



**Society for Values in Higher Education**

c/o Portland State University  
PO Box 751-SVHE  
Portland, OR 97207

Phone: 503.725.2575  
Fax: 503.725.2577  
E-mail: [society@pdx.edu](mailto:society@pdx.edu)

**WE'RE ON THE WEB**  
[WWW.SVHE.ORG](http://WWW.SVHE.ORG)



### MEMBERSHIP DUES, 2006: THANKS AND A PLEA

Thanks to all Fellows who have paid their membership dues for 2006. We are also grateful to all who have contributed to our Annual Fund. As noted in our Fall, 2005 Newsletter, a large percentage of the Society's operating budget depends on annual dues and contributions from our members.

We are therefore deeply concerned that, as of February, 2006, the percentage of members who have paid their dues is significantly lower than at this time last year. Just why this is the case is not clear, though it may be that our decision to include the first dues notice in the Fall Newsletter, rather than to send it by separate

mailing created some confusion.

Whatever the case, we hope those who have not yet paid their 2006 dues will acknowledge the urgency of this plea that they do so. If you have not paid as yet, you will be receiving a third dues notice. It is our hope that many of you will have already paid by the time that request reaches you in early March.

George T. Karnezis  
Associate Executive Director

Jon Wiant  
Chair, Membership Committee

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# SVHE News: Views & Values

**P.O. Box 751-SVHE; Portland, OR 97207-0751**  
**Phone 503.725.2575 • Fax 503.725.2577**  
**Email: [society@pdx.edu](mailto:society@pdx.edu) • Website: [www.svhe.org](http://www.svhe.org)**



Newsletter Date:  
February 2006

## Fellows Meeting: North Central College, July 20-25, 2006

### Honor in the Professions

What does ethical integrity mandate for professionals? Are teachers responsible for inculcating ethical ideals in the student—and whose ethical ideals? For the doctor or other health-care professional, what is the ethical action when scientific knowledge conflicts with compassion for patients? How can religious professionals honor diverse cultural values? Can honor as ethical virtue be reconciled with its often ambiguous history in American and other cultures?

At the annual Fellows Meeting (FM '06), July 20-25 at North Central College in Naperville, Illinois, we'll discuss questions emerging from the theme, "Honor in the Professions". In evening plenaries and afternoon interdisciplinary panels, practitioners in law, medicine/bioethics, teaching, and religion, respected for their research and their personal commitment, will consider the role concepts of ethics and honor play in our professional decision making.

### Featured speakers

#### Evening Plenaries

- **Larry McCullough**, Professor of Medicine and Medical Ethics, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, Texas, will offer "An Eighteenth Century Critique of the Concept of Honor."
- **Walter Bennett**, former trial lawyer, NC state trial judge, and professor, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Law School, will discuss "The Lawyer's Myth: Honor in the Profession of Law."
- **Miriam Cooke** and **Bruce Lawrence**, both teaching this semester at the University of Jakarta in Indonesia, will offer a first-hand perspective "On Understanding Muslim Ethics and Calibrating Changing Concepts of Honor in Islam Today". At Duke University, Miriam chairs the Asian & African Languages & Literature program; Bruce is Professor of Islamic Studies and Comparative Religions in the Graduate Department of Religion.
- **Cathy Bao Bean**, author of *The Chopsticks-Fork Principle, A Memoir and Manual*, immigrant and emigrant into and out of cultures, including the educational and environmental, and newly-named 2006 SVHE Fellows Lecturer, will ask, "Can We as Teachers Honor MultiCulturalism While Stirring the Melting Pot?"

#### Afternoon Panels:

- **Steve Sfekas**, a private practice lawyer who practices health care law and is an adjunct professor at the University of Maryland-Baltimore County, will explore "The Constitutionality of Compulsory Vaccinations."
- **Douglas Diekema**, Center for Pediatric Bioethics, Children's Hospital and Medical Center, University of Washington, Seattle, will open up issues for parents, doctors, and public health, as he considers "How Should Physicians Respond to a Parent's Refusal to Vaccinate?"
- **Carol Ochs**, Director, Doctor of Ministry Program, Professor of Jewish Religious Thought at Hebrew Union College -Jewish Institution of Religion, New York City, will examine the possibilities of "Honoring Truth of Knowing, Truth of Being, and the Absolute Truth."
- A fourth panelist in teaching will be announced soon.

Information on morning groups begins on page 12 of this newsletter. Go to [www.svhe.org](http://www.svhe.org) for further program developments and forthcoming registration information.

## SVHE Board Actions

### Washington, D.C. meeting—January 28 and 29, 2006

The following are some of the actions of the SVHE Board at its recent D.C. session which followed a successful mini-regional gathering in connection with the AAC&U national meeting:

- Fellows who have not paid dues during the preceding SVHE fiscal year (October 1 – September 30) will not receive copies of *Soundings*, our SVHE journal, until they are current dues-paying members.
- Cathy Bao Bean was unanimously elected to

deliver the Fellows Lecture for the 2006 Annual Meeting at North Central College.

- Board members elected by the membership, who will begin their terms at the conclusion of the 2006 Fellows Meeting, are Jerry Berberet, Gayle Bray, Richard Harter, Hal Jackson, and Amy Noel Lampazzi.

Newly elected SVHE officers for 2006-2007 are:

Jon Wiant, President  
Allen Dunn, Vice President  
Janet Edwards, Secretary

Dick Harter, Treasurer

The SVHE newsletter is now being edited in the SVHE office, by George Karnezis and Renee Devereux. Official thanks was voted for previous editing by Diane Brotemarkle and Meg Wiant.

The SVHE Wingspread "Declaration," now on the SVHE website ([svhe.org](http://svhe.org)) for comment and critique, was endorsed for further grant activity and public relations. We had 100% Board attendance and participation.



## Nominating Committee Report

The Committee met in December by phone conference and conducted discussions through e-mail in order to prepare a list of candidates for the Board of Directors election. Having decided last year to reduce the size of our Board from twenty members to fourteen over the next two years, six candidates were asked to run for the Board. Fellows were asked to pick up to four candidates from the proposed slate.

Ballots were prepared by the SVHE Office and mailed out in mid-December, with a return deadline of January 18,

2006. The ballots were received and counted in the SVHE Office.

During the winter meeting of the Board the ballot results were reviewed and the slate of four nominees finalized for presentation and election at the annual Board meeting on January 28.

The Society would like to welcome its 2006-9 Board of Directors members: Jerry Berberet, Dick Harter, Hal Jackson, and Amy Lampazzi. These individuals will begin their terms of service at the 2006 Fellows' Meeting in Naperville, IL.

After five years on the Board, Ellen Maher has decided to step down. Gayle Bray has been selected to serve out the remainder of her term. We would like to thank Ellen for her years of hard work and dedication. Ellen, you will be missed.

Meg Wiant, Chair  
Nominating Committee

## Membership Committee Report

SVHE continued its membership expansion in 2005 with significant growth in institutional membership. Our ranks also grew with the addition of a number of new members from the American Association of Higher Education who accepted our invitation to join SVHE when AAHE ended its organization last spring. We have also welcomed a number of new fellows who came to the Society through nomination by other Fellows.

The Executive Office and the Membership Committee have streamlined membership procedures to ensure timely processing of new membership nominations. Your nominations or recommendations should be sent to the Portland office and you are encouraged to include a resume of the potential Fellow.

