

# SVHE News: Views & Values



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## Presidents Report—September

October 2005

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In this 81<sup>st</sup> year of the Society's existence there is ample cause for celebration, especially in light of difficulties for some national higher education associations. We have improved communication with Fellows, strengthened the national office, trimmed our capable governing Board, and made measurable progress in SVHE's national projects, while presenting a highly successful Fellows' meeting at Portland State on "Values and Dialogue in a Polarized World."

Specific highlights include:

- Revitalized newsletter, SVHE News: Views and Values, under the editorship of Diane Brotemarkle with Meg Wiant as Layout Editor.
- Comprehensive Society website ([www.svhe.org](http://www.svhe.org)) with capability for in-depth dialogue on ethical issues.
- A sparkling interdisciplinary journal, Soundings, which recently secured financial health.
- Stable and expanded SVHE office staff characterized by the excellence of Pam Montgomery and Renee Devereux.
- Exemplary hard-working Board of Directors which began the process of a reduction in size for greater effectiveness.
- A systematic plan for staff and Board evaluation in order to improve performance and seize opportunities.
- Broadening of our summer teacher workshop to affect both individuals and institutions.
- Extending the Democracy Project to address higher education's engagement with issues of religion and public life.
- Examining fundamental purposes of the Society, including revising the mission statement.

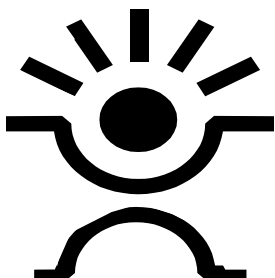
These and other crucial activities of the Society were made possible by the involvement and dedication of numerous Fellows.

At the same time, we realize that continuing strength and vitality require our addressing problems of gradual declines in SVHE membership and in attendance at Fellows' Meeting. Your wisdom, suggestions and ideas are hereby solicited; speaking for the Board, we promise attention and initiative for the good of the Society.

We look forward to seeing you at the 2006 Annual Fellows' Meeting, where our theme will be "Honor in the Professions" – a natural for extending our reach to a wider range of colleagues. Look for additional information to come!

Bob Spivey

([bspivey@foundation.fsu.edu](mailto:bspivey@foundation.fsu.edu))



### Special points of interest:

- 2005-2006 Dues forms are enclosed
- Highlights from this year's FM
- Democracy Project's Religion and Public Life Update

# HURRICANE KATRINA AND STUDENT /INSTITUTIONAL ASSISTANCE

## Messages from AAC&U and CIC

Since the devastation wreaked by hurricane Katrina has affected schools and universities in the area, we have received important messages from organizations seeking to assist students in the continuation of their studies.

In its letter to us, the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) notes how "this event also provides a valuable opportunity for the nation - and its colleges and universities - to reflect on the root issues that make many Americans especially vulnerable in times of catastrophe." It goes

on to observe that colleges and universities not only must provide the needed expertise in situations like this, but also "help the nation redress the causes of the inequality and disenfranchisement made all too clear in the wake of such a disaster."

For institutions seeking assistance or wishing to offer assistance and needing to connect with each other, AAC&U refers us to the Society for College and University Planning, which has set up a Lyris-based e-mail discussion list open to all. To join the lists, send a

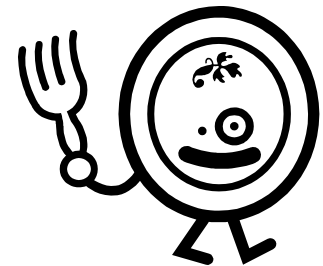
message to [scup-katrina-request@umich.edu](mailto:scup-katrina-request@umich.edu) with "subscribe" in subject line. Best not to have text in message body.

Richard Ekman, President of the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) has notified us that as of September 6th the American Council on Education (ACE) is establishing a website with a message board where institutions in need of help can describe their needs, and others can offer assistance": [www.campusrelief.org](http://www.campusrelief.org).

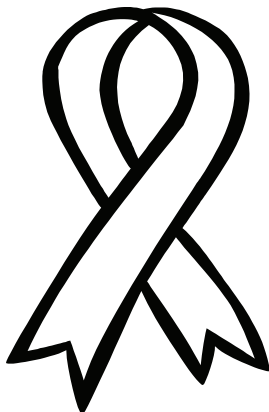
## SVHE SUPPORTS SISTERS OF THE ROAD

During the Simple Supper at the Annual Meeting, the tradition of taking a collection for a local charity was again honored by Society Fellows. Fellows contributed a total \$558.00 to Sisters of the Road whose Portland Café is a refuge for the homeless in a city where only 31% of housing assistance requests are being met. This donation is doubled through corporate support of

the Café whose mission is "to build authentic relationships and alleviate the hunger of isolation in an atmosphere of non-violence and gentle personalism that nurtures the whole individual toward changes that will reach the root of their homelessness and poverty and end it forever." More information is available at [www.sistersoftheroad.org](http://www.sistersoftheroad.org).



## Memorial Fund Honors Fellows



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.

# THANKS TO PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY



The Society's operations are greatly enhanced by the generosity of Portland State University which houses its offices and its library resources. Last year, through the Herculean effort of our office staff, the library was moved from the darkness of PSU storage into the bright light of its office. Normally the cost of renting these facilities would be a considerable strain on our operating budget, so we are most grateful to PSU for providing this

space for us. We are also indebted to the University for the free use of meeting spaces for most Morning Groups during this year's meeting, and for their assistance in making it such a success.

## SVHE Mission Statement

During the February Board meeting we began a discussion of changes to the current SVHE Mission Statement. That process was furthered at the August 1<sup>st</sup> Town Meeting when Janet Edwards skillfully led small groups in proposing revisions.

