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Letter from the President

**Kenneth P. Serbin,
President, Brazilian Studies Association
University of San Diego**

Dear BRASA Colleagues:

BRASA is an organization that continues to grow and become ever more dynamic thanks to your support and participation. Our success shined brilliantly at the Eighth International Congress of BRASA, held at Vanderbilt University from October 13-16, 2006. BRASA VIII revealed the full vigor of Brazilian studies in the United States with 90 excellent panels and other events attended by a total of more than 400 individuals from the U.S., Brazil, and other countries. The highlight of BRASA VIII came on the evening of October 14 as we honored Professor Thomas Skidmore with BRASA's first Lifetime Contribution Award before a packed auditorium of former Skidmore students, dignitaries, and conference participants. During BRASA VIII we welcomed Professor Peggy Sharpe as our new vice president (for the term 2006-2008) and president-elect (2008-2010) and also five new members of the Executive Committee (EC) and four alternates. For more on BRASA VIII and the new EC please visit www.brasa.org.

At the October 13 EC meeting we heard from outgoing EC member Chris Dunn and Valerie McGinley

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University of San Diego

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BRASAnotes

Editor

Emanuelle Oliveira

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Letter from the President

(continued from page 1)

Marshall, Director of Development and External Programs of the Roger Thayer Stone Center for Latin American Studies at Tulane University, about the exciting preparations for BRASA's Ninth International Congress. Under Chris's able and enthusiastic leadership Tulane is planning the congress for March 27-30, 2008. In December 2006 Tulane opened a new campus center that can accommodate our panels and other activities. After the Katrina disaster New Orleans is recovering its cultural vibrancy and will serve as an attractive backdrop for the congress. Judy Bieber of the University of New Mexico has graciously agreed to head the program committee for BRASA IX.

The EC voted unanimously to hold our Tenth International Congress in Brasília in 2010. The planned site is the Centro de Convenções de Brasília, a spacious and recently renovated facility that regularly holds major national and international conferences. The Centro is located in the Eixo Monumental just west of the city's hotel sector. Brasa X will coincide with the 50th anniversary of the inauguration of Brasília.

The EC approved my proposal to establish a BRASA travel grant for promising new students in Brazilian studies. Watch the website and the BRASA Digest for competition guidelines. We will be strategizing on

ways to endow this exciting new program. This initiative became possible because of BRASA's improved financial situation under executive director Marshall Eakin's efficient administration.

On October 16 representatives from different colleges and universities voted to form the Consortium on Brazilian Studies (COBRAS). An outcome of the 2005 BRASA-sponsored Conference on the Future of Brazilian Studies in the United States, COBRAS will serve as a means of creating institutional linkages to BRASA and as a way of establishing a network among colleges and universities that are developing Brazilian Studies. Marshall Eakin and former president James Green and will serve as national coordinators of COBRAS, which will initially be housed at Brown University. The next meeting of COBRAS will take place at the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) Congress in Montreal in September 2007.

At the BRASA luncheon on October 16 I outlined the objectives of my term. BRASA will continue on the firm path established by immediate past president Timothy Power and other past presidents and so finely executed by Marshall Eakin. We will move ahead with many of the recommendations of the final report of the Conference on the Future of Brazilian Studies, including the construction of an internet portal that will make BRASA the premiere source on Brazilian studies. We will study the establishment of a section for graduate and college students. We will also consider

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setting up a section of BRASA for high school teachers and others not affiliated with a college or university. We are instituting a human rights task force to monitor the problem of visa acquisition for scholars moving in both directions between Brazil and the United States and to monitor and report on the violations of human rights in Brazil and the violation of the human rights of Brazilians in the United States. I believe it is necessary to broaden our membership base by bringing in scholars from under-represented fields such as economics and business and by building ties to other organizations and groups who have a profound interest in Brazil. Finally, we are exploring the formation of a BRASA fundraising initiative in order to further strengthen our financial base.

We have a very busy agenda in the following months, especially because BRASA IX is now only six months away. Here are some important dates to keep in mind:

- * **January-February 2008:** BRASA elections for new vice president and new members of the EC.
- * **March 27-30, 2008:** BRASA IX, Tulane.

