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UAH Humanities Center, 2001

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UAH Humanities Center

The University of Alabama in Huntsville

Number 2

July 2001

Center Brings Distinguished Visitors to Huntsville

One of the most important contributions the Humanities Center makes is our sponsorship of visiting scholars. Programs featuring visitors bring together faculty, students, and townspeople and give them the opportunity to discuss recent books with their authors. Visitors provide intellectual stimulation outside of classrooms and contribute to the growth of intellectual community centered on the university.

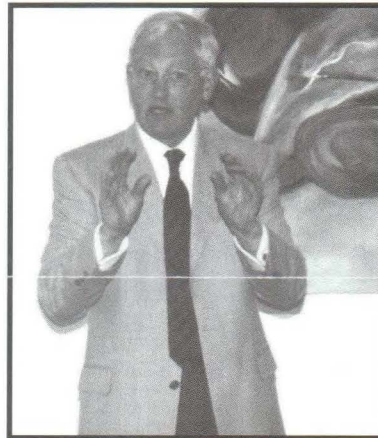
The most important of our visitors come through the rotating position of Eminent Scholar in the Humanities. But the Center sponsors and co-sponsors many other visitors to campus each year, cooperating with departments and programs at UAH and complementing the support of such groups as the Alabama Humanities Foundation. The Center's contributions range from modest amounts to major support of several thousand dollars.

Eminent Scholar **Kelly Cherry** returned to UAH in the spring of 2001 following a successful semester in academic year 1999-2000. In addition to teaching a class, Ms. Cherry lectured or gave public readings in several locations in the south including Columbia, South Carolina; Knoxville, Tennessee; and Dallas, Texas. Ms. Cherry has recently retired with the titles Eudora Welty Professor Emerita of English and Evjue-Bascom Professor Emerita in the Humanities from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. Her colleagues at UAH, her students, and many friends in north Alabama look forward to her return in the fall semester of 2001.

During the week of April 9th the History Department hosted distinguished visiting scholar **Edward Ingram**, Professor Emeritus of Imperial History at Simon Fraser University, Canada. Professor Ingram, who is both

founder and editor of the well-respected journal, *International*

History Review, now resides in Wellington, New Zealand where, in a very active retirement, he is Honorary Research Fellow at Victoria University and edits his journal. Professor Ingram delivered three lectures during his visit and conducted a workshop for faculty on grant writing. His carefully and imaginatively crafted presentations accomplished the Humanities Center's goals for the



Visiting Scholar Program—they exposed UAH students and faculty to the wisdom of a scholar with a lifetime of exemplary achievement in research and writing. Like many distinguished scholars before him, Professor Ingram expressed surprised delight at the energy, activity, and collegiality he found in the UAH community.

Dr. Douglass S. Parker, noted classicist from the University of Texas-Austin, presented two talks on Plautus's *Amphitruo*, a Latin play studied by the Society for Ancient Languages during the spring semester. In the morning presentation, Dr. Parker directed several student volunteers in a master's class of a scene, paying attention to the problems of translating classical humor into colloquial English. In the evening presentation, Dr. Parker explored the issues raised for both ancient and modern viewers when the classical gods and goddess are represented on stage in a bawdy play. The new translation of Plautus's *Amphitruo*, begun by Dr. Parker especially for these talks, will probably be finished by the end of this summer and sent to press shortly thereafter.

Scholarly Comings and Goings: Humanities Conferences

Humanities scholarship is as specialized as that in scientific and technical fields, yet faculty members have to be generalists. At UAH and most other universities, they teach over broad fields such as English literature, the history of Western Civilization, or the art history of the Western world. They reserve their specialized knowledge for their upper-level and graduate students or for presentation to community groups.

To stay on top of their fields and to keep their own ideas fresh, UAH scholars must attend conferences where they interact with other experts. The Humanities Center underwrites the cost of our faculty members' attendance at such conferences when they are presenting scholarly papers, serving as officers, or participating in other aspects of the programs.

Conferences are stimulating but exhausting. Sessions run from early in the morning till into the evening. At social occasions, collegial friendships develop as non-stop intellectual conversation occurs. Ideas for new books and inspiration for collective projects often come from conferences. Since the dawning of e-mail, scholars can maintain these important connections easily, but the importance of personal connections remains. Faculty members return to UAH filled with new ideas and eager to share them.

