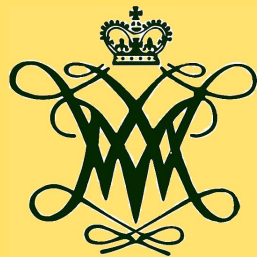


# VOICES

Office of Diversity and Community Initiatives



April, 2012

Welcome to the April issue of VOICES. As the academic year comes to a close there are various programs and activities taking place. This issue highlights diversity initiatives around campus and in the community. I hope you enjoy reading and if you have submissions, please email [diversity@wm.edu](mailto:diversity@wm.edu).  
*One Tribe. One Family, Chon*

### ODCI presents Webinar Opportunities

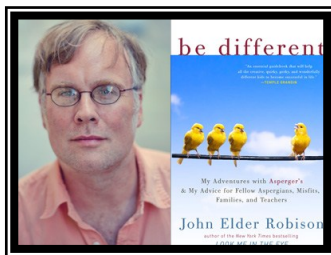
All webinars will begin at 3:00 pm and will be held in the Recreation Center Conference Room. Please RSVP to [diversity@wm.edu](mailto:diversity@wm.edu) to reserve space to participate.

Thursday, April 12, 2012: *How to Create a Safe Space Program with Campus Police*

Thursday, April 19, 2012: *To Ask or Not to Ask: LGBT Identity Questions on National Research and College Forms*

Wednesday, April 25, 2012: *LGBT College Students: Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Other Drugs*

Thursday, April 26, 2012: *Shining Light on the Whole Spectrum: How to Embrace Bisexual, Pansexual, Fluid and Questioning Students through Programming and Practice*  
-Sponsored by the Center for Student Diversity



## John Elder Robison set to visit William and Mary

On Tuesday, April 17 the College of William and Mary is pleased to welcome John Elder Robison. Robison is a New York Times Best Selling Author. Mr. Robison, an author and frequent lecturer about his life with Asperger's, blogs for *Psychology Today* and is an adjunct faculty member at Elms College in Chicopee, Massachusetts. He is the author of *Look Me In The Eye: My Life with Asperger's, a memoir of growing up different that was published in 2007* and most recently, *Be Different: Adventures of a Free-Range Aspergian*. Today, Mr. Robison serves on boards and committees of the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control, Autism Speaks, and a number of universities and colleges. He has also developed graduate courses that are now part of the autism curriculum at Elms College in Chicopee, Massachusetts. According to Robison, "After being introduced to Asperger's Syndrome, the knowledge changed my life forever. It took some time, and a lot of hard work, but the knowledge of how and why I am different transformed my life." Asperger's syndrome is one form of autism. The collection of differences are called the autism spectrum. Autism is at its heart a communication disorder or difference. Some autistic people have difficulty speaking, or understanding language. Asperger people tend to be blind to the unspoken cues of other people. The visit is being sponsored by the Neurodiversity Working Group chaired by Karin Wulf and Warrenetta Mann. College offices supporting the visit are the Office of Student Affairs, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Department of History, the Roy R. Charles Center, the PELE Special Education Advocacy Group of the William and Mary Law School, and the Neuroscience Program. The lecture will be held at 4:00 pm in Andrews Hall 101 and is open to the public. Robison's books will be available for purchase and signing.

## I Am W&M Week

**I AM  
W&M**

It's time to tell our stories! I AM W&M is a diversity campaign organized by the Student Assembly with collaboration from a number of individuals and campus organizations. It is dedicated to celebrating the identities and personal stories of all members of the Tribe community while engaging in the story of our College's history, values, traditions, and changes. The goal is to expand the definition of diversity to include every member of the William & Mary community! Consider participating in one or all of the events listed below:

April 7	7:30 pm	Sarah Kay's Project V.O.I.C.E in Commonwealth Auditorium
April 10	4:00 pm	Lemon Project Panel in Chesapeake A
April 11	6:00 pm	Diversity in the Social/Greek Realm Panel in Tidewater A
April 12	4:00 pm	Community Service Panel in Tidewater A
April 13	3:00 pm	Gay Pride Festival in the Crim Dell Meadow
April 14	7:30 pm	Mosaic Concert in Commonwealth Auditorium

*I Am W&M T-shirts will be sold on April 9th and April 14th for \$5 in the Sadler Center. Please contact Brianna May at [bemay@email.wm.edu](mailto:bemay@email.wm.edu) for more information.*

## *Reves International Affairs Lecture Series Spring 2012*

The Reves Center is pleased to announce the Spring 2012 International Affairs Lecture Series.