The following statement reflects a consensus from those energetic discussions, plus comments by board members and deliberation by the Executive Committee of the Board:

**The Society for Values in Higher Education—a fellowship of educators and other professionals, across disciplines—is committed to teaching, learning, and scholarship that nurture ethical, creative, and informed citizens dedicated to the common good. We work to strengthen integrity, diversity, social justice, and civic responsibility in higher education and the wider society.**

Please send your suggestions regarding this proposed Mission Statement to Bob Spivey, SVHE President ([bspivey@foundation.fsu.edu](mailto:bspivey@foundation.fsu.edu)) by Wednesday, November 30th at the latest.

## SVHE WEBSITE: VISIT, READ, AND RESPOND AT [www.svhe.org](http://www.svhe.org)

We have worked hard to make the SVHE website useful to all our members and to provide opportunities for stimulating on-line discussions. We would like to see more website activity and urge you to contribute to it. Morning groups may continue their conversations and share resources. Others may be interested in forming a new group or

can create a forum topic that might lead to the formation of such a group. Current forum topics include: Heri Spirituality Project, SVHE's name and mission, Work as a Calling, and Higher Education Working Conditions. Please let us know what you think of the site. We welcome suggestions for how it may

best serve you and the Society. Send comments to: [society@pdx.edu](mailto:society@pdx.edu)



## EIGHTY-FIRST ANNUAL FELLOWS MEETING A STUNNER IN PORTLAND, OREGON

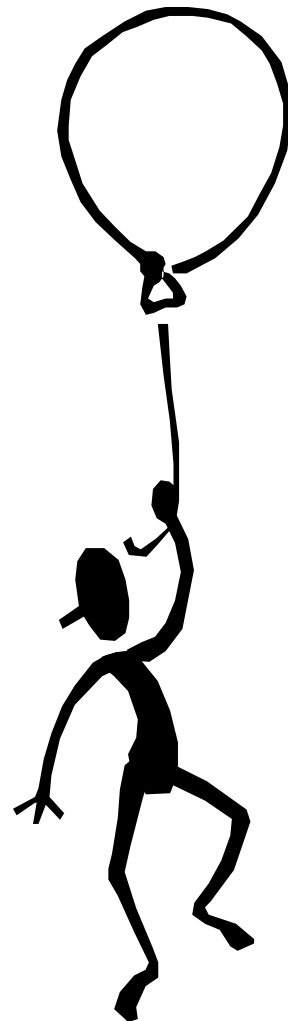
As the descriptions of this year's Morning Groups and the responses to the exciting plenaries indicate, this year's gathering was notable for the many opportunities it provided to refresh our attention to matters that concern anyone thinking seriously about how values inform higher education and the lives of all of us as citizens.

It was also a time for us to experience the delights of a "city that works," where natural and urban life seemed to be less in competition. Mix that into the traditional end-of-the day social gathering, which also included the always rousing (Bennett) Bean Pot sale and the silent auction brilliantly conducted by Nancy Jones and Judy Meschel, and helped by others, such as Scott Berger who assisted with comestibles and potables, and you have a recipe for the kind of fellowship experience that makes this annual event so special.

Whether we were being engaged by the provocative discussion of media and political communication by PSU Professor Larry Wallack, or entranced and even moved by former Oregon Governor Barbara Roberts's wide ranging speech that touched not only on the special qualities of Oregon and the challenges of political leadership, but also on the personal challenge of dealing with her husband's death, these events, along with the creative presentation by Elizabeth Minnich and Sy Kahn on democracy and privatization, and the novel interview format capturing Jon Wiant's rich experience as an educator and intelligence authority, impressed all who attended with how much this meeting embodied the energy of its surroundings as well as the sharp intelligence and wit of so many of its participants.

The Society congratulates and extends its thanks to the Program Committee, Ellen Maher, Cathy Bao Bean, Allen Dunn, Janet Edwards, Nancy Jones, Cynthia Magistro, Meg Wiant, Judy Meschel, and Mary Treanor, as well as to the Society Administrative Staff of, Executive Director Marvin Kaiser, Business Manager Pam Montgomery, and Administrative Assistant Renee Devereux. Thanks also to those who made the Summer Teaching Workshop a success: George Newtown, Amy Berger, Beth Bennett and Alice Araujo. Those who have assisted in the past understand the special challenges, the keen attention to detail and the virtue of patience so necessary to making this Annual Meeting run smoothly. We deeply appreciate all those whose efforts made those sunny summer days at Portland State so memorable.

We look forward to next year's meeting in the Midwest. We encourage new proposals for Morning Groups for a meeting which will address the theme of "Honor in the Professions." Additional details about our next meeting will appear in our newsletter.



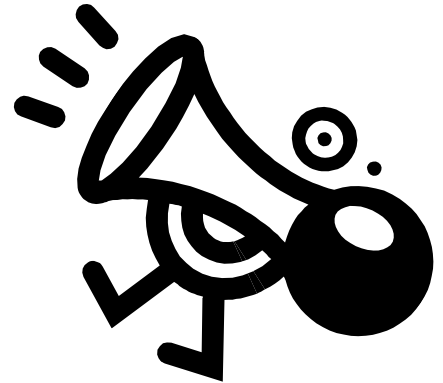
## Morning Groups Rock at the Annual Meeting in Portland Oregon 2005!

### Celebrating the Search

The morning group, "Celebrating the Search" was itself a celebratory meeting of a group that has taken many forms and names over the past twenty years but has always had its eyes on what adds wonder, awe, and holiness to our lives. This year we had presentations by Godfrey Paasche who shared his remarkable story; from John Raby whose decision process in going for Conscientious Objector status was a profound spiritual search; with Carol Ochs who continues to work out her own theology with the help of the comments of this group; and with Hal Jackson who has promised us a further development of his thoughts next year as well. The group (this year there were 13 of us) is rich not only in the presentations but in the thoughtful, engaged comments and insights of all the members. We look forward to next summer's meeting where several people have already promised to make presentations.

