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P.O. BOX 250, LEWISBURG, PA

CARE NEWSLETTER

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### *From the desk of Doug Sturm...*

#### Shocking Rise in Hate Group Activity in US

The Spring 2009 issue of *Intelligence Report* (Spring 2009) discusses a troubling rise in hate group activity in the US over recent years.

In his editorial Mark Potok, while acknowledging that Barack Obama's election to the presidency is "a sign of how far our nation has come in embracing...diversity," would not have us neglect the strong presence of countervailing forces at work, including "a more than 50% jump in the number of hate groups" emerging throughout the nation since 2000. That number peaked in 2008 at 926. Relatedly, a government study reports that "some 21,000 people a year are victimized by hate crimes, the vast majority of them motivated by race or ethnicity."

Speculating about the effects of increasing diversity in American culture, Robert Putnam (according to Potok) conjectures that "in the short to medium run, immigration and ethnic diversity tend to reduce social solidarity, while in the long run...immigration strengthens societies by enhancing creativity and economic development." Potok notes that, as demographic projections point to "the loss of a white majority in 2042," we may for some time witness an increase in white anger among those who consider the U.S. as a specifically white nation.

If Potok's perspective is cogent, what might CARE do in our region to advance the cause of mutual respect and equality?

#### Crossing Boundaries through Direct Dialogue & Policy Convergence

Despite the bold opening words of the U.S. Constitution—"We, the People"—the body politic in the U.S. has been, from its beginning, deeply divided. And yet American culture always has been haunted with a determination to "form a more perfect union."

That determination was the central theme of Barack Obama's March 2008 campaign speech responding to the political fracas over Jeremiah Wright's critique of America (<http://my.barackobama.com/page/content/hisownwords>). Newly appointed Attorney General Eric Holder expressed the same determination in his remarks during a February 2009 Black History Month Program at the Department of Justice. (<http://www.usdoj.gov/aq/speeches/2009/aq-speech-090218.html>).

These two presentations, both worthy of continuing deliberation, offer specific ways of crossing the boundaries that separate us in this land: (1) direct dialogue and (2) political collaboration.



Arguing the case for direct dialogue, Holder insists that “we, average Americans, simply do not talk enough with each other about race.” But to stimulate such talk, “we must feel comfortable enough with one another, and tolerant of each other, to have frank conversations about the racial matters that continue to divide us.” He urges that to “come to grips” with our racial past we must “foster a period of dialogue among the races.” In the absence of such dialogue, we shall continue to live in our several “race protected cocoons” and thereby fail to comprehend how entangled our identities are with each other. Direct dialogue is a necessity for us to comprehend who we are as a people and how we might form a more perfect union.

Presenting the case for political collaboration, Obama proposes that, whatever our racial or ethnic identity, our destinies are conjoined. If we are to create a more perfect union, we must endeavor to cooperate with each other in response to the critical needs of our time. Black and brown and white, we must work together to improve the lot of all—in health care, education, housing, economic opportunity, and environmental sustainability. To do this, we must surmount the anger and bitterness that perpetuate the divisions among us.

So, a question to members of CARE: What can and should this association do to foster direct dialogue and policy collaboration?

### “State of Black America 2009: A Message to the President”

The National Urban League released its annual “State of Black America” in March. This year’s theme was “A Message to the President.”

The League initiated this series of annual reports in 1976, each issue presenting an overview of how Black Americans are faring within the US, along with a set of articles addressed to a particular theme.

Go to: [www.nul.org/thestateofblackamerica.html](http://www.nul.org/thestateofblackamerica.html) for more information. Printed copies of the whole text are available as well for \$19.95

*You can contact Doug Sturm at [sturm@bucknell.edu](mailto:sturm@bucknell.edu).*

### Upcoming Events in the Community and Beyond

#### CARE TABLE at the Lewisburg Arts Festival – Help Needed

CARE will be a staffing a table downtown at the Lewisburg Arts Festival on April 25. Volunteers are needed to sit at the table and greet interested visitors.

Volunteers are asked to commit to shifts of one hour at the table. It is advantageous for us to have more than one volunteer for each shift. The fair runs from about 9 am to 5 pm. Help is also needed for put-up and take down. We will need to utilize our CARE banners, secure a tent, if possible, and provide a table and two chairs. A children’s art activity would be welcome if someone is willing to conduct it.

Please notify Iris Rifkin-Gainer at [irifkgai@bucknell.edu](mailto:irifkgai@bucknell.edu) or Cindy Peltier at [Peltier@bucknell.edu](mailto:Peltier@bucknell.edu) if you are willing and able to participate in this effort.