**Thursday, April 5 - Thomas Christensen, Princeton University, "China's Foreign Relations."**

**Friday, April 6 - McSwain-Walker Lecture:** Vladislav Zubok, Temple University, "Did the U.S. Lose Russia? America and Russia as the Reciprocal 'Other.'"

**Monday, April 9 - George Taylor Ross Lecture:** Jeffrey Kopstein, University of Toronto, "Why Neighbors Kill Neighbors: The Political Origins of Anti-Jewish Violence."

**Wednesday, April 18 – Arvind Subramanian, Senior Fellow, Peterson Institute for International Economics, "Eclipse: The Rise of China."**

Further details of each event will be printed closer to the date of each lecture.

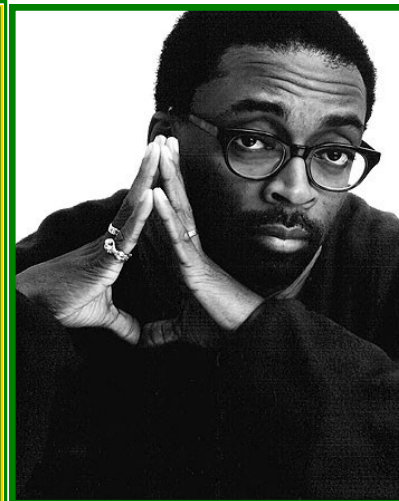
### *Black Law Student Association holds Annual Oliver Hill Scholarship Dinner*



Over 100 people attended the scholarship dinner named in honor of noted Civil Rights Attorney, Oliver Hill. The event featured a keynote address by the Honorable Sandy Conyers, alumni reflections, and a host of awards and presentations. The recipient of the 2012-13 Oliver Hill Scholarship was Pam Palmer, a 2L student from Arkansas. The dinner culminated a full week of activities sponsored by BLSA to include the Candlelight Vigil for Trayvon Martin, Fashion Show, and Admitted Students Day. Congratulations on all your events! Best wishes to the new 2012-13 Executive Board led by president Diana Cooper and thanks to the outgoing Board and president Jonathan Anderson.

### *Spike Lee visits William and Mary*

Alma Mater Productions (AMP) brought Filmmaker and actor Spike Lee to campus on March 27th. In his speech entitled "An Evening with Spike Lee: America Through My Lens," Lee spoke about his college experience and the importance of education. He shared with a packed audience the importance of following your passion—doing what you love. Lee answered several questions from the audience related to his movies, the New York Knicks, and his upcoming documentary about Brazil. An unexpected visit with Williamsburg musician, Bruce Hornsby added excitement to the evening as they shared memories of their many collaborations.



## William and Mary Theatre Productions

**Disappearance:** April 10-14 at 8pm, April 14 at 2:00 pm in PBK Studio. \$5

Written by Keralino Sandorovich and translated by Wayne Lamers, *Disappearance* was first performed in December 2004 at Kinokonuya Hall in Tokyo as a production of Nylon 100C under the playwright's own direction. In January 2005, the company took the play on a national tour that included stops in Morioka, and Niigata--two cities deeply impacted by the 2011 tsunami. This is a magical, black comedy romance, science fiction play. Proceeds from the play will be donated to Japan Recovery Initiative. The play is directed by Professor Francis Tanglao-Aguas.



**RUINED:** April 19-22 at 8:00 pm, PBK Hall \$10, \$5 for WM Students



How does one survive on the edge of conflict? That question is at the heart of Lynn Nottage's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, *Ruined*. Mama Nadi runs a bar and brothel in the Democratic

Republic of Congo, a country torn apart by a ravenous war against the land, the communities and the women who inhabit them. But is Mama Nadi protecting or profiting from the women she shelters? Inspired by interviews with Congolese women, *Ruined* is a thought-provoking commentary on exploitation in various forms and a testament to the strength of the human spirit in the face of adversity. The play is directed by Professor Artisia Green.



### *Confucius Institute Grand Opening on April 16th*

The William & Mary Confucius Institute (WMCI) is charged with promoting Chinese language and culture at the College and in the Central and Southeastern regions of Virginia. The WMCI was established in 2011 and will be dedicated in 2012, joining a network of over 300 Confucius Institutes worldwide. It is the second Confucius Institute at a public university in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The WMCI is a collaborative program in partnership with Beijing Normal University (BNU) and the Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban), a public institution affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Education. For additional information please visit [www.wm.edu/sites/confuciusinstitute](http://www.wm.edu/sites/confuciusinstitute).