Carol Ochs

Hal Jackson



### Democracy Project's Initiative on Religion and Public Life

In the Democracy Project morning group this year, we considered the issue of religion, public life, and higher education. Specifically, we built on a Wingspread conference, also held in July 2005, sponsored by SVHE and the Johnson Foundation. Some of the questions we considered included:

- How well are colleges and universities educating students for a religiously pluralistic democracy?
- How should the academy respond to claims that it operates in a culturally biased way that privileges secular and liberal values and discredits others?
- How do we preserve standards of public reason, intellectual integrity, and academic freedom when faced with challenging religiously-grounded assertions?
- Is it appropriate for the academy to critique changes in the landscape of religion and public life, pointing to changes in the intersection between church and state or to religiously motivated war and violence?
- Can the classroom be open to religious insights without promoting or denigrating specific religious beliefs?
- Is a Judeo-Christian version of a virtuous citizen a better template for the moral development of students?
- How should the academy respond to reports that Americans are weakening in their ethic of tolerance and less willing to compromise with others of different beliefs or values? What will happen to a democracy where dissent is discounted or ignored?
- How should the academy respond to the growing spiritual interest among students? Can universities support a spiritual quest while simultaneously holding to the highest standards of intellectual inquiry and academic excellence?
- What are the ground rules for civic discourse on matters of religion and public life? How do we encourage civility, candor, and diversity of perspectives?

The Wingspread gathering and the work of this morning group will continue to be a central focus for SVHE. We encourage all members to become involved and to attend regional meetings that will consider these and other issues.

Nancy Thomas [democracyproject@aol.com](mailto:democracyproject@aol.com)

Bob Spivey [bspivey@foundation.fsu.edu](mailto:bspivey@foundation.fsu.edu)

### Environment Values

The Environmental Values morning group had a lively and spirited meeting, with a variety of experiences and presentations, spiced with discussion and debate. Chris Hathoway of the Lower Columbia River Estuary Project introduced us to the issues and stakeholders through an informative presentation on "Land Use and Restoration in Oregon," which left us looking forward eagerly to our fieldtrip to the Columbia Slough. Recent developments in the state's land use regulation were considered by Jo Margaret Mano in "Oregon's Measure 37," a new law that threatens Oregon's innovative urban growth control boundaries. Chuck Lauter explained the environmental benefits and economic advantages of "Land Trusts in Wisconsin" in preserving rural landscapes and open space. The Lower Columbia Watershed Council's annual regatta gave us a unique opportunity to try out our skills in canoeing and kayaking, and to discover the intricacies of water control in the Portland region. Booths and displays from environmental groups helped us to understand local habitats and the on-going restoration of the Columbia Slough. Dorothy Guyot concluded our wide-ranging discussions by examining "Theravada Buddhism as a Basis for Environmental Ethics." The group looks forward to convening next year in Indiana.

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

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

### Forms of Autobiography

For our 2005 meeting, we continued to explore the interrelation between the self and the culture, this time with emphasis on reciprocal influences of political, ethnic, racial, sexual, or religious sub-cultures and the individual life. These issues were illuminated by presentations by Martha Spivey, Nancy Corson Carter, Walter Blass, Walter Herbert, Janice Smith and Marianne Finnegan, as well as in group discussions. We talked about traditional roles and expectations for American women, and rigid role expectations of women in Afghanistan. We glimpsed post-World War II American rural family life; racial and social class tensions in American Yankee and Rebel sub-cultures; spiritual and moral questions involved in feelings of difference and exclusion based on gender; and practical and emotional aspects of international adoptions. Throughout our substantive discussions, our presenters also led us to address questions of form and strategy in dealing with autobiographical materials. They gave us a stimulating variety that included traditional narrative, fictionalized autobiography, Japanese poetic and narrative forms, and vignettes enlivened by power point slides. It was another very good year for the group.

Marianne Finnegan ([gilfinn@netheaven.com](mailto:gilfinn@netheaven.com) or 518-587-7961)

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

### Historical Fiction

This summer, the Historical Fiction group met in a well-appointed board room at Portland State University to discuss literature of the two World Wars. Welcoming back past participants as well as new members, the group was the largest and most engaged it has been in recent years. Stephen Sfekas facilitated discussion of Sebastien Japrisot's *A Very Long Engagement*. Mary Papke then facilitated discussion of John Okada's *The No No Boy* and James McBride's *The Miracle of St. Anna*. We concluded with a screening of several sections of the HBO series of *Band of Brothers* and a comparison of Stephen Ambrose's book to the visualization. Throughout, the discussion was rich and stimulating, the various members bringing their particular expertise to the table. The group unanimously decided on the readings for next year: *Middlesex* by Jeffrey Eugenides, *Gilead* by Marilynne Robinson, *The Shadow of the Wind*, by Carlos Ruiz Zafon, and *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay* by Michael Chabon. We look forward to next year's meeting and urge those interested to contact the conveners or to begin reading for another exciting week of work on historical fiction.