#### Recruiting Help to Plan for Puerto Rican Picnic

Anyone interested in helping to coordinate the Puerto Rican Picnic in Sunbury's Marina in July, please contact Margie at 524-2100.



### Fiesta de Mayo Celebration in Milton

The Milton community is making plans to host the second annual “Fiesta de Mayo,” a celebration of Hispanic/Latino culture and connections with other cultures! Fiesta de Mayo celebrates the rich diversity in the Susquehanna Valley. “It’s really just a lot of fun. It’s an opportunity to enjoy food and a variety of crafts, music, and dance, and to socialize,” said Joe Rosa, co-founder and chairman of Fiesta de Mayo.

The event happens on Saturday, May 9, in downtown Milton. Vendors and exhibitors open to the public at 10 am and should remain open until 6 pm or so depending on the vendor. Still, it might be possible to get a cup of coffee early in the morning.

The purpose of the event is to build bridges between different cultures through a time of interaction, food and fun.

This event happens rain or shine!

As with the Arts Festival in April we will need volunteers to commit to shifts of one hour at the CARE table. It is advantageous for us to have more than one volunteer for each shift. Help is also needed for put-up and take down.

### Williamsport Area Events:

Lycoming College Jazz Ensemble Concert, Clarke Chapel, April 17. 8:00 pm. Works by Chick Corea, Kris Berg, Adrien Re, Les Hooper and others.

WSO-Pops: "From Buenos Aires to New York" The Williamsport Symphony Orchestra at the Community Arts Center, May 12 7:30 pm. Composer, educator and pianist Mike Garson will perform. Tickets can be purchased online at [www.calive.com](http://www.calive.com) or by phone at (570) 326-2424 or (800) 432-9382.

"Beyond the Wall: Homeless Zone" Free Movie Premiere, Community Arts Center, May 18, 7:30 pm.

Dr. Ben Carson, YWCA Kickoff on May 20. Free lecture starts at 6:00 pm, followed by Q&A session. Reception starts at 4:45 pm and is a ticketed event. Tickets for the reception can be obtained at the YWCA.

### Pennsylvania's Human Relations Commission issues a request to CARE

Since its beginning, CARE has been in regular contact with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, especially with Ann Marie Van Dyke on the staff of the Commission’s Education and Community Services Division. Among other duties, Ms. Van Dyke collaborates with Pennsylvania’s Interagency Task Force on Civil Tensions, including conflicts concerning racial and ethnic discrimination.

After Ms. Van Dyke received a message from CARE about happenings in Sunbury involving tensions among Latino, Black, and white groups, she sent a request to the CARE steering committee: “We do not have the good clipping service that we used to so we often do depend on our friends out there to keep us informed. It would be very helpful if someone in your group regularly watched the news for matters of interest to PHRC and referred them to us.”

*Anyone interested in this assignment should contact CARE’s steering committee.*



## STORIES OF THE SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY at Bucknell

**“Cultures at the Confluence— Environmental Humanities and the Susquehanna Valley”**

**“The Knox Mine Disaster,” Tues. 4/7, 7 p.m., Smith Library**  
Kenneth Wolensky, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission;  
responder Diana Di Stefano (History) Tues. April 7, 7 p.m., Smith Library

**“Visions of the Susquehanna,” Thurs. 4/23, 12-1:30 p.m.**  
**Traditional Reading Room**

Mike Payne (English Emeritus) on Joseph Priestley, Carmen Gillespie (English) on Toni Morrison, Steve Jordan (Biology) on Joseph Smith, Alf Siewers (English) on James Fenimore and Susan Cooper, Mary Hirst (Ole Bull State Park) on Ole Bull’s Oleana; moderator David Myers (President’s Office) and responder Katherine Faulk (German and Humanities)

**John Hope Franklin, Black Historian and Advocate, Dies at 94**

John Hope Franklin’s studies of the place of African Americans in the history of the United States have been pivotal in expanding our understanding of this nation. Franklin “often argued that historians have an important role in shaping policy, a position he put into practice when he worked with [Thurgood] Marshall’s team of lawyers in their effort to strike down segregation in the landmark 1954 case *Brown v. Board of Education*, which outlawed the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ in the nation’s public schools” (*New York Times obituary*, March 26).

Upon receipt of the Kluge Prize for the Study of Humanities from the Library of Congress, Franklin remarked that he had “long struggled to understand how it is that we could seek a land of freedom for the people of Europe and, at the very same time, establish a social and economic system that enslaved people who happen not to be from Europe.”

He declared that his life’s work was dedicated to presenting “the case for change in keeping with the express purpose of attaining the promised goals of equality for all peoples.” To demonstrate our gratefulness for Franklin’s contributions toward that end, we need to join in that continuing cause, however elusive it might be.

