

The National Steinbeck Center Announces:

STEINBECK FESTIVAL AUTHORS RECOUNT BOLD JOURNEYS

30th Annual Steinbeck Festival: *Journeys: Steinbeck Around the World*

Non Profit Press Release For Immediate Release

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SALINAS, CITY OF LETTERS (July 12, 2010). The 2010 Steinbeck Festival, "Journeys: Steinbeck Around the World," to be held from August 5-8, 2010, welcomes three authors to the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas, California. Authors Ted Conover, Thomas Hummel, and Ruby Bridges will recount tales of their own bold and varied journeys: through the roads of the world, across America in the footsteps of iconic American authors, and up the steps of a contested school and into a new era.

Thursday, August 5th 7:30–8:30 pm

KEYNOTE: Author Ted Conover: *Next to My Passport: Travels with Steinbeck*

National Steinbeck Center. \$18, \$10 for members, or included in festival passport packages

The Pulitzer Prize finalist and the author of *The Routes of Man: How Roads are Changing the World and the Way We Live Today*, will discuss his book, the far-flung roads it describes, and Steinbeck's inspiration on the way. In his latest book, Conover explores six key byways around the world. In Peru, he follows the route of a load of rare mahogany over the Andes to its origin in an undisturbed part of the Amazon for which a road is planned. In the Himalayas, he accompanies a group of teenagers on their annual trek out of their isolated Himalayan valley during the rare weeks when the frozen river creates a dangerous road of ice. Crossing the highways of China, he describes the exploding enthusiasm for car culture. *The Routes of Man* explores how roads unite and sunder worlds, shape history and impact communities across the globe.

Ted Conover is the author of the just-released *The Routes of Man: How Roads are Changing the World and the Way We Live Today*; *Newjack: Guarding Sing Sing* (winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award and finalist for the Pulitzer Prize); *Whiteout: Lost in Aspen*; *Coyotes: A Journey Across Borders with America's Mexican Migrants*; and *Rolling Nowhere: Riding the Rails with America's Hoboes*. He is a distinguished writer-in-residence at the Carter Journalism Institute of New York University.

"Ted Conover is one of the great writers of my generation, and this may be his finest book. Fearless and compassionate, with echoes of Conrad and Kerouac."

–Eric Schlosser, author of *Fast Food Nation*

FRIDAY, August 6th from 6:00-6:45 pm

Author Thomas R. Hummel: *A Journey through Literary America*

National Steinbeck Center. Free, as part of First Fridays Salinas

Thomas Hummel has traveled across America to experience "the intersection of literature and place," and his new book, *A Journey through Literary America*, brings us stories and images of unique places brought to life in the pages of great literature...including Salinas, City of Letters. Some of the greatest stories of American literature are the stories of the authors themselves and the places that sparked their imaginations. In 2008, writer Thomas Hummel and photographer Tamra Dempsey set out in search of the sources of inspiration for 26 of this country's greatest authors, including Willa

Cather, John Steinbeck, Rita Dove, William Faulkner, Robinson Jeffers, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and others. Twenty thousand miles later, the result is a literary pilgrimage in photography and prose. Selected images by Tamra Dempsey will be exhibited at the National Steinbeck Center during the Steinbeck Festival.

Sunday, August 8th from 11:00 am–12:00 pm

Ruby Bridges: *My Journey Up the Steps*

National Steinbeck Center. Free for Monterey County residents with proper ID. Free with museum admission to others.

Ruby Bridges recounts her historic journey up the steps of William Frantz Public School in New Orleans, the first black student at the formerly all-white elementary school. John Steinbeck watched her take those courageous steps 50 years ago and described the incident vividly in *Travels With Charley*. The Steinbeck Festival marks the 50th anniversary of her journey and celebrates the publication of her book, *Through My Eyes*, which gives her own version of her story.