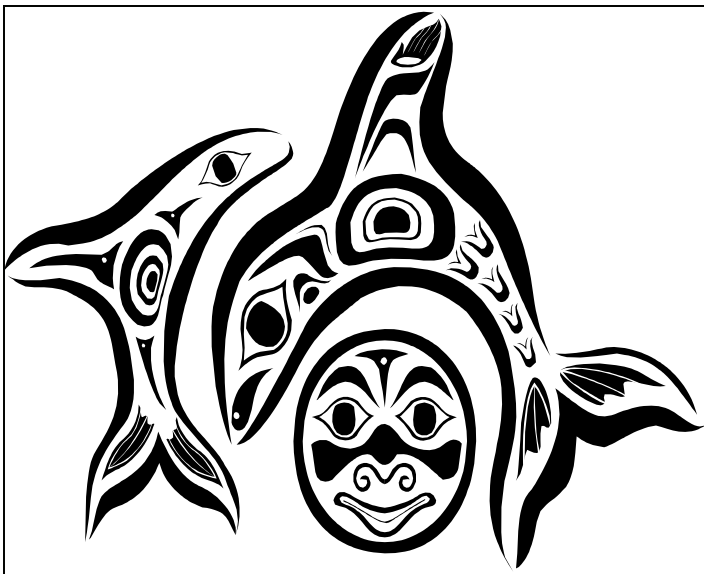
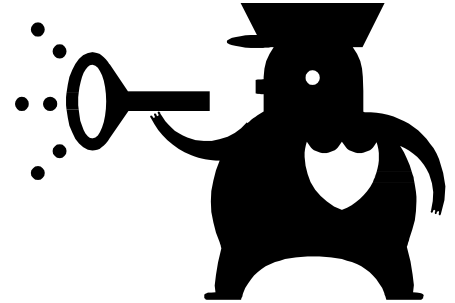
Stephen Sfekas [stephen@sfekaslaw.com](mailto:stephen@sfekaslaw.com)

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

### Intelligence, Security and a Dangerous World

Society Board Member Jon Wiant, recently retired from 37 years in foreign affairs, led the morning group through a four day exploration of the intelligence and policy issues that have seized the headlines since September 11, 2001. Drawing on readings from the 9/11 Commission Report and the Report of the Commission on Weapons of Mass Destruction, the well-attended group ranged broadly over questions centrally concerned with understanding with the interaction between intelligence and national security policy. The group examined the structure of American intelligence and the ways in which particular organizational cultures may contribute to intelligence failures or policy abuses of intelligence. The group discussed the inevitable tensions between secret intelligence and an open society and the profound implications of the institutionalization of Patriot Act principles. Against the backdrop of Pontecorvo's harrowing 1965 film The Battle of Algiers, the group concluded with a wrenching discussion on whether the horrors of Abu Ghraib were an inevitable by-product of the gritty war against terrorism. The group plans to reconvene next year and look at a series of issues related to the broader annual Meeting themes of ethics in the professions.

Jon Wiant [jon.wiant@dia.mil](mailto:jon.wiant@dia.mil)



### Native American Studies

The Native American Studies group, which met several times in the '90s, reconstituted itself this year with seven members ranging in age from c. 20-65 with backgrounds in Canadian Studies, film, law, literature, politics and women's studies. In keeping with the history of this group, we chose one American Indian author from the region, in this case, Sherman Alexie (Spokane/Coeur d'Alene), and used his work as a jumping off place for discussion of Native cultures and perspectives. Our aim was to understand as much as possible about the diversity, integrity and vitality of Native cultures in the context of their struggle to survive. The group found in Alexie's script for *SMOKE SIGNALS* and in four of his stories, a complex vision of relationships among individuals, and a trickster-like affinity for ambiguity. The core belief in the stories we read, however, is love--in its many forms and degrees. We came away with respect for his enormous skill as an artist and his courage as a critic of both cultures, and with a desire to continue the process of understanding we had begun. We hope that Native members of the Society will join the group and steer it into new waters.

Estella Lauter [lauter@uwosh.edu](mailto:lauter@uwosh.edu)

## Popular Culture

The Popular Culture morning group had a compelling series of discussions for another year. We started with pop-cult autobiographies as introductions—asking each member of the group to describe the role that popular culture plays in their lives, and the pieces of popular culture they claim as theirs. Since the participants ranged widely in age and background, we soon realized that no one person knew all of popular culture. We talked about the relationship of popular, elite, and folk cultures, and the relationship of the producers and consumers of popular culture.

Over the next several days three participants gave presentations. Dan Shoemaker discussed the place of identity and blood in a set of post-9/11 films. Margie Jones addressed the power of relationships and the struggle for authenticity in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel*.

Dan Sack described the origins of "rapture theology" and its place in popular culture, illustrated with a recent *Simpsons* episode.

The group will meet again next year. We are 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 we use this knowledge?

We are defining 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.

Dan Shoemaker [dancshoemaker@mac.com](mailto:dancshoemaker@mac.com)

Dan Sack [sack@alumni.princeton.edu](mailto:sack@alumni.princeton.edu)

## Terrorism: Thinking the Unthinkable

The spectacle of terrorism continues to dominate the American public imagination; it has shaped our politics and reconfigured our sense of our national priorities. In this Morning Group we read two works which investigate the causes of terrorism from the perspectives of religious studies and of philosophy, respectively. We considered Bruce Lincoln's *Holy Terrors: Thinking About Religion After September 11*. It analyzes the increasingly important role of religion in the politics of both Western and Middle Eastern cultures since the end of the Cold War. Lincoln finds a surprising symmetry in the ways both Christian and Islamic politicians have used religious narratives to frame contemporary historical events. He presents careful readings of speeches by George Bush, Jerry Falwell and Osama bin Laden. One of the most revealing documents in the book is the set of final instructions for religious purification that was found in the luggage of the 9/11 hijackers. Lincoln's work does not exculpate those who commit acts of terrorist violence, but we felt that it makes a compelling case that local acts of terror need to be understood in the context of global cultural changes.