Humanities scholars publish their ideas in books and articles, but it takes years to get them in print. Conferences feature cutting edge scholarship in every field, thus attendance is essential for a first-class faculty like ours.

Here are a few examples of what the Center helps our faculty accomplish.

Dr. Stephen Waring traveled to Reno, Nevada, to receive the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics History Manuscript Award and spoke on the subject, "Did Cold Weather Cause the Challenger Accident?" **Dr. David Stewart** traveled to Roanoke, Virginia, serving as a board member at the Nineteenth-Century Studies Association at its annual conference. **Dr. Deborah Heikes** traveled to Zurich Switzerland, presenting a paper entitled, "Rationality and Subjectivity: Some Thoughts on the Bias Paradox" at the 9th meeting of the International Association of Women Philosophers.

UAH also hosts conferences in Huntsville. The largest scholarly conferences—those of the major national associations like the American Historical Association and

the Modern Language Association—attract thousands of attendees and are held in the nation's biggest cities. UAH and Huntsville cannot absorb those huge meetings, but, with the help of the Humanities Center, we do host regional groups or smaller specialized societies. In this past year, Huntsville was the site of two scholarly conferences co-sponsored by UAH and the Humanities Center.

The **Southeastern American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (SEASECS)** convened in Huntsville for its 27th Annual Meeting this past March. SEASECS is a multi-disciplinary group whose interests embrace such fields as economics, history, politics, science, art and architecture, literature, music, philosophy, and religion. The conference theme was "New Beginnings: The Eighteenth Century and the Future." The Society has infrequently met in Alabama and never before in Huntsville.



(Above l-r, Dr. Eleanor Hutchens, Dr. Lila Miranda Graves, Dr. Kay Weeks, and Dr. Stephen Szilagyi)

Among the invited speakers were two Huntsvillians, **Dr. Eleanor Newman Hutchens**, UAH Professor Emerita of English and local architect **Mr. William W. Herrin**. Dr. Hutchens presented an interesting and at times humorous discourse on the history of Twickenham in downtown Huntsville. Mr. Herrin followed with an enlightening presentation on the influence of Greek architecture in early Huntsville residential designs and public buildings in other parts of the Southeastern United States.

In October the **South Central Region of The Historical Society** met in Huntsville. The theme of this meeting was "Nationalism(s): Do Contemporary Theories Fit Historical Experiences?" Represented at the meeting were scholars from such institutions as University of Tulsa, Vanderbilt University, Auburn University, University of Kentucky, University of Southern Mississippi, Alabama A&M, University of North Alabama and UAH.



Nationalism around the world, topic of discussion during one of The Historical Society sessions held at Burritt on the Mountain.

Global Research in the Humanities at UAH

Humanities scholarship is rooted in a long tradition of human thought, and often it treats issues and events that occurred long ago. As economic, political, social, and cultural globalization accelerates, it is more important than ever to understand how different cultures developed and how they have interacted with each other. Many contemporary problems have their origins in the past, and usually solutions to those problems require understanding their deeply buried causes. The Humanities Center, through its research grants program, helps faculty members advance their scholarship by supporting their travel to distant libraries and archives. Several of the grants from this year's competition concerned the mingling—peaceful and warlike—of cultures and societies around the world.

Philip Boucher, Professor of History, will continue his work on the French Caribbean. In his research, he finds two different types of societies—both containing slaves—and reflects on their differences. He plans to write about the type of society that existed in the Caribbean during the time preceding and immediately following the French Revolution. His book has the title, “France and the Caribbean in the Era of Slavery.” He raises the question—is there a difference between a slave society and a society with slaves?

Mitchell Berbrier, Assistant Professor of Sociology, will continue his studies on the Cleveland Cultural Gardens using the development and growth of the Gardens as a microcosmic reflection of the public's view on ethnicity in Cleveland and America. As he puts it, “they are intended to be truly *cultural* gardens, and in each, in addition to foliage and flora, you will find sculptures, plaques, and monuments to cultural figures important to each community, as well as landscaped architecture evocative of each region or group.”

Kwaku Gyasi, Assistant Professor of Foreign Languages and Literature, travels to Africa and Paris as he researches African literature translated into European languages. Dr. Gyasi poses several questions as to the impact the translation has on the literature and the impact the literature has on the language, suggesting that a new discourse has been created by the combination of the two.