### *Office of Admission Selects Class of 2016*

The Undergraduate Admission Office has been hard at work crafting the class of 2016. While it is too early to know what the class will look like on move in day this fall, the Office received over 13,000 applications- a new record for the College. The applicant pool and the number of admitted students were more diverse than ever. There will be a number of Admitted Student events during the month of April including the Day for Admitted Students (April 14th) and myWM Mondays. We expect hundreds of visitors exploring campus in an effort to make final enrollment decisions. The Multicultural Recruitment Team will hold a collaborative outreach event with UVA and VT on April 21 in Hampton Roads. The program will educate parents and their students about the admission process and life on a college campus. –*Stacy Richardson, Associate Dean of Admission*



**Congratulations to  
Debbie Sydow  
Richard Bland College President**



**Congratulations to  
Katherine Conley  
W&M Dean of Arts and Sciences**

### *Congratulations to Nekisa Cooper, '99*

*Nekisa Cooper, a W&M Government major and standout basketball player, recently won the Independent Film Spirit Award for producing "Pariah." The film tells the story of a Brooklyn teenager juggling conflicting identities that risks friendship, heartbreak, and family in a desperate search for sexual expression. The movie comes out on DVD on April 24th. Congratulations Nekisa!*



## My fond memories of the International Student Leadership Conference

*Submitted by Lopamudra Das*



Finally the D- day arrived. I was so excited to be going to the International Student Leadership Conference (ISLC) hosted by James Madison University for the weekend (March 16 & 17). I had been looking forward to the event especially after the great experience last year. Four of my teammates from the International Student Advisory Board (ISAB) were participating too, all wonderful people, we would have an amazing journey together.

We started Friday afternoon; it was a perfect day, slightly cloudy and warm. Four of us, Wendy, Chelsea, Kacha and I were in the car. Wendy was driving, Chelsea beside her and I was at the back gazing out of the window in between the conversations, music, and munching of chips. The sights became different quickly soon after we left Williamsburg. All around there were varying shades of green that kept changing rapidly as we moved along further.

It was a three hour trip to Harrisonburg, which is nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains and the scenery was beautiful. The trees were beginning to get green, somewhere in the midst there were bursts of colorful spring blossoms, a bit of purple here, smudges of pink and yellow...I was charmed. I also remembered my days in Siliguri. The picturesque mountains and the tea garden, reminded me of old times back home.

We stopped in between for a coffee, and reached our venue by 6pm. There was dinner waiting, and more than 200 participants buzzed around the place. We had pasta, chicken, cookies, and salad to eat. Then we were taken to watch a documentary, "Pray the Devil Back to Hell." It was an intense movie, based on the life of Ms. Leymah Gwobee (the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize Winner) who was the keynote speaker the next day.

Before I watched the documentary, I'd only heard of the civil war in Liberia in the papers, and it was not quite real to me. The movie depicted the horrors of war, the brutal and terrible events that took place, and the helplessness and frustration of the common people. The war in Liberia lasted 14 yrs, under a tyrannical and ruthless ruler. It was through the peace movement initiated by the women that the pressure was gradually built up to overthrow him and bring peace to the country. And this movement was organized by Ms. Gwobee, who led thousands of women braving bullets and oppression to create a revolution. The challenge was tremendous, and she made it happen. Therefore, the theme for the conference this year was "Lead the Change", in her words we should not wait for a "Gandhi, Mandela or King. We should be our own Gandhi, our own Mandela, our own King" and lead the change we want to see.

Many were in tears after it was over, and we could empathize with her after we saw the movie. There was a discussion after, and then we had a group activity. The group activity was a game designed such that we could feel the effects of power and oppression. Through a sequence of trading numbered coupons, we were divided into smaller groups, and then each group was given some powers. It happened that I got into the one with the highest power, and then we could layout new rules for the game and everyone had to follow. Not surprisingly though, once we were in that group we had the same urge to remain there with our privileges and made unfair laws to prevent the others from winning. The game ended with other groups protesting heatedly, and then the entire purpose of the game was explained by the organizers. It was a nice learning experience.

Ms. Gwobee gave her speech the next morning and the audience listened intently as she narrated her story, and it was hugely moving and inspiring. There was a thundering applause when she finished, and we were eager to hear more from this amazingly courageous, brilliant and motivating speaker. The question and answer session lasted for another hour during which we came to know more about her life and future vision. I admire her strength and courage, and I'm fortunate to have met her in person and to also have a picture taken with her!



In the evening we had a tea break and then time to explore around a little bit before dinner. We went walking through the serene and beautiful campus of James Madison University, and stopped by a lake to feed ducks. Standing on a small wooden bridge to feed the ducks below, we watched the evening sunshine glimmering on the waters, trees swaying gently in the breeze, children playing in the garden and the sound of bagpipes playing in the distance. It was mesmerizing, but we had to leave soon to get ready for the final event.