The second book considered, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*, edited by Giovanna Borradori, makes a similar point. Both of the philosophers interviewed understand terrorism as a response to (and perhaps as a contradiction within) the process of modernization. For Habermas, terrorist violence is the result of distorted communication between societies who find themselves at different stages of that process; he feels that only global justice protected by a framework of international law can remedy this distortion. Derrida agrees that the problem of terrorism must be addressed within such a framework of international justice, but he finds that our understanding of that framework itself is necessarily incomplete and self-contradictory and suggests that reform will entail a painstaking analysis of the dangers inherent in our democratic ideals. The difference between these two philosophers incited some of our liveliest discussions. I think most of us were on Habermas's side, but the conversation is ongoing.

Allen Dunn [ardunn@utk.edu](mailto:ardunn@utk.edu)

Be who you are and say what you feel,  
Because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind.

Dr. Seuss



## Reflections on a Plenary Event

The highest point of the 2005 Fellows Meeting for me—even higher than my great morning group and the Bean pot I won in the raffle—was Si Kahn's and Elizabeth Minnich's plenary on their new book, *THE FOX IN THE HEN-HOUSE* (Berrett-Koehler, 2005). Their argument against privatization of government functions to the degree it has been practiced was brilliant and timely, and their imaginative combination of song, narrative and theory was engaging and compelling. I urge everyone who missed it to buy the book and to catch one of their speaking gigs this fall if at all possible. (I may very well drive 200 miles to hear it again!)

Someone in the audience asked Elizabeth, in effect, what is new about the conflict between democracy and privatization. Are things really worse now than they were at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century? Elizabeth replied that in her view, democracy is more severely threatened than ever before; the sheer quantity of losses—many of which cannot be reversed—adds up to a massive change in the quality of life for ordinary people whom democracy should serve.

As she and Si developed their idea, I was reminded of a novel by Octavia Butler, the widely admired African American writer of speculative fiction, published in 1993: *THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER* (Warner Books). The story takes place in 2024–2027 on the West Coast of the U.S., when food, water and fuel are in short supply because of climate changes and a complete breakdown in the infrastructure. Everything has been privatized; there is no functional public space, just walled enclaves for those who have anything they want to protect. The country is a nominal democracy in that citizens still vote for the President, but the structures that economist Amartya Sen finds essential to freedom no longer exist (see *DEVELOPMENT AS FREEDOM*, Anchor, 1999). The protagonist, a young Black girl, is one of the few to survive when her community is destroyed. Her journey north on foot through a lawless and corrupt country, where the slogan “every man for himself” becomes savage, to a place where she and a few others establish a new community based on a new religion called “Earthseed,” takes up the second half of the book. But readers should not expect a happy ending; the turmoil that has been set in motion during the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is not easy to resolve.

We are lucky to have early warning signals like Butler's book, and perhaps, despite the tragedy, Katrina may serve as the canary in the mine shaft to save other lives and a way of life that we took for granted throughout most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Elizabeth's and Si's new book eloquently explains why we should pay attention to politics. And we heard it first, directly from the authors!

Estella Lauter

Professor Emerita, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh

Views expressed in this publication are the sole responsibility of the contributors and general editor, and do not necessarily represent official policy of the Society or its Directors.

## Announcement

### Institute on College Student Values



Florida State University's Division of Student Affairs is proud to announce the 16th annual Institute on College Student Values. This year, the focus will be on "Finding Wholeness: Students Search for Meaning and Purpose in College" and will be held February 2-4, 2006 on the campus of Florida State University. Over the past two decades, the Institute has become a national gathering for higher education administrators, teachers, researchers, and students who are especially interested in how colleges and universities encourage moral, civic, and spiritual development.

The Institute will include featured speakers, workshops, roundtable discussions, exhibits, and special presentations on the research, leadership, and educational strategies used by colleges and universities to promote the holistic development in their students. Featured speakers include: **Marcia Baxter-Magolda**, professor of Education Leadership at Miami University; **Rebecca Chopp**, president of Colgate University; **Alan Wolfe**, professor of Political Science and director of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life at Boston College; and **Scotty McLennan, Jr.**, dean of Religious Life at Stanford University. **Arthur Chickering** and **Liesa Stamm** will serve as faculty in residence. Invited presenters include **Peter Laurence**, co-director of Education as Transformation; **Bill McDonald**, VP Student Affairs at Presbyterian College; and **Jennifer Lindholm**, director of Project on Spirituality. Speakers will also discuss the roles that values and spirituality play in this success.

The Institute is co-sponsored by the FSU Division of Student Affairs and the Hardee Center for Leadership and Ethics in Higher Education.

More information about the program, general information, and registration along with the Institute brochure are available at [www.Collegevalues.org/Institute.cfm](http://www.Collegevalues.org/Institute.cfm).

### AAC&U Conference and SVHE's Democracy Project Continue the Conversation on Religion and Public Life.

SVHE believes that colleges and universities can serve as our nation's think tank and even, as Richard Rorty has optimistically suggested, "the conscience of the nation." Religion and public life is a critical issue facing American democracy, and one that the academy needs to address constructively.

In July 2005, the Society for Values in Higher Education's Democracy Project convened a select group of academics in religion, American democracy, and democratic education at the historic Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin. Allen Dunn's report in this issue admirably captures key themes explored by participants, as does the description of the morning group session, "Democracy Project Initiative on Religion and Public Life".

Wingspread participants agreed that, among other outcomes, there was a need to produce a statement on the academy's opportunities and responsibilities to address such questions. The statement will be reviewed and critiqued at a session of the AAC&U during its Conference in Washington D.C. January 25-8, 2006. This session fits squarely with the needs of AAC&U's Demanding Excellence conference. It touches on all three of the questions identified by AAC&U: institutional responsiveness to a changing world, curricular innovations, and the connection between liberal education and civic competencies. Presenters at this session will consist of those Wingspread participants able to attend and additional individuals who have reviewed the statement between now and November 2005. Session participants are invited to respond to the statement by sharing their views and providing feedback which will make the statement a clear and forceful message about higher education's role in addressing the topic of Religion in Public Life.

