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# Oregon Humanities Center 2006 Summer Report

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## Summer Reflections:

### *A Note from the Associate Director*

Greetings from the Oregon Humanities Center! I hope you are enjoying the long, warm days of summer, and that they are affording you some leisure and a slower daily pace.

While the OHC generally does not host many public programs during the summer months, it is nonetheless a busy time behind the scenes here at the Center, as we regroup from the year just completed, and make plans and schedule speakers and events for the coming year. One of our most important summer tasks is communicating with you, our friends and supporters, to let you know what we have been doing, and how you have helped to make it all possible!

2005-06 was another extraordinarily busy and successful year for us. I cannot remember a year in which we have offered a more exciting or better attended series of public lectures on such wide-ranging and interesting topics.

As always, in addition to our own regular endowed lectures, the OHC co-sponsored a large number of public programs with other units on campus, including performances of medieval, baroque, Bulgarian, and Northern Indian classical music; the visit of University of Chicago political science professor and expert on terrorism, Robert Pape; a conference on the topic of "Figures of Friendship in Emerson and Thoreau"; the Margaret Mead Traveling Film and Video Festival; a speaker series in Romance Languages and another in Comparative Literature; and a public lecture by graphic novelist Art Spiegelman, to name just a few.

As part of our continuing commitment to public outreach and the dissemination of humanities research, the OHC published two lectures in print form during 2005-06—one by Louis Menand (Harvard) based on his May 2005 Portland Kritikos lecture, "The Story of the Soup Cans," and the other by Martin Jaffee (University of Washington), one of the participants in our May 2004 symposium on "Inner War," whose essay is entitled "The Wars of Torah: The Sublimation of Violence in Rabbinic Piety." We

hope to have print versions of John Shelby Spong's 2005-06 Kritikos lectures available some time this fall. (Interested readers can find a complete listing of Humanities Center publications on our web site at: <http://uoregon.edu/~humanctr/>)

We also continue to expand our reach to those who prefer to stay informed via television and the internet. There are now more than 427

"UO Today" interviews available in streaming video format on our web site. Many of the lectures we host are also now available on-line through the University's web page, the "UO Channel." You can find out more by visiting: <http://media.uoregon.edu/index.html>

We hope you have been able to join us for many of the events we hosted this past year, and that you will continue to support us by coming to future events. Thanks so much for helping to make the work we do here at the Center both worthwhile and rewarding!

—Julia J. Heydon



# Public Program Attendance at an All-Time High

This was an astonishingly successful year for the OHC with regard to public programs. We're wondering now how we can possibly top the amazing slate of speakers and the capacity audiences who came to hear them in 2005-06!

The year began with two fascinating and well-attended lectures in November by Clark Lecturer William L. Fox, who spoke about the Antarctic and also about his personal journey as a writer. In February, the Cressman lecture by Australian paleoanthropologist Peter Brown on the discovery of the "Hobbit People" in Indonesia drew nearly 500 people from all over western Oregon—many more than the room was capable of holding!

In April we once again drew a capacity crowd at the O'Fallon Lecture with Richard Ford



on the topic of "Racial Culture"—but this time we were prepared, and had arranged for overflow seating! We finished the year off with two thought-provoking and inspiring Kritikos lectures in May by retired Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong, who drew an amazing 700 people in Eugene, and over 300 in Portland—record turn-outs for us in both locations!



Richard Ford



John Shelby Spong giving his Eugene lecture on May 24.

Photo courtesy Oregon Daily Emerald

## Private Gifts Allow OHC Fellowship Programs to Flourish

One of the most significant and tangible ways in which the OHC is able to support UO humanities faculty and their research efforts is through our faculty research fellowship program. For many faculty, the protected time these fellowships offer makes a crucial difference in their ability to complete and publish the books and articles essential to their professional advancement. We are therefore very pleased to announce the receipt of two major gifts this year in support of our faculty research fellowship program.

The first is a **\$350,000 endowment bequest** for the **Ernest G. Moll Faculty Research Fellowship**, which is awarded each year to the faculty applicant who submits the best proposal in the field of literary studies. The donor has been generously supporting the Moll Fellowship on a regular basis for the past several years with annual gifts.

This year's Moll Fellowship recipient was **English professor William Rossi**. Rossi's project sought to situate Henry David Thoreau's writing in the context of nineteenth-century debates about evolution. The fellowship term provided Rossi the opportunity he needed to re-evaluate and re-conceptualize his project as a whole, to study Thoreau's *Walden* more deeply, and to begin to develop what is, for Rossi, a new method of inquiry involving narrative theory. Of his fellowship period, Rossi says, "The process of stepping back, of gathering up loose threads and torn fabric, together with the feedback I received [from a colleague at another university], allowed me to pursue research and writing with a clear and fresh sense of my argument, and to work on these two chapters [of a forthcoming book] with a better sense of the whole."

With this new endowment pledge, the Moll fellowship will now be supported in perpetuity. We are very gratified to know

that this fellowship gift, given in honor of former UO English professor Ernest "Jerry" Moll, will benefit humanities faculty for many, many years to come.