I close by thanking you all for your support and ideas. I want to encourage every one of you to become involved in BRASA by running for office, volunteering to serve on committees and task forces, sharing your concerns and ideas, proposing panels and papers for our congresses, and

joining in a new era of advocacy of Brazilian studies.

Um abraço,

Kenneth P. Serbin
President, BRASA

Destaque BRASA

John Burdick
Syracuse University

My name is John Burdick. I began my intellectual career by studying religious history as an undergraduate at the University of Michigan, where I graduated in 1979 after completing an honors thesis on the ideas of death and salvation in the writings of Martin Luther. I went on to earn a Master's degree in social history at Yale University in 1982. I planned to pursue a doctorate there, and was poised to defend a proposal on the transition from slave to free labor in the tobacco industry in North Carolina, when I realized that I wanted to spend my time interviewing living rather than dead people. I moved to the discipline of anthropology in 1983 and began my doctoral studies at City University of New York, under the supervision of Eric Wolf. At the time I was very involved in solidarity work with the revolutions of Central America, especially Nicaragua, and feeling quite romantic about liberation theology. I was eager to go to Nicaragua to witness the Christian base communities at work

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bringing about the revolution. But it was hard to get research access to Nicaragua. Brazil, in contrast, was very easy to visit, and the progressive Catholic movement there was in full swing. I went to Brazil for the first time in 1985.

For the next few years, until 1988, I conducted research on the competition between the progressive Catholics, Protestants and practitioners of umbanda. (That work was published in 1993 as *Looking for God in Brazil*.) I completed the PhD in 1990 and in 1992, after a couple of years teaching in the CUNY system in NYC, I moved with my wife Judy and our one-year-old son Ben to take up a position at Syracuse University. There I began to work on creating a program to place student researchers into the local community to conduct action research. This has been an immensely exciting and challenging undertaking, which drew me deeply into the grassroots activist community of Central New York. I also began a new project in Brazil on race and religion. Between 1993

Photograph: John Burdick



and 1995 I built a research team in Rio de Janeiro and when I finally got funded was able to carry out extensive research in 1996 on racial ideas in pentecostalism, progressive Catholicism and the devotion to the slave saint Anastacia. (That project was published in 1998 as *Blessed Anastacia*.)

From 1998 to 2004 I continued to build the community research project at Syracuse, and became involved in the peace and justice

movement the local level. In 2001-2002 I went on leave and wrote another book about the Catholic Church's evolution since the 1980s. (published as *Legacies of Liberation*) Since 2003 I have been involved in my most challenging project to date, the effort to understand the social force of music on political mobilization. I have been conducting a study in São Paulo in which I compare the ideological views about race of three types of evangelical Christian musicians (gospel rap, black gospel and gospel samba), to see to what extent some kinds of musical practices foster stronger race militancy than others. I was on

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leave in 2005 gathering data for this project and am now at work trying to make sense of it all. In the meantime, I direct about a dozen doctoral students and do my best to keep students bridging the divides between the University and the community, and between academia and activism. I enjoy living in beautiful central New York, with my wife Judy (currently an assistant attorney general of the State of New York), my son Ben (16 years old), my daughter Molly (12 years old) and our extraordinary beagle-hound Fred. ■

Texto em Debate

Black Identity Politics in a Surprising Place

John Burdick

The last decade has seen astonishingly rapid changes in black identity politics in Brazil. If someone had told me in the mid-1990s that ten years later affirmative action in public universities would be both hotly debated and in the process of implementation, a major television network dedicated to black issues would be on the air, a national secretariat would have as its mission to dismantle white supremacy, and that a federal law would mandate the training of a whole generation of high school

teachers in Afro-Brazilian history and culture, I would have thought he was a lunatic. Yet he would have been right on all counts.

Yet the legitimization of the public debate about race and racism is really only the first step in the long hard struggle against the dominance of Brazilian society by the phenotypically European. There is still a long haul between creating spaces for public debate and nurturing deeper changes in belief, attitude, and worldview. Racism is an extremely tough weed to uproot: its prickly leaves may be cut, but deep dendritic roots remain. Changing attitudes about color and phenotype, altering Eurocentric standards of beauty, taking pride in African ancestry, changing the presumption of white privilege and superiority—all these are battles that must be fought, in part, on the terrain of everyday life—in the ways people understand history, the way they think about and understand the places in the lives, how they imagine and look at their bodies, why they believe God created people of different colors. While the political struggle against racism in Brazil has entered a new phase, the cultural struggle has only just begun.