Happily, the AAC&U conference dates coincide with both the SVHE Board's mid-year meeting and a planned SVHE regional meeting in Washington D.C., so those attending these meetings will be able to participate in this continuing SVHE/Democracy Project sponsored conversation on Religion and Public Life.

## NEH/SVHE Summer Institute - 2005

### "A Voice of Their Own: Women Writing—Venice, London, Madrid, Paris—1550–1700"

An NEH summer institute is the closest thing to an SVHE annual meeting one can attend outside the SVHE. An institute is aptly described as "a month of work"; it is like putting four SVHE meetings together back to back, each with a single morning group that moves through Venice to London to Madrid to Paris. Though much else happens at SVHE meetings, the morning groups are their principal source of energy; so it has been in these institutes (2001, 2003, 2005). The people who attend, though often specialists in one of the traditions studied, know very little about the other three. So the institute provides a course everyone wishes they had taken in graduate school but never had—because it is never available there. Meals, often shared together, are occasions to continue the conversations. Future projects arise out of them—yet more new energy. Most participants are housed together in a dorm, with the usual complaints of dorm life that one remembers also from SVHE meetings, but still the setting helps people bond and make

new colleagues and friends. And though the eight faculty or facilitators of the institutes are distinguished scholars in their respective fields (one each in literature and history in each of the four cultural traditions), discussions are based on materials read in advance and those determine the course of any particular morning. The 2005 institute, to a greater degree than either of its predecessors, was discussion oriented. The faculty helped make this possible, but the group's own personality (and every group has one) kicked in and created classes in its own image. The result was some of the best discussions of primary source texts I have ever been part of.

The title of the institute describes its content. But what we are actually doing is helping to recover voices that have long been silenced and perhaps a tradition that can be reconstructed from those voices. The most important instrument of this recovery (apart from texts written in English) has been "The Other Voice in Early

Modern Europe," a series published by the University of Chicago Press that gives voice to forgotten early modern continental European women writers who spoke in many genres and in many languages. The larger goal is to integrate their work into an expanded tradition of early modern female and male writers, to give them a *contemporary* voice.

Many participants in these institutes would make wonderful colleagues in the SVHE. A good avenue toward that end might be an invitation to them to attend an annual meeting as part of the teachers' workshop contingent. Conversely, many SVHE members might be interested in attending one of these institutes—the only downside is that you will miss the SVHE meeting the year you attend, since the two always overlap. We are planning to apply for a fourth version for 2007. The faculty is already in place. I hope to see some of you there.

Albert Rabil, Project Director

## Words to Savor

I am convinced that if we are to get on the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin (applause), we must rapidly begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights, are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.

A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth. The Western arrogance of feeling that it has everything to teach others and nothing to learn from them is not just.

Martin Luther King Jr., addressing the audience at the Riverside Church in New York City on April 4, 1967

## 2006 Fellows Meeting—Honor in the Professions: Religion, Law, Medicine and Education

What does *honor* mean to you, and for your profession? The 2006 Annual Fellows Meeting focuses on four classic professions: religion, law, medicine, and education. From July 20 - 25, 2006 at Saint Mary's College in South Bend, Indiana, Society Fellows and thoughtful guest practitioners from each field will generate papers, dialogue, formal, and informal discussions examining the role of honor in contemporary professional practice. What ethical dilemmas emerge when one's personal honor conflicts with professional duties mandated in codes of ethics, or societal norms? If honor is rooted in virtue ethics, does that ancient concept inform modern codes of professional ethics? In a consumerist society, how are ethical choices made? How can we reconcile the high idealism of honor as virtue with other aspects of its complex and often ambiguous manifestations in American and other cultures?

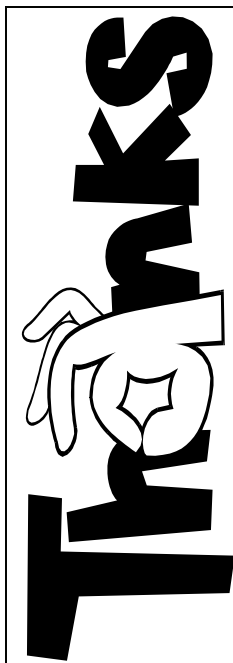
We anticipate intense and fruitful conversation. You're invited to participate in four mornings of thematic sessions, dialogue in interdisciplinary afternoon sessions, and attend evening plenary sessions presented by practitioners in these professions.

We invite papers exploring the theme of honor in any of a dozen on-going morning groups, particularly *Celebrating the Religious Search, Religion and Violence, and Teaching and Learning*. Others, including *Forms of Autobiography, Environmental Values, Historical Fiction, and Native American Studies*, also welcome proposals for working papers. Additionally, we seek leaders interested in forming thematic morning groups on *Medicine*, including bioethics and medical humanities, and on *Law*, including the teaching and practice of jurisprudence.

Why not join us to explore these issues, and participate in additional, varied opportunities? Families are welcome! We offer child care and youth activities so both parents can attend morning sessions. Share in a poetry session, a women's group, a writing workshop, films, and singing. Participate in interfaith worship. Explore local attractions in and around South Bend. And you won't want to miss SVHE's annual auction—where you can win, for example, the trip of your heart's desire, unique handmade art, or just the right T-shirt.