In the weeks ahead the Society will extend membership invitations to a number of current recipients of national graduate fellowships including the Charlotte W. Newcombe Fellowship and similar fellowships from the AAUW and Compton. The Executive Office is also exploring categorical invitations to other academic and civic organizations whose mission relates to SVHE goals. The Membership committee also encourages Fellows to promote the idea of institutional membership for their colleges or universities. The Executive Office will provide you with additional information on the many values of institutional membership. (see page 6)



**REMEMBER THE AUCTION.  
BRING YOUR TREASURE  
\* CLASSIC AND KITSCH \*  
TO NAPERVILLE!**

## Food for the Soul: Reading on the Web

The following readings are conveniently available through the links menu on the SVHE website [www.svhe.org](http://www.svhe.org)

SVHE Fellow Preston Browning, inspired by Adrienne Rich's definition of a patriot as someone "struggling for the soul of her country," has written "Struggling for the Soul of One's Country: American Pathologies and the Response of Faith" (CrossCurrents Winter, 2004). Browning sees America as "suffering multiple pathologies, chief among them a kind of love affair with violence and, among our leaders and many. . . citizens, an addiction to militarism and to war." Nevertheless, with Arundhati Roy, he believes "another world is not only possible, she is on her way." The piece is available at: <http://www.crosscurrents.org/Browning0404.htm>

Leigh E. Schmidt's piece "Spirituality in America," which appeared recently in THE WILSON QUARTERLY is a fine text for anyone interested in increasing religious literacy as well as our understanding of issues surrounding religion and public life, the subject of last year's SVHE sponsored Wingspread Conference. [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=wq.essay&essay\\_id=146855](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=wq.essay&essay_id=146855)

In the web publication *In Side Higher Ed* Scott Jaschik's "Faith on the Quad" reports the continuing interest and reflection prompted by the Wingspread Declaration, "Religion and Public Life, Engaging Higher Education". Several comments responding to the Declaration follow the article. <http://insidighered.com/news/2006/01/27/religion>

SVHE Fellow, Martin Marty's "Textbook Cases", published by the Martin Marty Center at the University of Chicago Divinity School web publication *Sightings*, is valuable in correcting some misunderstandings about the alleged "prohibitions" against religion in the schools. [http://marty-center.uchicago.edu/sightings/archive\\_2006/0130.shtml](http://marty-center.uchicago.edu/sightings/archive_2006/0130.shtml)

Bill Moyer's has been using his retirement wisely. Most recently, he has taken his stand on what he sees as the increasing "culture of corruption" in Washington, a culture where money's rule brings us closer to a plutocracy distant from those "Democratic Vistas" once imagined by Walt Whitman: "It is . . . a world where politicians and lobbyists hunt together, dine together, drink together, pray together and prey together, all the while carving up the world according to their own interests." His entire speech on this subject, "Restoring the Public Trust," is available at: [http://www.tompaine.com/articles/2006/02/24/restoring\\_the\\_public\\_trust.php](http://www.tompaine.com/articles/2006/02/24/restoring_the_public_trust.php)

## READER'S CORNER: SO MANY BOOKS, SO LITTLE TIME.

*Exploring Women's Studies: Looking Forward, Looking Back*, a major new anthology that chronicles the rise of women's studies across the disciplines over a 30-year period, has just been published by Prentice Hall. Its editors are Carol Berkin, Professor of History at CUNY and a noted women's studies scholar; Judith L. Pinch, Senior Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation; and Carole S. Appel, former Women's Studies Editor at the University of Illinois Press. Judith Pinch, who directed the program of Woodrow Wilson Women's Studies Fellowships for many years, was a member of SVHE's Executive Committee for several years. The twenty contributors to the book all held Woodrow Wilson Dissertation Grants in Women's Studies between 1974 and 2001. The book brings together historians, anthropologists, literary critics, sociologists, art historians, and cinema scholars to examine and exemplify the evolution of women's studies as an academic discipline. The Woodrow Wilson program that funded their early research remains the first and only national program of its kind. As Anne Firor Scott, professor emerita of history at Duke, says in the book's introduction, "Underlying the new scholarship were precepts that could be summed up in two words: gender matters." In addition to scholarly articles, each chapter is prefaced by a brief autobiographical essay explaining why the author became interested in

women's studies and how the field has changed over the years. Contributors include Pulitzer Prize winner Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, on the lives and work of women in early New England; Miriam Cohen, Professor of History at Vassar College, on the politics of gender and schooling in the Progressive Era; Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Professor of Women's studies and English at Spelman College on African feminism; Martha Nell Smith, Professor of English and Director of the Maryland Institute for Technology on the Humanities, on how feminism and technology are transforming the humanities; Shanshan Du, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Tulane University on sexual division of labor among the peoples of Southwest China. Judith is also proud to say that one of the contributors is her daughter, Adela Pinch, Associate Professor of Women's Studies and English at the University of Michigan, writing on "Stealing Happiness: Women Shoplifters in Georgian England." Review copies of the book, which is designed for scholars and students in women's studies courses and general readers interested in history, literature, and the social sciences, may be obtained by calling 1-800-526-0485 or visiting [www.prenticehall.com](http://www.prenticehall.com)

### A HISTORY OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN ROCKY MOUNT

by David Jones

was published by the church last September, and printed here locally. It is a detailed account, both chronological and thematic, of the church from its formal organization in 1878 through 2003, its first hundred and twenty-five years. I was asked years ago to "edit" a history of the church, but I think the person who asked meant "compile." In any case, I wrote a serious treatment of the church's life, warts and all, in which I tried both to tell the church's story and to provide a record which can usefully be consulted from now on. Including footnotes and index and so on, it runs to 500 pages. It was indeed a labor of love, one which reflects my conviction that what happens locally in religion and politics and everything else matters much. You will note that I have called it "A History" and not "The History," an important distinction to me.



## Congratulations!

### INTRODUCING THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2006-2007

#### President

Jon A. Wiant was elected President of the Society for Values in Higher Education during the Society's winter meeting in Washington, DC last week. Wiant will assume the presidency at the Society's Annual Fellows Meeting at North Central College in Naperville, Illinois next July. Wiant, who recently retired from a 35-year career with Department of State, is Professor of Intelligence History at the Joint Military Intelligence College and a Senior Intelligence Specialist with Pearson Analytical Solutions of Arlington, Virginia. He has been a Fellow since 1973 and a Board member since 2000.

He is a graduate of Otero Junior College in La Junta, Colorado and the University of Colorado. He was a Class of 1970 Danforth Fellow and did his graduate work at Cornell University where his dissertation was on contemporary Burmese politics. He is a decorated Vietnam veteran and has been awarded both the National Intelligence Medal and the National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal.

#### Vice President

Allen Dunn is Professor of English at the University of Tennessee. His areas of specialization include literary theory and twentieth-century literature. He is editor of 'Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal' and co-editor with Alan Singer of 'Literary Aesthetics: A Reader.' His recent work addresses the role of ethical philosophy in literary criticism. He was introduced to the Society by Ralph Norman in whose footsteps he has tried to follow and is addicted to the anaerobic ecstasy that he finds in cycling and rowing.



#### Secretary

Janet Edwards chairs the 2006 Program Committee. Since '75, she has led SVHE morning groups, offered writing workshops, and is a founding member of the Women's Group and the Cronos. She earned her undergraduate degree at Duke and her Ph.D. in English literature at Harvard University, where she held a 1965 Danforth Fellowship for Women. She has taught at the Park School of Baltimore, Bard College, and University of Maryland Baltimore County, and served as program officer at the National Endowment for the Humanities. Now retired, she lives and writes in Chapel Hill, NC; travels with husband Carl (SVHE '61), and delights in their 6 grandchildren..

#### Treasurer

Dick Harter will serve as Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee. This is where he came in to the Society 30 years ago. Recycling works. Dick serves as counsel to Bingham McCutchen LLP, a large law firm whose principal office is in Boston. Although he has provided general corporate advice and executive compensation advice to clients for many years, much of his current work is for non-profit organizations. He has served as Interim President of Chicago Theological Seminary and as a long-term trustee of both Chicago Theological Seminary and LeMoyné-Owen College. Dick and his wife Gay, also a Society member, are dedicated bicyclists.