Madeleine Youmans, Assistant Professor of English, continues her linguistic research into the implications of language use in a contentious social environment. Specifically she states, “These cross-culturally based different patterns of epistemic modal use are tied to different, culturally based epistemologies held by the two groups, which. . . contribute to cross-cultural miscommunication between Chicanos and mainstream Anglos.”

Richard Gerberding, Professor of History, will be researching into the past of Charlemagne of France also known as Charles the Great, Holy Roman Emperor. Specifically, he will investigate the significance of the work of Paul the Deacon, a member of Charlemagne's court, who appears to have fabricated part of the Emperor's family history.

Lillian Joyce, Assistant Professor of Art and Art History will continue her research about the feminine subjects of ancient Roman art known as *maenads* or *bacchantes*. She travels to Rome and Naples with the intention of shedding some light on the historic use of these women in various art forms.

Center to Sponsor Two Visiting Scholars at UAH in 2002

Next February the Philosophy Department will host Dr. Catherine Elgin of Harvard University. Elgin has published over 40 articles in distinguished journals including *The Journal of Philosophy*, *Philosophy of Science*, and *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*. She has published five books. Her most recent books are *Between the Absolute and the Arbitrary* and *Considered Judgement*. It has been said of her, "She defends the view that the goal of inquiry is not knowledge, as ordinarily conceived, but understanding." Her current investigations are the extent to which action influences and is influenced by human understanding.

In March of next year the Women's Studies Program will bring Sandra Harding, Professor of Education and Women's Studies at UCLA, to UAH. She is the author and/or editor of ten books and numerous journal articles, is on the editorial board of 19 journals, and has lectured at over 200 universities and conferences in North America, Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, New Zealand and Central America. She is currently the co-editor of *Signs*, the most prestigious journal in Women Studies. She is a consultant to many United Nations organizations including the Pan-American Health Organization, UNESCO, U.N. Development Fund for Women, and the U.N. Commission on Science and Technology for Development.

Please watch for dates and times of public lectures by these distinguished visitors.

Second Union Grove Dialogue

This year the Humanities Center selected **Dr. Clarke Rountree** as the **Union Grove Scholar of 2001**. His selection was based on his paper "Instantiating 'The Law' and its Dissents in *Korematsu v. United States*: a Dramatistic Analysis of Judicial Discourse." Dr. Rountree was nominated by Dauphne Rogers. During the dialogue, which was attended by faculty and students from the University, Dr. Rountree discussed the relevance of Dramatistic Criticism, Kenneth Burke's method of analysis, to the *Korematsu* case.

Dr. Rountree's presentation was followed with comments by **Roy Meek**, Professor Emeritus of Political Science, and student panelists **Robyn Frame**, **Dauphne Rogers** and **Michael Spearing**. Questions were taken from the audience and the panel responded with their views on the issues raised in Dr. Rountree's paper.

2001 Salmon Library Enhancement Awards

This year almost \$9,000 in materials for the Salmon Library will be purchased to enhance the humanities at UAH. Individuals with winning proposals included Dr. Lillian Joyce, Art & Art History, Dr. Sandra Carpenter, Women's Studies and Drs. Virginia Martin, Sheri Shuck and Stephen Waring with a joint proposal from the History Department.

Twenty-three books were ordered in Renaissance art to support the redevelopment of an art history class in that field. Growing numbers of students within the college are studying art, and these materials will support traditional art classes as well as newer courses in graphic art using computers. In addition, the Center will purchase the remaining collection of the *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*. It "will offer an exhaustive literary and visual study of Greek and Roman mythological characters that is without parallel."

The history department plans to offer a survey course providing students with a comparative historical perspective on the development of five major world regions: Asia, Europe, Africa, the Americas and Oceania. Their goal is to help the students acquire a common cultural literacy that is not Eurocentric. Seventy-one books were ordered with a grant from the Humanities Center to achieve this goal.

A collection of United Nations publications on the status and position of women in the world has been ordered to aid the Women's Studies program. This collection of current and historical information provides both statistical data and analysis concerning the economic, political, and social differences between men and women in countries around the world. The information will come in the form of four books, fifteen Country Profiles, and one CD-ROM containing international statistical data tables from 206 countries.