We invite your leadership and participation, your ideas and proposals. Contact program committee chair Janet Ray Edwards at [janetsvhe@bellsouth.net](mailto:janetsvhe@bellsouth.net). Put the dates on your calendar now: July 20 - 25, 2006, Annual Fellows Meeting at Saint Mary's College in South Bend, Indiana. Watch for breaking news on the SVHE Website at [www.svhe.org](http://www.svhe.org), and in forthcoming newsletters, February 15 and May 15, 2006.

### Outgoing Board Members



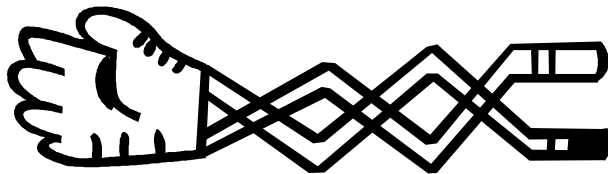
The Board would like to express unanimous appreciation for the work of retiring Board members Sherman Beverly, Richard Carp, Trudy Cunningham, George Newtown and Fiona Tolhurst.

In particular, the Board recognizes:

- Trudy's faithful service over many years, and her willingness to continue as photographer for SVHE meetings;
- Fiona's leadership in the SVHE Teachers' Workshop (SWCT); in the Annual Meeting at Alfred, which Board members praised as a 'model meeting,' her revision of the 2005-2006 SVHE Brochure, and her willingness to continue serving SVHE on the *Soundings* editorial board;
- Sherman for his inspiring presence and influence at the NE Illinois University meeting, his vision of how learning communities can function, his work as a liaison between higher education and K-12 teachers, and on the Democracy Project;
- Richard for his substantive contributions ('lectures' 😊) at Board meetings; his tremendous leadership with SWCT, and in both, his fresh perspective and ability to focus on practical details.
- George for his leadership of the VFIC-SVHE partnership in this year's SWCT and for his generous financial contribution to underwrite the expenses of this program.

The Board thanks all five retiring Board members for their thoughtful contributions and expresses special gratitude for their ability to cut to the chase on issues before us.

# Welcome!



## Newly Elected Board Members

### Emily Albrink Hartigan

In 1985 (I think), David Burrell wrote to me about an article I had written, and when I finally replied to his "kindred souls are at a premium these days" note, he immediately invited me to SVHE. I thought he was crazy. He wanted me to come to St. Mary's in South Bend to some group of folks I'd never met, based on my review of Tom Shaffer's *ON BEING A CHRISTIAN AND A LAWYER* and Michael Novak's *THE SPIRIT OF DEMOCRATIC CAPITALISM*, when he'd be in Cairo and someone named Sr. Elena Malits would help me along. Four days before the meeting, I called Elena, and I was hooked. I packed my son Ben in the car and arrived a day late to some meeting room where the only other person present came up to greet me -- it was Tom Shaffer. From that meeting -- which called me back into the academy after I had "frosted" my PhD. at UW-Madison with a J.D. and practiced law for eight years, the Society has been the locus of intense meetings of spirit, intellect and feeling with profound connections and disconnections.

I have taught law for 18 years, and published fairly widely in law and religion; I am a long-time member of the *JOURNAL OF LAW & RELIGION* Editorial Board and a professor of law at St. Mary's University School of Law, San Antonio. The Society is unique and edgy and rich in the unknown resources of all that members like Chris Downing (*WOMEN'S MYSTERIES*) know that they don't understand. I anticipate the possibility of serving where I have benefited for many years, and hope that I may be of service.

### Walter P. Blass

I was born in Germany, grew up there and in Belgium, spent the first year of World War II as a refugee in France, and came to the U.S. as an 11-year old. I went to Choate, received a Bachelor's degree from Swarthmore College, and got an M.A. in International Economics at Columbia University. After a tour of duty in the Navy as a supply officer at sea, I worked for the Foreign aid program in Washington (forerunner of USAID), for my father's engineering company, and then 24 years at AT&T from which I retired as Director of Strategic Planning. I spent two years in Afghanistan as Country Director of the Peace Corps on a leave of absence from AT&T in 1966-68. Since retirement, I have divided my time between teaching management at Fordham University and The Grenoble Graduate School of Management and serving as a Trustee at Guilford College in Greensboro, NC. and a business consultant. My most recent talk was on "Crucial Issues in the Management of Innovation", given to a group of 100 CEO's, university people and local authority officials in Meylan, France. I was elected a Fellow in the Society in 1975.

I've been a Fellow since 1975, following my first experience with SVHE at the Williams College seminar on urban Planning. In the nearly 30 years since I've thoroughly enjoyed coming to the annual meeting and participating in Morning Groups--especially the technology and autobiography groups. Given my experience as a strategic planner, it would be my hope to help the Society lay out a roadmap for its future--a financially assured one--and to make a unique contribution to the intellectual life of our Society (capital S) and our wider society (lower case.)

### Harold A. Jackson, Jr. "Hal"

In this period of American history, I think that the academy should think more deeply about its role in preserving ethical values in the education of students who have the responsibility of transmitting these values to others. Therefore, if I were elected to the SVHE board, I would be able to help us determine what creative role we might play in sorting out these ethical questions. Further, I believe that I can be an asset in urging new and seasoned academicians to join the Society. I currently serve SVHE as co-convenor of the Morning Group Celebrating the Search and as leader of the long-running afternoon group *Godwrestling*.

