

Nation & World

Penn State Professor Speaks at African American Museum in Philadelphia

By Robert Ripson - Lion's Eye Staff Writer - rlr283@psu.edu

Dr. Craig Stutman, adjunct professor of history for Penn State Brandywine was the lead lecturer at the African American Museum in Philadelphia (AAMP) located at 7th and Arch Streets in the Independence Hall area of Philadelphia. Dr. Stutman's presentation was supported by the AAMP and his talk centered on a prominent African American artist, Henry Ossawa Tanner.

The presentation was well attended by patrons of the arts and laypeople who were eager to hear Stutman present the early life of Tanner and what influences played a part in the development of his art. As the lecture progressed, there were those that were visiting the museum who paused from perusing the gallery art and listened intently to Stutman as he energetically spoke.

One of the key influences on Tanner's art as Stutman describes were his parents. Tanner's father, **Dr. Craig Stutman (Photo courtesy of Rob Ripson)** Benjamin Tucker Tanner was a bishop at the AME (African Methodist Episcopal) Church of Philadelphia. Both of Tanner's parents were in possession of intellectual curiosity and supported Tanner's efforts when at the young age of eight he professed his desire for the art world. Stutman supported this claim with examples of his early work which depicted zoo animals and the natural world. Although Tanner had a sickly youth, he survived to become a painter of great renown.

Stutman explained that some of the acclaim that Tanner received was his rendition of the daily life of African Americans in contrast to the stereotypical representations that the "white newspapers and magazines of the day published." One illustration that those papers which were unfortunately too common was the comical and farcical they perceived the African American life to be. One of Tanner's best paintings which interrupt these stereotypes was an 1893 oil painting titled "The Banjo Lesson." This shows a young child in the lap of an older man, the child holding the banjo receiving instruction, a warm and touching painting that emphasizes the humanity of the African American; especially during a time when that sympathy was not the felt in certain realms of the late 19th century. Tanner eventually moved to France to pursue instruction and gain prominence in the European art scene. Which he did when his work was displayed Paris.

Stutman gave an informative presentation which also included a question and answer session which followed. The question and answer session quickly turned into a lively and respectful debate into realm of how to accurately portray African Americans in the contemporary sphere which some have called post-modern art. This term is beginning to make its way around other disciplines of the social sciences as well. This is taking us away from the subject at hand, but are we getting ahead of ourselves in trying to label the time that we live in? Regardless, those that remained questioned Stutman on the merits of Tanners contributions and can we, as social scientists, depict Tanner as a man who transcended race? Should we characterize Tanner only in the context within the time period in which he lived or does his work speak to our modern world in which we live? Do we compare Tanner as a leader in African American activism and should we compare him to later activists such as Malcom X or Martin Luther King, or even among his contemporaries Ida B. Wells, just to name a few.

These questions and more were handled deftly, historically and with great respect among all who attended. Stutman facilitated a great learning experience and those that attended left with a heightened sense of awareness of the greatness that Henry Ossawa Tanner was, is, and should be remembered for.

Still No Answers in Trayvon Martin Slaying

By Matt Rodgers - Lion's Eye Staff Writer - mmm187@psu.edu

17-year-old Trayvon Martin was shot dead in Sanford, Florida in what has amounted to a "self-defense" shooting involving community watch member George Zimmerman nearly two months ago. It has now been established that Zimmerman is charged with second-degree murder.

Zimmerman called 911 when he saw a suspicious person wearing a "hoodie" wandering through his neighborhood. Official transcripts of the call show Zimmerman saying "This guy looks like he's up to no good. Or he's on drugs or something. It's raining and he's just walking around, looking about." To which 911 dispatch returns "OK, and this guy... is he black, white or Hispanic?" Zimmerman replied "He looks black."

There have been thousands of different accounts as to what "actually" happened that Sunday night into early morning Monday, but hearsay is just that, hearsay. The media has altered audio, shown pictures of Zimmerman showing no injuries which were later found to be altered. Along with the 911 tapes, here is what we know is fact.

On February 26 local police responded to a 911 call of a suspicious man walking through a gated community just after 7 pm. Sanford police arrived to find Zimmerman standing over a motionless Martin with a 9 mm handgun in his hand. Martin was declared dead on the scene.

Additional 911 calls were made by residents of the neighborhood saying there were two men fighting. One caller said "They're wrestling right in the back of my porch. The guy's yelling for help and I'm not going out." Faint crying and two loud bangs are audible in the background.