All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence.  
Martin Luther King, Jr.

The following report was submitted by George Newtown to Bob Spivey, President SVHE and Ned Moore, President VFIC.

## 2005 Summer Workshop for College Teachers—Final Report

The inaugural SVHE/VFIC Summer Workshop for College Teachers took place at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon, on 27 July through 2 August 2005. The workshop involved participants in extensive morning sessions during the annual meeting of the Society for Values in Higher Education; their afternoons and evenings remained available for preparing microteaching slices, for participating in the activities of the SVHE, and for sightseeing in the Portland area.

Twenty-one faculty members participated from eight of the VFIC member institutions: Bridgewater (3), Hampden-Sydney (2), Hollins (1), Lynchburg (3), Mary Baldwin (3), Marymount (3), Randolph-Macon Woman's College (3), and Shenandoah (3). Facilitators were Alice Araujo (Mary Baldwin), Beth Bennett (Washington and Jefferson), Amy Berger (Heidelberg), and George Newtown (Centenary).

Sessions at the workshop placed content in the context of examining implicit and explicit values of teaching practices. Each of the following areas came into consideration in collaborative sessions led by the facilitators: Learning Styles, Syllabus Construction, Microteaching, Assessment, and Writing Assignments. In addition, the workshop staff assisted the participants in delineating institutional and personal goals.

Evaluations submitted by the participants rated all aspects of the workshop in the affirmative column. The participants found the workshop valuable and that they wish to construct additional liaisons among their institutions in the near future.

The most consistently positive reactions valued comments from peer consultants, appreciated the emphasis on values and ethical concerns in teaching, and praised the effectiveness of the workshop leaders. There was less consensus about the scheduling of the workshop, the transparency of the community-building techniques that facilitators demonstrated in their peda-

gogies, and the clarity and timeliness of pre-workshop information. Several participants mentioned their unclear understanding of the relation between the workshop and the SVHE annual meeting. These areas, along with a reexamination of all sessions to ensure they are appropriate to the levels of experience of the largely mid-career faculty participants, should figure in the redesign of the 2006 SVHE/VFIC workshop.

For 2006 Amy Berger will direct the workshop, which will take place 20-25 July 2006 at North Central College in Naperville in Illinois. In order to prevent a misunderstanding such as occurred this year over expectations for expenses and honoraria for staff, SVHE should provide workshop facilitators with written contracts delineating their responsibilities and compensation.

After hearing a preliminary report of the 2005 workshop, the SVHE Board offered a variety of suggestions for better integrating the 2006 workshop participants into the SVHE Annual Meeting: coordinate scheduling more closely with the SVHE Program Committee; publish the names, disciplines, and institutional affiliations of SWCT participants in the last SVHE newsletter before the meeting; post photographs and bios of participants prominently during the SVHE meeting; set aside an hour in the workshop schedule as a "Meet the Board" session; reschedule SWCT activities so that participants might take part in a Morning Group and/or invite participants to give papers or presentations in afternoon groups.

The facilitators noted that participants' views of what their participation in the workshop meant to their home institutions and to VFIC varied widely. Their impressions ranged from being unaware of any expectations beyond individual professional development to expecting that they would become part of a grant writing effort on behalf of VFIC. Some participants seemed resistant to the idea

that their institution had sent "a team" rather than a collection of individuals. To the extent that VFIC and the participating institutions have goals beyond the professional growth of the individual participants, the VFIC/SVHE offices should consider ways of imposing more consistency in the recruitment process from campus to campus, perhaps through the creation of a pamphlet or webpage that deans could make available to prospective participants to ensure greater accuracy of information. The VFIC college deans should be impressed as well with the need for greater ethnic diversity in the choice of participants.

As regards future activity, teams from the individual VFIC colleges outlined possible goals for their institutions in the areas of increasing interdisciplinary and team teaching; supporting interactions among faculty; introducing service learning or increasing connections between service learning programs and academic programs; strengthening connections between career preparation and the liberal arts; increasing international or global emphasis; and mentoring new faculty.

Participants and facilitators from this year's workshop expect to participate in a reunion in November 2005 at a conveniently located Virginia college. (see page 5) At that time, in addition to reestablishing contact with one another, they will share progress reports about their personal and institutional goals. A list serve has been established to help participants keep in touch.

Jong Ra of Hollins College, one of the original VFIC planners for this workshop and a participant this year, has offered to spearhead efforts to construct ongoing VFIC workshops on the pattern of the SVHE/VFIC Summer Workshop for College Teachers. The SVHE and VFIC leadership will need to coordinate grant-writing and planning efforts in order to establish and maintain such a consorsial initiative.

## SVHE WEBSITE PROMPTS EARLY DISCUSSION ON HONOR IN THE PROFESIONS

Below are excerpts from a recent on-line discussion begun on SVHE's website, [www.svhe.org](http://www.svhe.org). We encourage on-line conversations on this or other topics of interest. The site is designed as a place where Fellows and others can not only obtain information about SVHE activities, but also join existing conversations or propose topics for new ones. If you have questions or need help posting comments, contact Renee Devereux in the SVHE office: [pdx01442@pdx.edu](mailto:pdx01442@pdx.edu) or (503) 725.2575.

Forum Question: Honor in the Professions...

Friends:

I recently heard Joseph Wilson (his wife is Valerie Plame) give a speech. . . He was impressive and, in a calm but intense way, "built his case."

As you know, whether this matter of his wife being outed should be criminalized, is becoming an issue. People like Richard Clark, in a recent Terry Gross interview, are seeking ways to talk about wrongdoing short of committing crimes. I'm interested in how our FM theme of honor invites us to test the force, status, and value of "extra-legal" talk about wrongdoing.

Does it seem to you that our theme invites us to carve out some conceptual or verbal space for thinking about wrongdoing in a value context outside the "criminal?" Wilson, understandably, wants to see the culprits as criminals (which they may very well be); however, Clark is looking for that other ethical space for registering his disgust at Rove and Co. Am I right that so much human action that warrants condemnation, and even some sort of punishment or sanction, may escape criminal charges and yet still be condemned for being dishonorable (eg. Clinton)? And I'm not talking about the idea of mere personal "dishonor," but somehow the dishonor done to --- how to put it?--- one's profession, or, in the present case, public life. That dishonor consists of failing to meet the responsibility one has to offset the currently fashionable cynicism towards "politics" or "politicians."

Camus said once he learned all he needed to know about ethics on the soccer field. That statement always intrigued me. I think he meant that, beyond the loyalty one has for one's team and the dedicated effort towards winning, there's also a loyalty toward the game -- the idea that you are responsible for meeting certain standards of gamesmanship that are to be judged by more than just the final score. Our theme for this year is, don't you think, searching for a language or a context for discussing standards of behavior that are not narrowly "legalistic" or superficially reducible to mere "manners." Perhaps the Enlightenment idea of "decorum" carries this sort of moral weight, even if today it seems a fairly lightweight term.

I welcome your thoughts and wonder if it may be useful for me to post this meditation and any responses to it (along with the Cavafy poem) on the website, and invite others to chime in. What do you think? We do need to plant some seeds for July that can make our theme more than a 5 day occasion.

Cheers

George T. Karnezis

George, I think that you have put your finger on some important ideas. Compliance with the law and with explicit codes of conduct is the minimum that one should expect from any professional. "Honor" to me means going beyond the required minimum behavior. It connotes a respect for the deepest traditions of one's society and of one's profession. Camus' comment about the soccer field is relevant.