## The Wingspread Conference on Religion and Public Life

In recent American political discourse, it seems that religion has more often been the source of conflict than the grounds for consensus. Studies have documented a decline in the American willingness to tolerate those who hold different values and beliefs, while at the same time the religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity of the population has increased dramatically. These facts make it incumbent on us in the SVHE to explore and cultivate positive roles for religion in public discourse. It was toward this end that this past July the SVHE's Democracy Project hosted a conference entitled "Religion and Public Life: Engaging Higher Education." The conference was organized by Nancy Thomas and funded by the SVHE and a grant from the Johnson Foundation. It took place at the Foundation's beautiful Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin. The conference brought together scholars from a wide variety of disciplines. It also included several college administrators, the heads of two institutes dedicated to the study of religion, a specialist in the ethics of health care, a student, and various members of the Foundation's staff. Over the course of three days we engaged in lively and open-ended discussions which were punctuated only by informal presentations from various participants and, for some at least, by sleep. In the course of our time together, three central issues emerged: 1) the need for religious literacy--that is, the need for citizens of a democracy to understand and to respect the religious beliefs of others, 2) the need to protect the academy from religiously inspired attacks upon academic freedom and the standards of intellectual integrity, and 3) the need to help students find meaning in their lives, including, for some at least, spiritual meaning.

The first of these was the least controversial; it was easy to agree that knowledge of and respect for the religious beliefs of others is a good thing, although it proved a little more difficult to agree about where, exactly, the college curriculum should address these issues. Is this primarily the responsibility of religious studies departments? Of all the humanities disciplines? Should it somehow be the obligation of all faculty members? If so, what does one need to know to teach religion across the curriculum? How can one do this effectively in such a polarized environment? The second topic addressed the conflict of cultures that has made religion such a charged subject. Here our discussion elicited many chilling accounts of assaults on academic freedom, including the controversy that erupted recently when the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill required its freshman to read sections from the Koran. Again, we found it easy to agree on general principles, in this case the absolute necessity of free speech in an academic environment, but more difficult to agree about the practical implications of this freedom. Where, for instance, does one student's exercise of the right to be heard become disruptive in the classroom and therefore an impingement on the rights of others? Should one student's commitment to Intelligent Design shape the discussion in her biology classroom?

The third topic was the most controversial. It exposed not only differences in educational philosophy but also differences in the kinds of expectations that various types institutions place upon their faculty members. Some claimed that it is every faculty member's responsibility to nurture the whole student, not just to educate her or him in a specific discipline. Others insisted that it is presumptuous to assume that faculty can give students the kind of guidance and counseling that they should be receiving from family and friends (who are likely to share their religious and cultural orientations) and that, in any event, the sheer volume of demands made on the professoriate make this kind of intervention practically impossible. Here, the exchanges were at times heated.

We concluded by compiling a list of possible action strategies and then selecting those strategies which we found most promising. Among the ideas that we selected are SVHE sponsorship of publications and public dialogues addressing these issues and our forging alliances with institutions that are currently working on projects which address these issues. All of these ideas, of course, require further fund raising and, even more importantly, the participation of Society members. This was the message that Nancy and I tried to emphasize when we presented a report on the Wingspread Conference in an afternoon session at our fellows meeting in Portland. The session was very well-attended, and the discussion was every bit as lively as it had been at the conference itself. This further convinced me that these issues are vital to our mission and that the Wingspread Conference may give us strategies and resources for addressing them in a productive manner. You will be hearing more about plans as they develop. If you have questions or suggestions about this or any other aspect of the Democracy Project, please feel free to contact me.

Allen Dunn

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\* Member by virtue of office on all standing committees.

Editor—Soundings

Allen Dunn

Editor—SVHE Newsletter

Diane Brotemarkle, Associate

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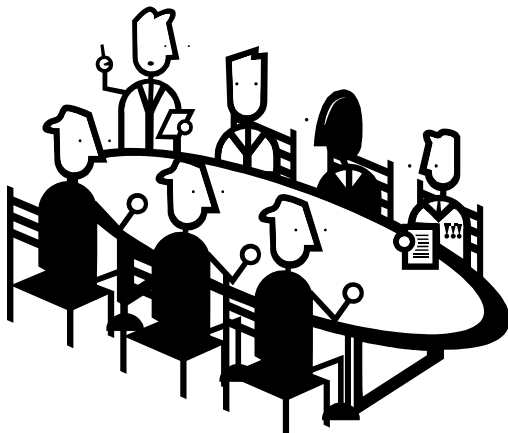
Nancy Thomas, Associate

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Council of Senior Fellows—Carol Ochs

Democracy Project—Allen Dunn

Summer Workshop for College Teachers—Cynthia Magistro



## Get ready! Get set! Don't forget!

Mark your 2006 calendar for the last week of January. Make your plans now to attend the **Annual AAC&U** meeting joined by an **SVHE Regional** meeting. Thursday evening, Nancy Thomas, will be discussing SVHE's Conference at Wingspread on *Religion in Public Life: Engaging Higher Education*. On Friday evening SVHE invites you to join Fellows and AAC&U members to enjoy a 5:30 reception followed by speakers and open discussion centered on the SVHE current interests and concerns. It's been a while since such an excellent opportunity as meeting at the Grand Hyatt in Washington D.C. has emerged. It could be a delightful evening to engage other Fellows and associates in these lively discussions. We really hope you will join us! More detailed information will follow.

### Regional Meeting

**Location: Grand Hyatt** 1000 H Street NW ph #(202)-582-1234 (for those driving)

Air arrivals in late Friday afternoon may go direct to Hyatt with luggage and check it with concierge for \$2 fee

- **Thursday, January 26th:**

4:30 – 6:00 Nancy Thomas presentation at AAC&U *Religion & Public Life: Engaging Higher Education*

- **Friday afternoon, January 27th:**

4:30 - Art Chickering Presentation at AAC&U meeting

5:30 - 6:30 SVHE Reception at AAC&U meeting

6:30 - 9:00 SVHE Regional Meeting at AAC&U meeting at Grand Hyatt



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