Upon initial inquiry Zimmerman told police that he had been approached by Martin who punched him in his nose before knocking him down and banging his head on concrete. It was just after this that Zimmerman shot Martin in "fear for his life."

The on-scene investigation was botched and for good reason. The police failed to administer any blood or alcohol tests on Zimmerman. Multiple officers walked through the scene which has now been declared contaminated.

When Zimmerman felt his life was in danger, under Florida's "Stand Your Ground" law, he is not criminally liable if he acted in self-defense. He is allowed by law to meet force with force, even if it is deadly force.

Titanic Legacy Continues 100 Years Later

By Dave Serpentine - Lion's Eye National & World Editor - dms5419@psu.edu

April 15 marked the 100-year anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic. It's a story most know about but most may not know why this incident is important and how it has changed society.

The RMS Titanic, nicknamed the "Unsinkable Ship," was a White Star British passenger liner that collided with an iceberg on her maiden voyage in the North Atlantic Ocean, near Newfoundland, and broke a part and sank during the early Monday morning of April 15, 1912. This voyage was suppose to travel from Southampton, England to New York City. There were 2,435 passengers and a crew of 892. The word "tragedy" has been synonymous with this event and that word can be described in many ways when discussing the Titanic.

After all of these years, the sinking still has an allure with society. One of the reasons for its importance is that this ship was known as a floating mansion; it was the most luxurious and biggest passenger liner in the world. This ship has been classified as the best representation of human society on this ship—there was the richest of the rich and the poorest of the poor on board. Most of the first-class passengers that boarded this ship were either millionaires, entrepreneurs, or political figures. In addition, there were many European immigrants who sailed on the Titanic hoping to start a new life in America. And the cruel lesson this incident taught everyone is that no matter the social class, when a disaster strikes no one is truly safe. In an interesting fact, famous businessmen J.P. Morgan and Milton Hershey were suppose to be on that voyage. In another interesting fact, lookout Fredrick Fleet who gave the iceberg warning later admitted that if he had binoculars, which were lost at the time, he would have spotted the iceberg.

Another reason why people find this subject interesting is because of the irony of the situation. When this ship was built, it was billed as the "Unsinkable Ship." And the whole irony of the situation bewildered people and made people curious to know how and why this ship failed. People thought this ship was too good to be true in regards to how posh it was and when the disaster struck, that too was also too good to be true. The disaster hit hard with many people because during this time, industry and technology was taking over the world and people began to put their trust and faith in highly advanced equipment. Another reason for its importance is this was before any of the world wars, so the world really hasn't this much innocent death and bloodshed before. The sinking taught society, shipbuilders and suppliers an important lesson—have as many lifeboats as possible, make sure the ship is built properly, and modern technology can fail. Years after the sinking, people debated on the ship's design and why ship the split. What researchers have found is that society has been giving the wrong impression and Titanic was not a weak ship. In fact, this ship was very sturdy while having a 300 foot gash following the collision. Titanic's shipbuilder Thomas Andrews predicted the ship would sink in a hour or so, instead the Titanic lasted over two hours and there was enough time to set up and use all of the lifeboats. Another reason why society seems to be interested in Titanic's story is that this was a real life incident and Hollywood could not have scripted it any better.

To commemorate the Titanic's anniversary, the MS Balmoral became a Titanic memorial cruise and it set sail on April 8 and it retraced the same course as the doomed voyage. This ship had a memorial service on the ship on the exact date and time and location when the Titanic struck the iceberg and when it sunk.

So, a century later, Titanic's story still fascinates and educates society and there are many more stories and discoveries of the incident that are still being released.

KONY 2012 Update

By Katy Lola Kulakowski - Lion's Eye Staff Writer - kzk5290@psu.edu

Since the launch of the viral video, KONY 2012, many critiques have deemed the movement as just another white western bandwagon brigade. The Invisible Children organization, despite facing many mass media blows about over-simplifying the situation and providing elementary methods, hasn't backed down. Invisible Children has recently released a second film, KONY 2012 II, and the critiques don't seem to be haggling the campaign any longer. Perhaps, their negativity was a passing fad. In KONY 2012 II, the facts are presented more clearly and various questions are addressed. Ben Keesey admits that the idea behind KONY 2012 is not new, and that Invisible Children is not the only organization geared towards ending LRA violence and that they were not the first. Keesey openly states that the goal of KONY 2012 is to make the guerilla warfare known to the public and stopping LRA violence, which all started with "Making Kony Famous."