I happen to be a passionate fan of the Orioles, especially the old Orioles pre-Edward Bennet Williams . . . the old Oriole Way, involved a complete dedication to playing the game the way it was

meant to be played. Players covered their positions well, batters played smart, the pitchers were well trained, everyone focused on getting things done right and they were embarrassed about mistakes. Even mediocre players played well in such an environment. The team was great to watch and they were a model organization. They actually loved the game and wanted to do justice to the game. In the same way, the best lawyers I have known have loved the law and its traditions and have internalized an ethos of service to clients, society and to the law. For them, not doing your best or disgracing the profession, were crimes as bad as criminal behavior.

Stephen Sfekas

I wonder how women experience differently than men the concept of "honor." Too frequently, both past and present, women are the objects by which men claim or redeem their "honor." And the ways in which women themselves traditionally have been considered "honorable" (virtuous) have been largely defined through male lens. What say, sisters?

Anne Underwood

The American Film Institute did a survey of critics once to come up with the greatest hero in movies. The first choice was Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. A great lawyer and great man.

The joke, George Will once commented that if you dig down deep enough into any American scandal at the bottom of it you will find a college basketball coach.

Steve

Thanks, Steve. Your personal response is so welcome. I believe that we need to find as many resources as we can for bringing such traditions and their adherents to light. (Can your group in historical fiction be a resource for that?)

It seems to me that too often "honor" has a limited military application or association with individuals involved in a duel. There are probably literary images that can help us to talk about less militant "heroism". How often in the Hebrew Bible, or in classic Greek tragedy does honor become a palpable value for us as a way of understanding human behavior or, more importantly, conflict -- both personal and public? Arguably, tragedy, at its most profound, offers such images.

Your fuller reference to a sports model resonates with Giamatti's fully developed condemnation of Rose; it also, relative to higher education, raises questions we hear so often about intercollegiate sports. Frankly I'm sickened by the drumbeat of publicity for the character-building virtues that the collegiate sports establishment so often insists upon. What kind of "games" are these giant athletic departments playing to be as successful as they are? (Did you know that at one time, when a forensics team would return from a successful competition, it would be greeted with a gathering of students cheering their victory?)

Thanks again,

George

## A Note from Nancy Thomas regarding the Democracy Project's

January 28—29, 2006, the Association for American Colleges and Universities held its annual meeting in DC. It was a terrific conference with nearly 1300 attendees. Bill Sullivan, Tony Chambers, and I convened a session on the Wingspread gathering and the draft declaration. *(The Declaration is included in this newsletter as an insert and is also available in an easy to print PDF version at [www.svhe.org](http://www.svhe.org))* The group of over 100 had a chance to read it, discuss it in small groups, and comment.

The declaration was also mentioned in a number of other sessions and at an SVHE informal reception on Friday night. By the end of two days, 493 copies of the declaration had been picked up. We invited people to comment via email or post comments on the SVHE web site.

The comments were overwhelmingly positive. People were grateful that we had done this and that we are "starting the conversation." One person called the statement "bold and useful." There was widespread agreement that this is an important topic, that colleges and universities should be more attentive to matters of public life, that this is a diversity issue *and* an issue of academic content and excellence, and that the document is generally balanced and comprehensive.

The comments were also constructive. A few people expressed concern that the document does not adequately address the realities of public institutions and the Constitutional restraints they face. A few commented that religiously affiliated colleges are "way ahead" in this debate. And there was real worry that we were going overboard in trying to "protect" religious students while not saying as much about protecting the rights of students with other views, especially around controversial issues.

A number of people took exception to this sentence on page three:  
*Higher education must foster a spirit of tolerance and actively champion an attitude of mutual respect and affirmation of the value of pluralism in a democracy without implicitly or explicitly privileging secular-rational world-*

*views or particular religious perspectives in the search for truth.* The questions were, is this "code" for supporting intelligent design in the evolution debate? And, shouldn't a secular-rational (scientific-data) perspective be privileged in an academic community?

The other sentence that was questioned was this: *It is important to distinguish the ideals of rational inquiry, which are common property of many of the world's great religious traditions as well as Western philosophy and science, from both religious and secular worldviews. Debate among worldviews is a valid, though often contentious and difficult, part of intellectual life.* The feeling was that worldviews, including religious worldviews, should be subjected to critique, debate, and rational inquiry. To "distinguish" them seemed, to these commentators, as though we were allowing an exemption from scrutiny.

Our next steps are to (1) consider comments and make changes as we see fit, (2) take the draft back to the Johnson Foundation/Wingspread for consideration, and (3) keep working to find funding for the action strategies we identified last July. These include faculty development and further gatherings, so stay tuned.

We welcome comments on the declaration. Post them on the web site or email them directly to me at [democracyproject@aol.com](mailto:democracyproject@aol.com). And if you want to start a dialogue on your campus and want SVHE to be involved, let us know!

Thanks for your continued support and interest.

Nancy L. Thomas, JD, EdD  
Director, Democracy Project  
Society for Values in Higher Education  
(860) 657-9907 (tel.)  
(860) 659-0222 (fax)  
[democracyproject@aol.com](mailto:democracyproject@aol.com)

It's easy to embrace theological absolutism. It's harder to find the right balance between the legitimate role of faith in our lives and the demands of our civic religion.

--Senator Barak Obama (D. Illinois)



**"Secrecy and an Open Society"**  
To read the entire lecture go to [www.svhe.org](http://www.svhe.org) and click on the "Matters of Interest" link.



## Update on SWCT 2006

In November Bob Spivey, Amy Berger, and Cynthia Magistro traveled to Lynchburg, Virginia to meet with Ned Moore, the Executive Director of the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges and five participants from last summer's Summer Workshop for College Teachers (SWCT). The meeting validated the work of last summer's workshop staff; participants reported feeling challenged, encouraged, and enriched by their workshop experiences. However, they did not experience SWCT as

an easy introduction to SVHE, and this seems to be due, to a large extent, to the fact that they did not attend FM Morning Groups where they might have developed relationships with society members. To address this problem, Amy Berger, who will direct the 2006 workshop, plans to schedule SWCT groups in the afternoons; each SWCT participant will attend a regular morning group in addition to the afternoon teacher's workshop sessions.

SWCT is in excellent shape for the summer of 2006. We will again be working with the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges to provide the workshop to teams of faculty from VFIC schools. Staff members will be Amy Berger (director), Sherman Beverly, Dave Stewart (a New Teacher's Workshop alumnus) and Terry Dolson, the Faculty Development Specialist from the University of Richmond.

## Board Member Speaks at Shawnee State University

SVHE Board Member and President-elect Jon A. Wiant delivered a public lecture on "Secrecy and an Open Society" at Shawnee State University in Portsmouth, Ohio January 23, 2006. The lecture was sponsored by the Office of the Provost and introduced by SVHE Fellow Dr. Michael Fields, University Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. In

the packed auditorium, Wiant discussed the current controversy over electronic surveillance in the context of the country's 225 years of tension between the needs for secret intelligence and the openness of democratic society. Noting that the problems first appeared with the creation of a Committee for secret Correspondence by the first Continental

Congress, Wiant explored how executive, congressional and judicial oversight have evolved to manage the balance between the often contradictory requirements. Wiant lead a Morning Group on these issues at the 2006 Annual Fellows Meeting.

### NOTICE

If you haven't done so yet, another reason to pay this year's dues is that failure to do so will result in your Soundings subscription being canceled for next year. While financial considerations have made this policy necessary, you will continue to receive the SVHE Newsletter. We hope all who have not paid their dues as yet will wish to maintain their Soundings subscription as one of the benefits of active membership.

**SUCH A DEAL: INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIP!**

For a mere \$500 annually, institutions can join those colleges and universities which have become institutional members of SVHE. We invite Fellows to approach their Presidents and/or Deans and inform them of the benefits such membership brings: two free individual memberships for their colleagues, reduced registration for the Annual Meeting, and free access to the Society's resources and services. We thank those fellows who have helped us increase and sustain institutional membership. The SVHE Office will happily send literature and information you can use to recruit new institutional members.