In this struggle it is crucial to listen carefully to all voices, especially new ones, that “black gospel music”, which took off in the early 1990s, has been fertile ground for the development of an everyday, deeply rooted black pride and explicit anti-racism. Among the forty black gospel artists I got to know in São Paulo between 2003-2006,

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almost all expressed agreement with one or more of the following ideas: the need to develop a black Christian theology; the desirability of creating a church with black leadership; the importance of getting the church to teach black history and nurture black self-esteem; and the need for churches to advocate for race-based affirmative action. I should point out that the phrase “expressed agreement” does not convey the dedication of many of these musicians to these ideas. Isabeh, a teacher of the black gospel singing style, has recently hosted in his home conversations and reflection about the interconnections between Christianity, blackness, and music. He now regularly packs audiences of young Christians into day-long workshops on the history of black music, in which he talks about its connections to US social history, from the role of spirituals in slave resistance to the role of freedom songs in the civil rights movement. For several months in 2004, Sergio Saas, lead singer of the black gospel choir Raiz Coral, ran a study group in his home, in which he and a half dozen other singers read and reflected together on black history, blacks in the Bible, and whether or not God had anointed blacks to evangelize the world. Now in his concerts, Sergio pauses between numbers to declare that black music is fulfilling Old Testament prophecies, that in particular “the prophet Isaiah foretold that the people of Ethiopia would someday offer up presents to the Lord, which is what *nós negros* are now

doing, winning souls with our vocal chords.” For the past two years, Ferrisbeck, a promoter of black gospel music, has run a website with sections devoted to “blacks in the Bible” and “black heroes”, including Zumbi, Martin Luther King, Mandela, Malcolm X and Bob Marley. In the Bread is Life Church, young black gospel musicians host educational forums on racism in Brazilian society, blacks in the church and on projects to buy preferentially from black-owned businesses. In the Azusa church in Vila Matilde, Pastor Sergio Melo, a singer of gospel blues who built his church around a black gospel band and choir, uses his pulpit, intervals between musical numbers, Sunday school lessons, and inter-ministerial luncheons to proclaim the virtues of affirmative action, the fight against racism, the valorization of *beleza negra*, support for black entrepreneurs, and nurturance of black leadership in and out of church. A few black gospel artists have even contemplated building a black church, one with mostly black leaders and congregants. “If the Japanese, Germans and Italians can have churches of their own,” said Daniel, of the gospel quartet Lynk 4, “it is only fair for *negros* to have one too.”

Why are these black gospel artists so ahead of the curve among evangelicals in their everyday in their black consciousness? Briefly put, it seems that becoming engaged in black gospel music draws the aspiring artist into a range of powerful experiential encounters, new cognitive knowledge, and arresting intellectual puzzles, which

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nurture the formation of a robust black identity and antiracist sentiment. In particular, the exposure in training to a flood of images of US black churches with their astonishing mode of self-assured, prosperous Christian blackness; the insistence by black choir directors that serious singers learn the history of black music; and ideas about the “black voice” fulfilling Biblical prophecies about Ethiopia all conspire to create a powerful mix of black evangelical pride. It is precisely the existence of this kind of what Italian theorist Alberto Melucci would call a submerged dendritic network of sentiment, belief and behavior that suggests—to me at least—that the MNE’s message of racial struggle has a fighting chance of resonating with a mass base. It may not too be long before evangelical Christians—usually dismissed as a drag on Brazil’s struggle to dismantle white supremacy—have become one of its major social allies.



Opiniões?
Envie-as para
Emanuelle Oliveira,
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VIII BRASA Conference a balance

Marshall Eakin
Brazilian Studies Association
Executive Director



Photograph: Emanuelle Oliveira

**BRASA VIII Opening ceremony
at Vanderbilt University**
From left to right: Marshall Eakin,
Assistant Provost Joel Harrington,
Dean Richard McCarthy, and Tim Power

The Eighth International Congress of the Brazilian Studies Association took place October 13-16, 2006 at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. With some 350 registered participants, 50 staff and volunteers, and an estimated 100 plus individuals who attended some of the sessions and events, the congress was a

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huge success. The initial call for papers was issued in September 2005 with a deadline for submission of paper and panel proposals in mid-January 2006. The program committee, ably led by Peter Beattie (Department of History, Michigan State University), selected panel proposals that were approved by the Executive Committee at its March meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Official letters were sent to everyone in early April 2006.