The second gift was from another regular OHC supporter who, like many donors, wanted to see his contribution put to



Michael Aronson

work right away. His generous **annual gift of \$50,000** is being used to fund **six faculty research fellowships** over a two-year period—expanding the number of these coveted awards we can offer by more than fifty percent per year! One of the fortunate fellowship recipients this year was **Michael Aronson**, English, whose scholarly work includes the study of small-town American-made movies in which the local

audience is also the subject of the film. Aronson was especially appreciative of the feedback he received when he gave his **Work-in-Progress talk** during his fellowship term. He described the interactive experience as "intensely satisfying" and added, "This is, of course, what the Humanities Center does best, bringing scholars with diverse disciplines and training together into one thought-provoking environment. . . . The Oregon Humanities Center Fellowship was, as promised, a significant moment in the ongoing development of my career as a historian and scholar."

We are, of course, also deeply grateful to others who have made gifts to OHC fellowship programs. Every gift helps, and we extend our heartfelt thanks to all of you!

## OHC Co-Hosts Residency of Medieval Singer and Scholar Anne Azéma

During the spring of 2006, the OHC collaborated with Romance Languages (which provided support from a Williams Fund grant) to bring internationally renowned performer and medieval music scholar **Anne Azéma** to campus for a ten-week residency as a Distinguished Visiting Artist.

Ms. Azéma taught an interdisciplinary course through Romance Languages entitled "**Men, Women, and Courtly Love.**" The course explored the world of Provençal and French medieval courtly lyrics, with an emphasis on the relationship between the texts and their musical settings. The course focused on the secular songs of the troubadours and trouvères, and Azéma frequently delighted her students by singing examples in class in her lovely and distinctive soprano voice as she discussed issues of interpretation and performance practice.

While in residence, Azéma also presented a concert entitled "**Le Jeu d'Amour: Songs and Dances from 1200-1400**" with multi-instrumentalist **Shira Kammen**. This lively and lovely concert, co-sponsored by the School of Music, was free and open to the public—thanks in large part to the OHC's **Endowment for Public Outreach in the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities**. The performance drew a large and very appreciative audience which nearly filled Beall Hall.

Azéma, a native French speaker, also visited the Fox Hollow French Immersion School, entrancing more than 200 elementary students with stories of medieval courts and castles, the Church and secular life, and the music, song, and dance of the Middle Ages. She spoke to the children in both French and English, and concluded her sessions by teaching them a famous medieval French song by the trouvère Adam de la Halle. From all accounts, it was a rich experience for the students, both culturally and linguistically, and the students demonstrated a genuine interest in medieval music and culture.

## The Board Report

The Oregon Humanities Center is served by two volunteer boards: a 15-member Faculty Advisory Board, whose purpose is to advise the Director and Associate Director on policy matters, review fellowship applications, and suggest lecturers and conference topics; and an external Board of Visitors, comprised primarily of members from the community and ranging in size from ten to fifteen members. Board of Visitors members serve as advocates for the Center, attend our events when they can, advise on and promote Center programs, priorities, and initiatives, and help us with "friend-raising" and fundraising.

Since membership on both boards is for three years (with one renewal possible for the Board of Visitors), we are always actively recruiting new members. If you or someone you know might be interested in serving on an OHC board, please call Julia Heydon at (541) 346-1001 to find out more.

"I serve on the Board of Visitors because I believe strongly in the value of higher education, and because I see the OHC using its funds very effectively to support excellence in humanities scholarship and teaching. It is emotionally rewarding as a board member to help support and direct this effort. I believe in the importance of both the humanities and the social sciences in preparing students for a full and rewarding post-graduate life, and supporting the OHC is one way I can emphasize this belief. The OHC reaches out across departmental lines [and disciplinary boundaries] in a way that few other University departments or organizations can."

—Robert Wulf, Board of Visitors



Robert Wulf

"I believe in giving back when I can, because I have been lucky enough to get a lot. I think education is vitally important, especially a university education. I believe that no matter what one's major is, the Humanities must play a part in everyone's life, in order to come out of the college experience as a well-rounded, truly educated person. Support for Humanities teaching, research, and public outreach, as well as the cooperation and collaboration among disciplines [which is at the core of the Humanities Center's mission] are important goals."

—Ann D. Thompson, Board of Visitors



Anne Dhu McLucas

"I support the OHC with my money and my time because I find the humanities to be at the heart of a great university. While I am a faculty member in one of the UO's professional schools, I still know that ALL students benefit from the work that those in the humanities do for the university, and that our faculty and students in those under-funded areas should be supported in every way possible."

—Anne Dhu McLucas, Professor of Music and OHC Advisory Board member



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OREGON HUMANITIES CENTER  
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## Thanks to Our Supporters

An increasing number of the programs offered by the Oregon Humanities Center would simply not be possible without the generous support of our friends and donors. We are deeply grateful both to our loyal, continuing supporters, and to our new friends—whose numbers, we are delighted to report, have grown considerably during the past year, and now include UO faculty, staff, and former students, as well as members of the community. If you enjoy our programs, we hope you will consider making a gift to the Center!

We would like to thank the following individuals, foundations, and corporations for their support during the past fiscal year, July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006. (We ask your forgiveness for any inadvertent errors or omissions.)

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