SVHE Board of Directors has unanimously endorsed the creation of a Memorial Fund to honor deceased Fellows whom we will especially miss at our Annual Meetings. It is fitting that in their memory we encourage members to contribute to a fund dedicated to the financial support of younger Fellows to attend Annual Meetings. Fellows are invited to name an individual in whose memory their contribution is being made. The Board believes this new fund will be a fine memorial to those whose presence contributed so much to the Society, and whose spirit of fellowship will be carried on by those younger members who will be grateful for the support they receive in their memory.

**Contributions to honor living Fellows are also welcome.**

Helena Meyer-Knapp has made a donation to the memorial fund in memory of Chuck Vandersee. Chuck passed away in January of 2003. He came to the Society as a Danforth Fellow in 1960. His good fellowship and contributions to SVHE will be missed.

Lynore Banchoff has donated to the memorial fund in memory of Rosemary Desjardins. Rosemary joined SVHE as a Danforth Graduate in 1968. Rosemary remained a valued and active member of the Society until 1998 when she moved to Australia.

David and Nancy Jones would like to thank and acknowledge two wonderful people and their extreme kindness – Dick and Gay Harter. In their honor the Jones' have made a contribution.

**Review of “God’s Politics” by Jim Wallis  
By: Henry Clark**

*God’s Politics* is a book that should be of great interest to politically conscious members of SVHE.

As its provocative subtitle “Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn’t Get It” suggests, the book gives people in different camps much to ponder. Evangelicals will be stung by Wallis’ analysis of the Bush administration and those who too quickly and unequivocally align themselves with it; progressives will be jolted by a sobering critique of “secular fundamentalism” and the tendency of liberal Christians to dismiss right-wing church folks as moralistic morons. If the book receives the thoughtful reception it deserves, both sides could unite in a new political-religious revival that concentrates on solving pressing human problems instead of using litmus-test labeling to certify their own ideological position.

Most churchgoers have heard of *Sojourners*, but they may not know much about the group or its courageous, energetic leader, Jim Wallis. One fascinating feature of *God’s Politics* is the overview it gives us of Wallis’s activities for over twenty years, and what kinds of leaders he’s been conferring with. Readers will be reminded of great public figures and of a number of their finest speeches; moreover, they will be introduced to several unsung spiritual heroes whose words and deeds will reinforce your hope for a better world.

These accounts of activities carried out in the name of *Sojourners* do not appear self-promoting, let alone self-aggrandizing. Instead, they testify to Wallis’s habit of viewing one’s daily round as an occasion for finding God – and opportunities for serving His purposes – in the mundane as well as the exalted. The same can be said of Wallis’s numerous references to his family, even his very young children, who are presented and commented on without sentimentality.

*God’s Politics* presents a strong argument for the indispensability of both personal virtue and social justice. It urges conservatives and liberals to abandon stereotypes of those they oppose, and to acknowledge that the real tasks of religious praxis today are in the arena of constructive actions, not finger-pointing. It instructs us to

move beyond the politics of complaint to a politics of solution in which we focus on discerning, designing and cooperating with all other people of good will in delivering genuine help to people in need. Wallis offers solutions and policy recommendations about tough issues, ranging from terrorism, war, abortion, gay marriage, and racial justice.

One noteworthy feature of the book is its admirably calm tone. It provides narrative, analysis, interpretation and exhortation, but it never indulges in invective or sarcasm. It is passionate in its appeal for economic justice. Wallis insists that there is no moral issue more crucial than that of poverty, and he rebukes Republicans for seeming to deny this theological fact, and Democrats for letting them get away with faith-talk that omits appropriate emphasis on the social gospel. On tax policy, he quotes with approval a statement made in a *Sojourners* article by Bill Gates, Sr. and Chuck Collins derived from their book, *Wealth and Commonwealth*: “Society has an enormous claim upon the fortunes of the wealthy. This is rooted not only in most religious traditions, but also in honest accounting of society’s substantial investment in creating the fertile ground for wealth-creation...The notion that it is all mine is a violation of these teachings and traditions.”

Not everyone will agree with Wallis on every point, and skeptics may question his optimism. But one of the many strengths of this book is its attack on a cynical withdrawal from politics and the evidence it provides for entering into the political struggle with hope. *God’s Politics* is full of stories about how some worthy goal which once seemed unattainable was in fact achieved in a relatively short time. Wallis does more than merely exhort, he predicts. And if his argument is heard and acted on by enough people, many of the hopes he sets before us may be realized in the not-too-distant future. As the final sentence of the book says, we do not have to search for extraordinary leaders such as FDR or Martin Luther King, for what is required is deeper commitment in our own lives. “We are the people we have been waiting for.”

## Regional Meetings

At the July 28, 2005 board meeting a discussion regarding the importance of revitalizing regional meetings took place, noting that the annual Meeting does not capture all membership and regional meetings can help encourage new membership. To that end we have held two successful regional meetings. The first took place in conjunction with the winter Board meeting and AAC&U annual conference in Washington, D.C. The second regional meeting was held in conjunction with the Institute on College Student Values in Tallahassee, Florida. At each meeting, The Wingspread Declaration (included in this newsletter as an insert) was the focus.

### Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting—Washington, D.C., January 29, 2006 In conjunction with the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)

Because much current public discourse about values and the place of religion in the public sphere remains superficial and merely contentious, the Society’s commitment to productive attention to such subjects is especially important. As Nancy Thomas has noted on page 16, the SVHE Mid Atlantic Regional Meeting provided opportunities for further reflection on the draft of the Wingspread Declaration emerging from the 2005 SVHE sponsored Wingspread Conference on “Religion and Public Life: Engaging Higher Education.” Some sixty SVHE Fellows attended this regional meeting in Washington D.C. They joined interested AAC&U members in a lively discussion focused on the emerging Declaration, which is now receiving national attention. The Society’s goal is to continue to create further opportunities for productive and rigorous attention to this topic, and we are pleased that this regional meeting contributed so successfully to that goal.

### SVHE Southeast Regional Meeting—Tallahassee, Florida February 3-4, 2006 In conjunction with the Institute on College Student Values (ICSV)

Through a combination of Institute sessions on the theme, “Finding Wholeness: Students’ Search for Meaning and Purpose in College,” and special SVHE sessions on “Religion and Public Life: Engaging Higher Education” (Wingspread Declaration draft), this regional gathering was both promising and productive.

Especially noteworthy Institute programs were plenary speeches by Rebecca Chopp (president of Colgate University and former dean of Yale Divinity School) and by Alan Wolfe (director of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life and professor of political science at Boston College) and the sessions on “Religion and Public Life: Engaging Higher Education” led by SVHE Fellows, Art Chickering and Bob Spivey.

Though attendance was sparse for the special SVHE sessions, participation was superb in discussion of the draft of the SVHE Wingspread Declaration and of the special presentations – “Torture, Justification, and Human Rights: Toward an Absolute Proscription” by former SVHE Fellow, Sumner (Barney) Twiss (FSU Distinguished Professor of Human Rights, Ethics and Religion) and “Evolution and Intelligent Design” by former SVHE Fellow, Leo Sandon (FSU Distinguished Teaching Professor of Religion and American Studies and syndicated religion in America columnist).

For further information email Bob Spivey at [bspivey@foundation.fsu.edu](mailto:bspivey@foundation.fsu.edu).

The following article was submitted by Sean O’Connell, a member of the Society for over 37 years, detailing his termination from Bermuda College. To contact Sean please email him at [connell@northrock.bm](mailto:connell@northrock.bm). SVHE has sent a letter to Bermuda College voicing its concern that proper procedures be followed in this case.