The final congress program consisted of 90 panels, and two plenary sessions, one on

the evening of October 14 and another on the evening of October 15. BRASA awards were given out at the plenary on October 14. The principal event of the evening honored Thomas E. Skidmore, Emeritus Professor of History, Brown University, with BRASA's first Lifetime Contribution Award. Vanderbilt University Chancellor E. Gordon Gee opened the evening's events and welcomed congress participants to the campus.



Thomas E. Skidmore, his wife Felicity Skidmore, and Kenneth P. Serbin in the ceremony of BRASA's first Lifetime Contribution Award



Photograph: Emanuelle Oliveira



Photograph: Emanuelle Oliveira

Jon Tolman awarding Marshall Eakin the Roberto Reis BRASA Book Prize at the BRASA VIII

BRASA IX: a welcoming note

**Christopher Dunn
Chair**

**Department of Spanish and Portuguese
Tulane University**

On behalf of Tulane University, the Stone Center for Latin American Studies, and the Brazilian Studies Council of Tulane, I am very pleased to announce that we will host BRASA IX. We look forward to welcoming you to New Orleans, a unique American city celebrated for its rich Latin and Afro-Diasporic cultural traditions. New

Orleans is currently experiencing a renaissance after much of the city was flooded in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

All of the historic landmarks of the city, such as the French Quarter, the historic creole neighborhoods of Tremé and Marigny, the elegant Garden District, Uptown, and Tulane University have been restored. The city's rich musical life has rebounded and its famous restaurants have reopened. Tulane University will host BRASA IX between March 27-30, 2008, while school is in session, taking advantage of the new Lavin-Bernick university center that will accommodate most of our activities.

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Dissertações e Teses:

Ana Maria Gadelha Albano Amora, Doutorado (2006), Planejamento Urbano e Regional, Instituto de Pesquisa e Planejamento Urbano e Regional da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro.

Orientador: Fania Fridman

Título: “O nacional e o moderno : arquitetura e saúde no Estado Novo nas cidades catarinenses”

Palavras-chave: Santa Catarina, cidades e vilas, política e governo (1930-1945), arquitetura e estado, saúde pública, aspectos sociais, Modernismo.

Resumo:

Trata-se de estudo, inspirado nas cidades catarinenses, acerca da ação pública sobre essas áreas urbanas e suas populações durante o primeiro

Governo Vargas, destacando-se a área da saúde pública e o aspecto simbólico de suas edificações, tendo em foco as três principais cidades catarinenses da época – Florianópolis, a capital, Joinville e Blumenau, respectivamente as cidades com maior desenvolvimento urbano e industrial. Estas obras indicam uma ação intencional do Estado sobre as aglomerações urbanas, dotando-as de equipamentos públicos. Tal ato denotaria uma proposta de desenvolvimento em direção a um processo de modernização na construção da nação, promovendo dentro de uma cultura moderna, um novo cotidiano, com o objetivo de transformar e implantar hábitos e costumes que levassem ao estabelecimento do Povo-nação. ■

Estamos coletando informações sobre teses e dissertações, a serem publicadas semestralmente no nosso BRASAnotes. Favor enviar título e palavras-chave para Emanuelle Oliveira, emanuelle.oliveira@vanderbilt.edu.



Photograph: Emanuelle Oliveira

**BRASA Executive Committee Meeting
at Tulane University,
March 10, 2007**

**Front (left to right): Mark Lokensgard,
Kathryn Hochstetler, Jan Hoffman,
Elizabeth Kiddy, Maxime Margolis,
Ken Serbin, Emanuelle Oliveira,
Peggy Sharpe, and Cecilia Grespan.**

**Back (left to right): Tim Power, Marshall Eakin,
Bjorn Maybury-Lewis, and Petter Bettie**