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2008 Summer Report

Celebrating Milestones at the OHC *A Note from the Associate Director*



I first came to the Oregon Humanities Center as Associate Director in August of 1998, and it is with gratitude and a sense of accomplishment that I now look back on the past ten years. The OHC will be celebrating its 20th anniversary this coming academic year, so this seemed like an excellent time to pause and reflect upon some of our achievements, and to anticipate some of the exciting possibilities that lie ahead.

For the past decade I have had the privilege of working with an outstanding staff and two dedicated volunteer boards, and of helping to direct a research center whose programs have benefitted a wide range of people, both on campus and in the community. During that time the Center has awarded 35 faculty teaching fellowships (ten of which qualified for Wulf Professorships); 90 faculty research fellowships in fields as diverse as anthropology, art history, philosophy, law, religious studies, literature, classics, history, English, political science, and music; and 40 graduate research fellowships, which have given doctoral students from many departments the boost they needed to finish their degrees.

I have also had the privilege of meeting and hosting many world-class writers, scholars, performers, teachers, and artists who have come to campus as guests of the OHC, including—during the year just ending—baroque violinist Jaap Schröder; writer and environmen-

tal activist Bill McKibben; climate scientist Stephen Schneider; artist, calligrapher, and Buddhist scholar Kazuaki Tanahashi; musicologist Richard Taruskin; and cognitive linguist George Lakoff. And that is just the tip of the iceberg. Each year the Center hosts five endowed lectures and hosts or co-sponsors as many as twenty or thirty additional events, so the list of speakers and events I have been fortunate enough to have been involved with over the years is much too long to recount. Many of you have attended at least some of these events, so you know how worthwhile they are.

This has also been a year for several important milestones at the Center. One of the most significant accomplishments has been the completion this past spring of a three-hour documentary, *A History of*

the University of Oregon (available on DVD at all Duck Store locations), which was in the making for more than eight years. Thanks to the tireless efforts of researcher, writer, narrator, and producer Rebecca Force, the editing expertise of Ward Biaggne and Lynette Boone, and the

support of some generous OHC donors, much of the University's unique and colorful history has been preserved in images and words, and bound together and brought to life in a fascinating

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Clockwise from left: Bill McKibben, George Lakoff, and Stephen Schneider.



Steven Shankman

Director

*Distinguished Professor, CAS
English; Classics*

Julia J. Heydon

Associate Director

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Program Coordinator

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Celebrating Milestones *(continued from front page)*

narrative. We are proud to have provided the University and the state of Oregon with this interesting and informative story of our 132-year-old institution.

We were also delighted to see another multi-year creative project come to fruition this year. At the request of the Bowerman family and with funding support through the Oregon Community Foundation, the OHC commissioned a 22-minute symphonic biography in memory of legendary UO track coach Bill Bowerman (1911-1999). This descriptive piece for full orchestra, composed by UO music graduate Rebecca Oswald, received its premiere as part of the 2008 Oregon Bach Festival. Together with OPB's half-hour video documentary on Bowerman and several other musical works (including three movements of an oratorio by J.S. Bach), "Man of Oregon" was presented on July 1, 2008 as part of a gala evening honoring Bill Bowerman at the Hult Center in downtown Eugene. The performance coincided with the 2008 Olympic Trials and a large and enthusiastic audience turned out for the multi-media event. We hope that this will mark the beginning of a new era of collaboration between the OHC and the Oregon Bach Festival.

The OHC is about to celebrate another landmark achievement as well: our weekly television program, "UO Today," is now nearing its 400th half-hour program. We are sad to report that Rebecca Force, who has produced the show since its inception in the fall of 1997, will be

leaving "UO Today" this fall to pursue a full-time teaching position at the School of Journalism. However, Rebecca provided us with a very solid foundation upon which to work, and we intend to continue to bring "UO Today" to our audiences both on cable access TV and in streaming video format on the web. We hope you will continue to enjoy our interesting weekly interviews with UO professors as well as visiting scholars, writers, and artists. Please join us in wishing Rebecca all the best in her new endeavors!

Finally, after fourteen years as OHC Director, Steven Shankman is leaving us this fall to direct a new Center for Intercultural Dialogue and Peace at the UO.



The new center is an outgrowth of many of the programs the Humanities Center has administered and hosted during the past five years, and it will be the home of the prestigious new UNESCO Chair in Transcultural Studies, Interreligious Dialogue and Peace that is currently

held by Professor Shankman. Barbara Altmann, Professor of French and interim director of the OHC in 2002/03, will be joining the Center as Director on September 15th. Please join us in welcoming Barbara, and in congratulating Steve and wishing him well as he embarks upon his newest venture. Our two centers will no doubt continue to collaborate over the coming years—in fact, next spring we will be co-hosting the visit of Mary Evelyn Tucker, Senior Lecturer in Religion and the Environment at Yale University, as part of an international meeting of the UNESCO Chairs on the UO campus.