## A Legalized Lynching By Sean O’Connell

I became a member of the Society 37 years ago while a Jesuit seminarian studying for my Ph.D. in mathematics at C.U.N.Y. Since then I have taught in the U.K., Sweden, and most recently, at the Bermuda College. Throughout my 29 years of service at that institution, I took leadership roles in championing the highest ideals of our organization committed to the values of integrity, excellence, discipline and diversity.

So when I received an abrupt termination of employment notice from the President two years ago for alleged gross misconduct stemming from false charges of highly inappropriate racial slurs, I was devastated. The fictional story of Professor Coleman Silk from Philip Roth’s brilliant novel *The Human Stain* had suddenly become all too real. What could never possibly happen in a sophisticated society governed by the rule of law was not only actually taking place on my own campus, but to me personally in a manner that defies belief.

My sorry saga is reminiscent of Kafka’s *The Trial*, and in some ways actually more bizarre. Like a set up for a kind of new age play, its first scene features three white professors socializ-

ing before evening class, chatting innocently about various personages and their petty peculiarities. Unbeknownst to these interlocutors, lurking in the shadows in one of the adjacent offices sits an eavesdropper scribbling down whatever he thinks he hears. Next scene finds him in the Vice President’s office the following day denouncing the trio and especially me for particular insensitivity. The suggestion of direct confrontation is dismissed as the official assures him that she will “take care of it”.

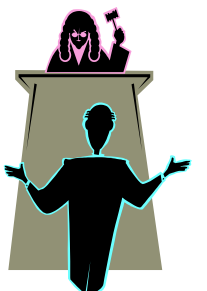
Two months later an internal committee interviewed the four of us separately. I explained that I had never called my accuser a “grease monkey” but rather was repeating a story I had heard earlier about a white Canadian who resented being pressured into wearing fancy academic robes at graduation since he was just a “grease monkey”, i.e., a mechanic. This body advised that we all attend a joint session with representatives of the Diversity Institute and the Committee for Unity and Racial Equality. The conclusion of that gathering was that none of us would knowingly speak or listen to any racist views and that by collaboration, campus tensions could be

overcome. This seemed to me eminently reasonable and fair to all concerned.

Then three months out of the blue came my letter of “extermination”. Over the last two years, I have been striving to secure justice using my local union representation. By means of various delay tactics and subterfuges, the College authorities have managed to avoid granting me a fair and impartial hearing. The Labor Dept. has just concluded an investigation which revealed that proper procedures had not been followed by management and urged both parties to accept arbitration. The trouble is that Bermuda legislation only allows the Minister to appoint an arbitrator if both parties agree and to date, the Board of Governors has refused to consent to this step thereby making a mockery of employee protections, natural justice, and fundamental fairness.

I ask for your support in my quest to secure exoneration, vindication, and reinstatement. This cause is truly worthy of your attention.

My sorry saga is eerily reminiscent of Kafka’s *The Trial*, and in some ways actually more bizarre.



## Morning Group Fellowship Program

The SVHE is pleased to announce a fellowship program designed to bring new voices into our Morning Group discussions at the yearly Fellows Meeting.

Each established morning group is invited to nominate a scholar whose work is making an important contribution to the field which the group is discussing. Both younger and more established scholars are eligible for this award. The scholars who are awarded fellowships will be expected to present works of original scholarship to the groups who have nominated them, and to participate in all of that group's discussions. In return, the fellowship recipient will receive \$1,000 to

defray the cost of attending the fellows meeting and to provide a modest stipend. Fellowship recipients will be selected by the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. The recipients will be chosen on the basis of their vitae and brief statements by the conveners who have nominated them. These statements should explain why the nominee's participation would be valuable for the group.

The Fellowships will be named for illustrious members of the Society. If you are interested in soliciting donations in honor of individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the Society and its programs, please contact the SVHE

office. Fellowships will be awarded only when they have been fully funded.

We are pleased to announce the Ralph Norman Morning Group Fellowship as the first in this program. Ralph Norman was editor of *SOUNDINGS* from 1985 until 2000 and has worked tirelessly to advance the interests of the SVHE.

In order to nominate Morning Group Scholars for 2006 or to make contributions to the Fellowship fund in honor or memory of distinguished fellows, please contact the SVHE office by April 15, 2006.

## LIBERAL EDUCATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP?

Those who regularly follow the ebb and flow of reflections on Liberal Education should find the following items of interest.

The cover of the Spring 2005 issue of the AAC&U publication *Peer Review* invites readers to articles on "Liberal Education and the Entrepreneurial Spirit." One argues that "the concept of entrepreneurship embodies the value of freedom that is also at the core of the liberal education." Other titles include "Academics are Intellectual Entrepreneurs," "Creating an Entrepreneurial Campus Culture," and "Fostering Social Entrepreneurship through Liberal Learning in the Social Sciences." Peter W. Bardaglio of Ithaca College claims that "academic entrepreneurship seeks to establish connections across disciplines . . . and between campus and community. It draws on the spirit of innovation, creativity and opportunity

that animates entrepreneurial activity in the business world to provide the richest learning experience possible for students."

From the UK, there appears a less optimistic voice in Mary Evans's *Killing Thinking* (Continuum, 2005). For Evans, a professor of Women's Studies at the University of Kent, knowledge, creativity, and education in British Universities have been replaced by "the painting-by-numbers exercise of the hand-out culture and the transformation of much research into an atavistic battle for funds."

The extent to which allegedly corporate values do or do not harmonize with higher education in the U.S. is the subject of Jennifer Washburn's *University Inc., the Corporate Corruption of Higher Education* (Basic Books, 2005). Washburn quotes a speech by UC Berkeley Chancellor

Robert Berdahl who worries about the incompatibility of market and academic values: "With the new capacity of some faculty . . . to earn substantial amounts outside the university, there can be a corresponding devaluation of the work of humanists and social scientists . . . it is worrisome that the great challenges posed by the advent of the new technologies . . . are fundamentally issues of ethics and public policy. Who will guide us through the moral and policy thicket of this new age if the humanists and social scientist are weakened by the overwhelming drive of market forces in a university-industrial complex?" (23-24)

Since our next Fellows Meeting takes up the subject of "Honor in the Professions," such reading might be especially pertinent for an exploration of how higher education's integrity is honored or dishonored by what some critics have called its corporatization.

(Continued from page 12)

*Clay* by Michael Chabon. We look forward to the 2006 meeting and urge those interested in participating to contact the conveners or to begin reading now for another exciting week of work on historical fiction.

### Intelligence, Security and a Dangerous World

Jon A. Wiant (wiantjc@earthlink.net)

The facilitator is a Senior Intelligence Specialist with a leading organization in professional intelligence education and a retired intelligence officer. Topics include: Foreign Intelligence and Domestic Security, Ethic and Intelligenc, Intelligence and American Culture, and Teaching and Intelligence. Prospective participants and presenters are encouraged to e-mail Jon.

### Rawls Reconsidered: 'A Theory of Justice' in the Twenty-first Century

Allen Dunn (ardunn@utk.edu)

Eric Bain Selbo (selbo@lvc.edu)

Perhaps no work in political philosophy in the 20th century was more influential than John Rawls' 'A Theory of Justice.' Though qualified and clarified by the author in subsequent writings, this landmark account of justice, equality, and democracy is as relevant today as it was when published in 1971. This morning group will examine some of the most important parts of the text. These careful readings will be supplemented by a few secondary sources---representing critical assessments of Rawls' work and placing it within the broader spectrum of options in political philosophy.

### Popular Culture

Dan Shoemaker (dancshoemaker@mac.com)

Dan Sack (sack@alumni.princeton.edu)

The Popular Culture morning group is interested in bringing a distinctly SVHE lens to popular culture--i.e., we are interested in looking at popular culture broadly understood with three questions in mind:

- 1) What values are communicated through popular culture?
- 2) What does popular culture tell us about society?
- 3) How can use this knowledge?