Dressing in traditional costume was encouraged, so I wore the colorful lehenga (Indian costume similar to a flowing skirt) which was a birthday present from my father. I get to wear it very rarely, and this was a good occasion. There were others dressed in their traditional costumes too and the venue was very pretty. The menu was chicken with rice, cheesecake, and a cup of coffee. Our dinner was served with live music playing in the background, and it was also time to say goodbye to some new friends whom I had met throughout the day.

I was sad that it was over so soon, but happy with all that I had learnt and experienced during this brief period. Interacting with people across the country, all around the world, I felt a strong connection and resonance that has greatly enriched my perspective. Ten thousand miles away from home I saw the differences fade in the similarities, and then become strengths. I am truly grateful to everyone who made this happen, thanks a lot!

*Lopamudra Das is a graduate student in Applied Science from India. She is a member of the W&M International Student Advisory Board. This is the second year; the Reeves Center has sent members of the board to the International Student Leadership Conference hosted by James Madison University.*

## Community Group Mentors BLSA Members



Led by President John Anderson, MD/JD, 16 members and spouses of the Epsilon Delta chapter of Sigma Pi Phi fraternity met with members of the W.C. Jefferson chapter of the Black Law Students at William & Mary in a

mentoring session. The members included a retired general in the US Army, retired business executives, and business owners. The program is supportive of the fraternity's efforts in assisting young students and is consistent with Dr. Shaun Parker's work on helping black males to become successes. Topics covered included networking, mentoring, balancing work and personal lives, behavior in the work place, especially with those not in important positions. At one point the spouses took the women to a private room to discuss the challenges faced by women in the work place. The students have asked that this session be repeated so that more of their members can attend.

—Prepared by Robert Taylor

## Former Poet Laureate Rita Dove speaks at Kimball Theatre

As a part of the English Department's Patrick Hayes Writer's Festival, Pulitzer Prize winner Rita Dove read from her works on March 29th at Kimball Theatre. Her publication, *Thomas and Beulah* won the 1987 Pulitzer



Prize for Poetry. In 1993, Rita Dove was appointed to a two-year term as Poet Laureate of the United States and Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress. She was the youngest and the first African-American, to receive the highest official honor in American letters. In the fall of 1994, she read her poem, *Lady Freedom Among Us*, at the ceremony

commemorating the 200th anniversary of the U.S. Capitol. Ms. Dove is the Commonwealth Professor of English at the University of Virginia. Her most recent publication is entitled, *Sonata Mulattica*. In 2011, President Barak Obama presented Dove with the National Medal of Arts.

## Religion and Culture—Did you know?

### Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Officially proclaimed "Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month" by President Barack Obama, is a celebration of the culture, traditions, and history of Asians Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States. Congress passed a joint Congressional Resolution in 1978 to commemorate Asian American Heritage Week during the first week of May. This date was chosen because two important anniversaries occurred during this time: the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants in America on May 7, 1843 and the completion of the transcontinental railroad (by many Chinese laborers) on May 10, 1869. In 1990 Congress voted to expand it from a week to a month long celebration and in May 1992, the month of May was permanently designated as "Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month." Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month is celebrated during the Month of May, but it is celebrated in April at the College.



### Easter

**Easter** is the central holiday for Christians. According to the Canonical gospels, Jesus rose from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion. His resurrection is celebrated on Easter Day or Easter Sunday. The resurrection established Jesus as the powerful Son of God and is cited as proof that God will judge the world in righteousness. Easter marks the end of Lent, a forty-day period of fasting, prayer, and penance. The last week of the Lent is called Holy Week, and it contains Good Friday, commemorating the crucifixion and death of Jesus. Easter customs vary across the world and throughout different branches of Christianity, but decorating Easter eggs is a common custom. In the United States and other Western countries, customs such as egg hunting and the Easter Bunny are also popular.

### Passover

**Passover** is a Jewish holiday that focuses on the story of the Exodus, in which the ancient Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt. Passover begins on the 15th day of the month of Nisan according the Jewish calendar and is celebrated for seven or eight days. It is one of the most widely observed Jewish holidays. When the Pharaoh freed the Israelites, it is said that they left in such a hurry that they could not wait for bread dough to rise (leaven). Therefore, for the duration of Passover no leavened bread is eaten. *Matzah* (flat unleavened bread) is often eaten in place of bread products. It is tradition for Jewish families to gather on the first night of Passover for a special dinner called a seder. During this meal, the story of the Exodus from Egypt is retold using a special text called the Haggadah. **A community seder will be held on April 6th at 6:00 pm in the Tidewater Room of the Sadler Center - this Seder is open to the entire campus community and will be lead by Rabbi David Katz of Temple Beth El.**