Center Provides Funds for Public Programs

In addition to the programs the Center sponsors directly, we offer support to departments, programs and interdisciplinary groups. In this way, people with ideas for public discussion can serve the local community by expending their energies, while the Center provides some essential money. A broad range of programming results, some of which is described below.

North Alabama Archeological Society Active at UAH

The Humanities Center has made possible a series of programs sponsored by the recently formed chapter of the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA). The AIA is the largest and oldest archaeological organization in North America. Together the Humanities Center and the AIA have sponsored lectures by internationally known archaeologists such as Egyptologist **Dr. Lanny Bell** of Brown University and **Dr. Jo Anne Van Tilburg**, Director of the Easter Island Statue Project. Underwater archaeologist **Jana Owen**, who works off the coast of Oman, was also brought to Huntsville with support from the Humanities Center.

Demonstrating enthusiasm and interest, the local chapter received their AIA charter for 50 plus members less than a year after their first event. In addition to lectures, the group sponsors field trips such as recent tours of the Nashville Parthenon and Moundville Archaeological Park, films and a reading group. For information, please contact Dr. Lillian Joyce at joycel@email.uah.edu or (256)824-6114.

V-2 and Forced Labor Subject of Exhibit

The Dora exhibit by Alvin Gilens provided Huntsville with a revised interpretation of the construction of the V-2 missile and the use of forced labor in Nazi Germany. While recognizing the leadership of the Von Braun team

in the V-2 program, no local forum has discussed openly the human rights violations and the use of slave labor associated with the program. In local venues, the story of the V-2 has celebrated technological achievement without reference to its darker side. In contrast, the artifacts, photos, and placards of the Dora exhibit spoke to the untold suffering of the slave workers, and the deliberate inhumanity and willful blindness of the managers, engineers, and the guards at Dora. Many community visitors, including dozens of high school students, toured the exhibit and left with a new, balanced, and more somber understanding of the history behind Huntsville's technological success. One of the best attended exhibits ever at UAH, the Dora exhibit was co-sponsored by a number of departments and supported by a grant from the Humanities Center.

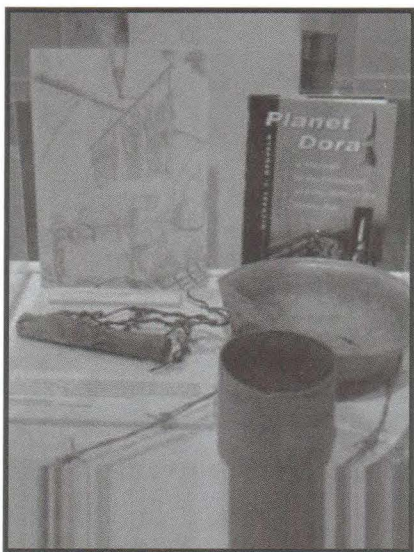
History and Philosophy Forums

These popular annual programs are often funded with external money such as grants from the Alabama Humanities Foundation, but the Humanities Center regularly provides some matching funds for cost-sharing purposes. This year's History Forum, "China and the West," and the Philosophy Forum, "What Do You Know: Responding to the Challenge of Skepticism" were well attended events that brought scholars from around the country to speak at UAH.

Each fall the History and Philosophy Departments host these forums. Please contact those departments for more information and look for posters and brochures highlighting the scheduled events.

Literary History of Religion

In March, with the aid of Center funds and staff, the Foreign Languages and Literatures Department hosted the symposium "Moses 'versus' Christ." During the symposium, scholars from Seton Hall University, Georgetown University, the University of Arizona, Toledo University, and Old Dominion University discussed the relationship between Judaism and Christianity in German literature. Their comments treated writing across the medieval and early modern periods and into the twentieth-century.



We're located on the World Wide Web at <http://www.uah.edu/humanities>

UAH Humanities Center

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Thank you for supporting the humanities.

From the Director

With our endowed programs securely established, the Humanities Center is involved in several new projects. One of these—the “International Business Studies Initiative: an Integrated Approach to the Study of International Business in a High Tech Community”—was recently funded by the Business and International Education Program of the US Department of Education. This two-year program combines the efforts of faculty from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, the College of Administrative Science, and members of the North Alabama International Trade Association to improve knowledge about international trade in this area. As this program develops, look for information at the Humanities Center’s website.

The Center welcomes your ideas about improving our services to UAH and the community. Your financial contributions help the Center grow. We appreciate your continuing help.



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