We define popular culture quite broadly. Previous presentations have included identity in post-9/11 movies, community and grace in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and

the Rapture according to *The Simpsons*. Other possible topics include video games, clothing, food practices, and magazines--the only limit is your imagination.

Presentations are eagerly welcomed.

### Religion & Violence

Helena Meyer-Knapp (meyernh@evergreen.edu)

Emily Hartigan (ehartigan@stmarytx.edu)

This morning group has dealt in the past with the intersection of religion with forms of violence and languages of peace, including historical and current perspectives. Papers this year range from a meditation on the most violent episodes of Hebrew Scripture to comic eschatology's disarming function. We invite presenters to propose related topics.

### Teaching and Learning: Honor and Excellence in Education

Cynthia Magistro (magistro@setonhill.edu or 412-537-3890)

Presentations are invited that shed light on or raise questions about honor and excellence in teaching and learning. Conversations will range from pragmatic to philosophical as we consider the meanings and outcomes of particular ways of engaging students and relating to colleagues.

### Weaving/Unweaving: Penelope's Journey

Rebecca Daniels (rdaniels@stlawu.edu)

Richard Carp (carprm@appstate.edu)

We believe that Penelope's "journey" within the context of the story of the *Odyssey* was critically important but substantially undervalued, even under noticed, throughout history. We intend to explore her journey as a female/feminist equivalent of the epic of the *Odyssey*, an alternative to the traditional hero's journey, using weaving and unweaving as a significant metaphorical structure for our discussions. We will examine Penelope's life and actions as an alternative to heroism that is equally valiant, equally creative, and equally necessary to this foundational story of Western culture. Readings suggested in preparation for our discussions include The Odyssey (Robert Fagles translation recommended), and Regarding Penelope by Nancy Felsen-Rubin. If you would like to make a presentation, please check with the conveners concerning your topic

## Preparing for FM 2006—Morning Group Offerings

Morning Groups are the heart of the annual Fellow's Meeting. These interdisciplinary groups meet for three hours each day over four consecutive mornings, giving members the opportunity to build upon previous day's conversations and to explore topics in depth. Quite a few of the groups are enriched by a multi-year history as well. Newcomers are warmly welcomed to join any group.

We ask morning group conveners to keep in mind the overall theme of this year's Fellow's Meeting, Honor in the Professions. Afternoon and evening sessions considering the theme of honor in four professions (medicine, law, teaching, and religion) are likely to offer provocative counterpoints to morning group presentations.

Please contact the morning group conveners listed below if you have questions and, especially, if you would like to make a presentation:

### Celebrating the Religious Search

Hal Jackson ([halamjac@comcast.net](mailto:halamjac@comcast.net))

Carol Ochs ([cochs@earthlink.net](mailto:cochs@earthlink.net))

Through the many different permutations of this group we have now arrived at a recognition of the joy involved in our different journeys. We are delighted that some people have already agreed to share with the group, and we have room for a few more presentations on individual's own spiritual searches.

### Environmental Values

Jerry Berberet ([wgerberet@aol.com](mailto:wgerberet@aol.com))

Jo Margaret Mano ([manoj@newpaltz.edu](mailto:manoj@newpaltz.edu))

The Environmental Values morning group will convene for the sixteenth consecutive year at the 2006 SVHE Fellows Meeting. Mounting concerns about the potentially catastrophic effects of environmental trends such as global warming are met with a seemingly official indifference in the United States. With the approach of the 2006 Congressional elections, the morning group will analyze the state of the global environment to identify environmental perspectives that might bring official Washington and much of the rest of the world closer together. In addition, the morning group will explore an upper Midwest environmental issue through discussion and a field trip. Participants are encouraged to propose readings and volunteer for morning group presentations, if possible by June 1, in keeping with our tradition of taking the group where the participants want to go. We will circulate a reading list of

what you propose in preparation for our FM discussions.

### Forms of Autobiography

Marianne Finnegan ([mgfinnegan@verizon.net](mailto:mgfinnegan@verizon.net) or 518-587-7961)

Mary Treanor ([mary.treanor@valpo.edu](mailto:mary.treanor@valpo.edu) or 219-464-5128)

This presentation/discussion group welcomes new and returning members. We seek a balance between presenters' own autobiographical work and studies of such materials by others. For our 2006 meeting our chosen theme will be turning points in life—personal, professional, intellectual, moral, spiritual—whatever aspects the autobiographer wishes to explore. As before, we are mainly interested in intention, form, and strategies of shaping one's story.

We invite anyone interested in presenting a paper and/or leading a discussion on some aspect of this general theme to contact us.

### Forty Years On

Phil O'Mara, ([pomara@Bridgewater.edu](mailto:pomara@Bridgewater.edu) or 540-828-5341)

Discussion of major achievements of the mid-sixties in the light of recent thought and experience.

Literary, social, artistic, philosophic, religious and other major accomplishments of the 1960's now seem to mean something different, to belong to our world in different ways. Full papers, short takes, issues for informal discussion are all welcome. Ideally, it would be good to hear from someone who was profoundly impressed then, and also from someone younger, who evaluated the work with fresh eyes more recently.

### Historical Fiction 2006

Stephen Sfekas ([stephen@sfekaslaw.com](mailto:stephen@sfekaslaw.com))

Mary Papke ([papke@utk.edu](mailto:papke@utk.edu))

Historical fiction, as critic Dawn Coleman writes, illustrates for us in striking ways "how the present continually reinvents the significance of the past." The group that participated in last summer's discussion of war novels unanimously decided on the following works for the 2006 meeting: *Middlesex* by Jeffrey Eugenides, *Gilead* by Marilynne Robinson, *The Shadow of the Wind* by Carlos Ruiz Zafon, and *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier &*

(Continued on page 13)

## Book Review: The Da Vinci Code: A Novel by Dan Brown, New York, Doubleday, 2003

By D. Moody Smith

The Da Vinci Code is based on Leonardo Da Vinci, or his work, and provides the protagonists, Robert Langdon, a Harvard professor of religious symbology, and Sophie Neveu, a young French female detective, with crucial clues in their quest for the Holy Grail. The clues have been put in place by Jacques Saumiere, Neveu's grandfather, even after he had been fatally wounded while performing his duties as a curator in the Louvre. After the murder, Langdon and Neveu search for the killer.

The elderly Saumiere was to have met with Langdon to discuss their common religious interests. It turns out that Saumiere was a leader of the shadowy Priory of Sion, said to have included among its members such luminaries as Sir Isaac Newton, as well as Da Vinci himself. The Priory possesses esoteric, secret knowledge about the Holy Grail and Mary Magdalene, which will be revealed in the course of the narrative. Arrayed against the Priory and its knowledge of these mysteries is Opus Dei (work of God), a Roman Catholic prelature, whose existence is much less shadowy. Opus Dei supports the orthodox understanding of Christianity and Christian history, which is rejected by the Priory of Sion with the support of the Professor Langdon.

In their view, the post-Constantinian Christianity of the Christianized Roman Empire painted over historical truths of Christian origins in the interest of presenting Jesus as truly God (and not really human). As God he enforced the authority of the Emperor and the Empire. It was all about power. The inconvenient fact that Jesus had been married to Mary Magdalene and had begotten children by her was suppressed. Documents that revealed this fact were excluded from the New Testa-

ment, which contains only those Gospels that conform to the emerging orthodoxy.

But the truth survived, and Da Vinci, among others, learned it, and passed it on. It is reflected in his famous portrayal of the Last Supper. In the Gospel of John, the disciple reclining on Jesus' bosom is the Beloved Disciple, John himself according to tradition. But if one looks closely at Da Vinci's painting, the disciple at Jesus' right may instead be a woman. Is it Mary Magdalene? If so, she is the Holy Grail. (There is no single cup, but several in the painting.) She is, as Jesus' wife, the receptacle of his blood.

