aso)

## RESIDENT LIFE



Mr. Tarome Alford  
Director of Res. Life,  
CCSU

Living in the residence halls is one of the most exciting times a student can enjoy about the on campus experience. A student who becomes a part of the residential community lives in an environment that promotes positive interaction, participates in stimulating discussions beyond the classroom and resides with peers that represent the Global Society. Residence Hall living provides students with these opportunities while helping them to achieve personal and academic growth.

Within the residence halls, staff members (i.e., Resident Assistants, Hall Directors, Area Coordinators) assist students with making the transition to college life. The staff sponsors diverse programs to meet the needs of the student population as well as serve as advisers to the Hall Councils.

If you are seeking on campus housing for the fall semester, it is important that you apply early. The demand for housing is great and if you wait, your application will be place on a waiting list. It is not uncommon for students that are placed on the waiting list to be notified during the summer months that a housing assignment has been reserved. A recommendation; if you are placed on the waiting list is to be patient. The housing office strives to identify rooms and we will contact you as soon as a space becomes available. If you would prefer to seek other housing options such as off campus housing or to seek housing for spring semester, please stop by the Department of Residence Life Office. The office maintains a resource for off campus listings. As well as you can find out information regarding housing availability for spring semester. The housing office is located in Barrows Hall. Please feel free to contact us at 860.832.1660. ■

Tarome Alford, Director of Residence Life, CCSU

## CAMPUS OWL - Connecting Our Communities

**The Issue: Finding events and spreading the word.**



**CAMPUS OWL**

As a student, I have come to realize the fact that finding events on our campus can be at times hard, but it is even harder to find events at other universities and colleges that may also be of concern. It is to my understanding that there is an ongoing task of Universities like Central Connecticut State University, to enrich their surrounding communities. The problem that needs to be address is how to provide a *central* location for event information at various colleges and universities, so individuals can easily find events that are of relevance.

**Resolution: Identify and cataloging upcoming events.**

On December 20th, the development of a calendar system in which different departments and clubs in school systems like Central would be able to post their events, was launched. CampusOwl's aim is to help the spread of information between campus to campus, campus to community, and campus to student thereby increase awareness and attendance.

We are currently in the works of scheduling appointments with other CT higher education school systems to bring their attention to our calendar and its facilities. ■

The site can be located at [www.campusowl.com](http://www.campusowl.com).

Nana Poku. Senior, CCSU

SEMESTER IN REVIEW



**Row 1** (Images from 13th Annual Conference-Left to right)-Questions are posed to students panelists by Dr. Evelyn Phillips (on right). The Welcome Committee (right image)

**Row2** (Broteer Excavation Project) Gerald Sawyer & Janet Woodruff of ALAADS excavating in the graves (left image). CCSU Students Bill Pizzuto, Debjani Das, and Charlie Castrovinci volunteered on the project (right image). Images by John Spaulding

**Row3** A daily scene at the Center for Africana Studies. A place where mentoring and other support pillars, are developed continuously .

## CONNCAS 2007

The Center for Africana Studies at CCSU will again host its annual five week summer transitional program for high school seniors, Connecticut College Access and Success Program, (CONNCAS). This successful program is in its fourth year and has helped many high school seniors make that leap to the next level.

This year's program will run from July 2, 2007 through August 3, 2007. Participants will live on campus and will participate in preparatory classes in Math, English, Information Technology, social studies and cultural activities. The program is **free** and includes residential accommodations, classes, transportation, meals and cultural activities. Our thanks to the many faculty and staff who volunteer their time and expertise to help make this program a success.

For additional information you may contact the Center for Africana Studies: (860)832-2816 or Nana Poku (email: poku\_naa@ccsu.edu).

### Editorial Board Members

Peter LeMaire	Eugene Baten
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Cherolle Brown	Maryann Abogunde
Aja Edwards	Sola Odesina
Rasta-Sela Wright	Nana Poku

### Contact:

Marcus White Rm. 008 | (860)832-2816

## Ghana Study Abroad—THE PLACE TO BE IN 2007!

You do not want another summer to pass you by without doing anything interesting do you? The program will introduce you to all facets of Ghana, including history, culture and politics. The cost of program is approximately \$3100 and includes airfare, hotel accommodation, site visits and two meals per day. A deposit of \$500 is due by April 2, 2007. Students can apply for scholarships through the Center for International Education. Non students can also participate in the program, without registering for a course.

Ghana (July 4th—20th)

For more information, please contact Dr. Charles Mate-Kole at (860)832-3105 or Mate-kole@ccsu.edu

### EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

The internet has become a very valuable educational resource for students of all ages. It is also filled with so much information that often finding the right information is like searching for a needle in a haystack. Here we have reviewed and made a very small collection of educational "jewels" that will help enhance your educational experience. The educational resources can be found at [www.ccsu.edu/cas](http://www.ccsu.edu/cas)

#### Mathematics

**Purple Math** ([www.purplemath.com](http://www.purplemath.com)): This is an excellent entire **algebra** book online for free. It is great for review of your basic to advanced algebra, or as a textbook in its own right.

*Visual Calculus* (<http://archives.math.utk.edu/visual.calculus/index.html>) : This is an excellent **calculus** book also available free online. It is great for students and teachers as a supplement to class texts or as a review text.

#### Physics

**Physics Classroom** ([www.physicsclassroom.com](http://www.physicsclassroom.com)): This site by *Study Works* bills itself as a High School Physics Tutorial but it is an excellent supplement also to college introductory physics students. It has animations to clarify various concepts.

**How Stuff Works** ([www.howstuffworks.com](http://www.howstuffworks.com)): Have you ever wondered how anything such as your microwave oven, or your cell phone, or your immune system etc works? If you have then this is site for you!

#### Africana Resources (African and African American studies)

**AfricaHistory.net** (<http://africahistory.net/>): This site is a collection of extensive resources about Africa. It is an excellent place to start when studying any topic related to Africa.