Ruby Bridges was born in Mississippi in 1954, the same year the United States Supreme Court handed down its landmark decision ordering the integration of public schools. Her parents moved to New Orleans because they heard there were better opportunities in the city. In 1960, after taking a test, Ruby was selected to go to William Frantz Public School. Greeted by an angry mob and escorted by federal marshals, Ruby crossed the threshold of this school and single-handedly initiated the desegregation of New Orleans' public schools. Her first-grade teacher was Barbara Henry and Ruby was her only student, as white families withdrew their children from the school. Ruby Bridges' story has been depicted in Norman Rockwell's picture for *Look Magazine*, "The Problem We All Live With," and in Robert Coles' *The Story of Ruby Bridges*.

The Ruby Bridges Foundation promotes the values of tolerance, respect and appreciation for other cultures. In doing so, it is the Foundation's hope to move first our children and then our society as a whole toward the elimination of racism and prejudice.

SATURDAY, August 7th from 5:30-6:30 pm

Book Signing with Festival Speakers

National Steinbeck Center. Free.

The three authors above, along with other local and Steinbeck authors, will sign their books.

ABOUT THE 2010 STEINBECK FESTIVAL

The National Steinbeck Center presents the 30th annual Steinbeck Festival—*Journeys: Steinbeck Around the World*, from August 5–8, 2010. This summer, set out for the open road. Your destination: the world, today and at key moments in history, with John Steinbeck as your guide. The 2010 Steinbeck Festival will explore journeys of all kinds, throughout America and the wide world, through the eyes of John Steinbeck and others. Each year, hundreds of people from all walks of life attend the annual four-day festival, which includes talks, tours, film and the visual and performing arts. This year, for the first time, the Steinbeck Festival will be celebrated not only in Salinas, City of Letters, but in literary locales throughout the wide world, from Berlin to Hanoi to Paris to Mexico City, through the first Steinbeck Festival International Fringe Fest. More information is available on the 2010 Steinbeck Festival at www.steinbeck.org.

Background on The Theme of The 30th Annual Steinbeck Festival

While John Steinbeck was most famous for his books set in California, much of Steinbeck's work was written in or about places far from his home state. Steinbeck traveled regularly to Mexico, and over one third of his works are either set in Mexico or feature characters of Mexican descent. He spent time in Europe, and during WW II Steinbeck served as a war correspondent for the *New York Herald Tribune* in Great Britain and the Mediterranean area. *A Russian Journal* (1948) was an account of the author's unique journey to the Soviet Union with the photographer Robert Capa. In 1959 Steinbeck spent nearly a year at *Discove Cottage* in England, working with *Morte d'Arthur*, one of his favorite books from his childhood. After returning to the United States, he, along with his wife's poodle, Charley, became reacquainted with his own country and in 1962 the national trek was published as *Travels with Charley in Search of America*. In later years he also provided special reports abroad, including in and about Vietnam, and divided his time between New York City, Sag Harbor and California.

Today, John Steinbeck's literature is translated throughout the world. Its popularity has never wavered in Europe and Steinbeck has a vibrant following in the Pacific Rim. His enduring and universal themes continue to touch people of all backgrounds.

BACKGROUND ON THE NATIONAL STEINBECK CENTER

The National Steinbeck Center is located in Salinas, California, the birthplace of John Steinbeck. The National Steinbeck Center is a museum and cultural institution whose mission is “to tell the story of John Steinbeck’s rich legacy, and to present, create and explore stories of the human condition.” The Center offers three visitor experiences: the John Steinbeck Exhibition Hall, which houses seven themed theaters with film clips and interactive exhibits from the Nobel prize-winning author’s works, the Rabobank Agriculture Museum, which explores the stories of the Salinas Valley “from field to fork,” and changing art and cultural exhibits and a variety of educational and public programs. For more information about the National Steinbeck Center or past festivals, please visit the National Steinbeck Center’s website at www.steinbeck.org.

For more information on upcoming events or purchase tickets call (831) 775-4721.