The progeny of Jesus and Mary survived, and can be traced into the Merovingian dynasty in France in the early Middle Ages. Toward the end of the narrative the reader learns that Detective Sophie Neveu herself stands in the Merovingian royal line, and is therefore a direct descendant of Jesus and Mary Magdalene.

Few serious students of Christian origins will take this rewriting of history seriously. There is substantial amount of literary evidence for the "orthodox" understanding of what actually happened. The version cherished by the Priory of Sion is based on surviving snippets of the Gospels of Philip and Mary, in which the disciples complain about how much Jesus kisses Mary Magdalene on the mouth, and wonder why he prefers her to them. Such documents are of uncertain origin and difficult to date, but few scholars believe they are earlier than mid-second century. At best there is no mention of Jesus and Mary begetting children. The view that Jesus was regarded simply as a man until the Constantinian takeover in the early fourth century will not withstand the most casual reading of the New Testament, particularly the Gospel of John (1:1, 18, 20:29).

But the Da Vinci Code is a mystery novel, not an essay on Christian origins. Most of it is devoted to the crime mystery and to the chase. As such it is exciting, even gripping, if also implausible or fantastic. Brown is quite successful in seducing the reader to suspend disbelief, as he unfolds the fast-moving and tightly constructed story. We are swept along by it, and are unlikely to stop to ask whether all this could have transpired within twenty-four hours. Almost certainly not. It is as likely that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene and had several kids!

Readers acquainted with Paris and London will recognize many familiar sites, but less familiar places also loom large: the Church of Saint-Sulpice in Paris and the Temple Church in Fleet Street in London. There is nice topographical symmetry: the story begins at the Louvre and ends there. The Da Vinci Code's wonderful amalgam of fact and fiction is symbolized (appropriately) in Robert Langdon's professional title. There is no such chair of Religious Symbology at Harvard or any institution that I know. It's a fiction. But Harvard University is a fact. Just going through the Da Vinci Code separating fiction and fact would keep one occupied for a long time.





What's been happening?

## FELLOWS NEWS AND PUBLICATIONS

**Thanks to all who have responded to our request for news which you made available to us on the space provided on the form for Annual Dues Payment. More news will appear in our next Newsletter.**

Fellow **Dr. Dixon Sutherland** and Dr. Donald W. Musser, Professors of Religious Studies at Stetson University, have edited *War or Words? Interreligious Dialogue as an Instrument of Peace* (Pilgrim Press) Eight of the eleven essays are based on Stetson University's Value Council theme emphasis on peace, violence, and religion.

**William F. Quillian Jr.**, 92, reports enjoying life, keeping busy with non-profit organizations, playing golf, writing letters to the editor, and wondering if he's the oldest SVHE Fellow.

**Nancy Corson Carter's** essay "War and Environment: Breaking Covenant with God, Earth, Ourselves, and Our Children," appeared in *Church and Society*, (Nov./Dec. 2005)

**Howard Carter's** *Our Human Hearts: A Medical and Cultural Journey* was published in February by Kent State University Press.

**Alfred Bloom** has edited *Living in Amida's Universal Vow* (World Wisdom Press, 2004).

**Valerie S. Field** continues her work for Anishii Native Legal Services, a legal aid organization serving Native Americans in northern Minnesota. In November, she gave a presentation on American Indian Law at Elizabethtown College, PA.

**Carle Arne Anderson** reports "Not dead yet. Still pissed and still willing to let the world know it."

**Jerry Hickerson** served as President of the Association for Continuing Education (2003-4) and retired from the ACHE Board in November, 2005.

**Frederick Coleman** works with a colleague at Kajsinsb House, a cultural healing center for Hmong refugees in Wisconsin, and presented a keynote address, "The Use of Narrative in Healing from Trauma," at the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual California Conference on Mental Health and cultural diversity.

**Karl D. Hartzell** turned 100 on January 17, 2006 and has published *The Laws of Living: American Values in Action*, (Ex Libris).

**Ralph Norman** retired from the University of Tennessee in July, 2003. He continues to work on his manuscript, "Several Senses of Magnanimity." Recent publications include "A Tale of Two regions: F. L. Olmsted, Tom Wolfe, and Public Space," in *Forms of Regionalism*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Center for the Study of Midwestern Cultures, 2005. He has also written the Forward to *Wrestling With God: the Meditations of Richard Marius*, forthcoming from the University of Tennessee Press.

**Marianne Novy's** *Reading Adoption: Family and Difference in Fiction and Drama* is being published by the University of Michigan Press. This discussion of adoption from Sophocles to Kingsolver, and Marianne's personal experience is a follow-up to her *Imaginary Adoption: Essays on Literature and Culture*, which was a *Choice* Outstanding Academic Title.

**We would like to make this a regular feature of our newsletter. Let us know what you have been up to email your submissions to [society@pdx.edu](mailto:society@pdx.edu).**

## Dreaming of Portugal A Memoir—by Marianne Gilbert Finnegan

Lured by the prospect of a mid-life adventure, Marianne Gilbert Finnegan and her husband, Walter, set out to build a home and open an international bookshop in the Algarve, the sunny southern coast of Portugal. They find the beauty they expected and establish warm new friendships across national boundaries. But their journey also leads them through unexpected obstacles presented by people, customs, climate and the quirks and snags of their own, suddenly expatriate, identities. Thus is a delightful memoir that speaks to the longing for adventure and the belief that building a new future is possible at any age.

### About the Author

In mid-life, Marianne Gilbert Finnegan and her husband spent four years in the Algarve region of Portugal. There they established The Griffin, an international bookshop that still continues as a vital community resource for both travelers and foreign residents. Their adventure is the subject of her memoir, *Dreaming of Portugal*, published in 2005.

As the daughter and granddaughter of songwriters and poets, Marianne inherited a strong writing ability. Her earlier memoir *Memories of a Mischling: Becoming an American* (published in 2002) told the story of her family's flight out of Nazi Germany and her growing up in New York City. Later, Marianne married and, during her children's school years, she earned a PhD at the University of Connecticut.

Her subsequent career included years as director of the Connecticut Humanities Council, as administrator and professor at Empire State College in Saratoga Springs, New York, and as owner of the Griffin Bookshop in Portugal. She now teaches at the Academy for Learning in Retirement, which she founded for Empire State College, and exchanges frequent visits with her daughters and grandchildren.

available at: [Borders.com](http://Borders.com) [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) or may be ordered from the author at [mail@mariannefinnegan.com](mailto:mail@mariannefinnegan.com) by email.

## MY FATHER'S HOUSE: A LIFE OF ADOPTION by David Jones

I refer to this as "my book." I was adopted at the age of ten days, and when my father died in 1984 a mentor and good friend told Nancy, "The time is right for the good book on adoption, and David is the one to write it." And so I did. I express the theme of the book in its "Introduction," by writing that "My experience was of adoption; my theme is experience as adoption." I employ my own experience, which indeed was very good and positive (in fact one editor who turned it down said I had written a "thank you," and I have). But it is more than that. My earliest memory is of hearing my father say, "We didn't bring you into the world; we picked you out." I elaborate what that has meant in my experience, and suggest that even though others will not identify specifically

with that experience, that it can illuminate all human experience. I particularly hold up marriage, the meaning of America, and the Christian faith and church to this illumination. It is autobiographical but not an autobiography, and biographical but not a biography. I try to narrate my experience and our family's--I had no siblings--honestly. It was an extraordinarily good experience, but I don't omit the difficulties in this portrait either.

Available in paperback through Barnes and Noble and Amazon; ISBN # 0-595-37461-1, \$16.95 retail.