None of this would have been possible without the continuing support of both the UO administration—particularly Vice President Rich Linton—and of our many dedicated private donors and friends. So I would like to close by

offering my sincere thanks to everyone—including all of you now reading this report—for a great ten years! I eagerly and optimistically await whatever lies ahead for the OHC, and hope you will be there to experience it with us!

Julia J. Heydon
Associate Director

Giving Opportunities

A term of focused research and writing for future scholars

You can give a graduate student the rare opportunity of spending an entire term immersed in research and writing, free of teaching duties and other work responsibilities, by supporting the **new** OHC dissertation fellowship program. These fellowships, offered in collaboration with the Graduate School, are for humanities doctoral students in the final stages of their dissertation writing. A gift of \$6,000 will fund one OHC dissertation fellowship, and \$150,000 will fund the program in perpetuity.

Where the humanities and the natural world meet

The **Robert D. Clark Lectureship** focuses on Oregon and Western U.S. history, and on the intersection between science and the humanities. Past Clark Lecturers have included notable writers and scholars like Terry Tempest Williams, David James Duncan, and Stephen Schneider. In order to continue to bring such world-class speakers to campus we need your help. Please consider making a generous gift in support of the Clark Lectureship.

Contact Julia Heydon for more information: 541-346-1001.

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Graduate Fellow Gains Fresh Perspective

Kelly Sultzbach, Ph.D. candidate, English

On August 8, 2008 I will be defending my dissertation, “Nature Replies in a Modern Voice: The Relationship Between Humans and the Environment in the work of E.M. Forster, Virginia Woolf, & W.H. Auden.” My Humanities Center graduate fellowship played a key role in my degree progress. Before my fellowship term, I had devoted a great deal of energy to job-search activities. While I did get an offer, it was not a position that was right for me; after some difficult deliberation, I chose to decline it. The job search was an immensely time-consuming and frustrating process that sapped my own pleasure in my project and left me numb with professional malaise. Having a quiet, uncluttered office with a pleasant view at the OHC helped me gain a fresh perspective on my work. I revised the first versions of my initial chapters and began the daunting task of reading for the third and final chapter on W.H. Auden. Having hours of silence and solitude helped me remember the joy of sinking into a text. I became a scholar again, reading poems for the pleasure of power and sound. Ideas

began to percolate again. Attending other talks and participating in a Humanities Center luncheon revived my convictions about the synergy of discourse between different disciplinary fields. Prof. Mark Johnson’s work-in-progress presentation on ethics and aesthetics spurred me to consider new lines of thought on my own project related to Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy of embodiment and its ethical dimensions. Conversations with Julia Heydon, Steve Shankman, and OHC board member Ken Kodama prompted me to articulate my views on the larger purpose of the humanities in a way that will inflect my dissertation’s introduction. My own work-in-progress talk provided an invaluable opportunity to get feedback on intersections between post-colonial studies and ecocriticism that will shape my further revisions—the kind of insights that only come through these rare occasions for a shared conversation. My inspiration for the project was re-ignited and my advisors affirmed for me afterwards that they also had a growing sense of the value of my work. With a majority of my Auden reading completed during winter term, I was ready by the beginning of spring to embark on the initial draft of my final chapter with a fresh sense of vigor and purpose.

The monetary aspect of the fellowship gave me access to original research material for my chapter on Virginia

Woolf and will defray the costs of presenting a segment of that completed chapter at a literature and environment conference. I used a portion of the funds to visit Washington State University’s special collection of Leonard and Virginia Woolf’s personal library books, which includes many texts that would be otherwise unavailable. Specifically, I was able to read the naturalist guides and scientific textbooks that directly inform Virginia Woolf’s fiction. I made discoveries concerning the threatened status of the thrush in London parks that reveal new interpretations of her use of the thrush in “Thunder at Wembly” and found dramatic metaphors in biology texts that directly support my literary interpretations of environmental imagery in *Between the Acts*. This coming fall, I will use the remainder of my funds towards a trip to the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association, one of the most important professional organizations in my field. I anticipate that the perspectives I gain from talking with fellow scholars at MLA will enrich my final product as I consider how to turn it into a book, and attending the meeting will allow me a chance to network with my professional peers.

I am deeply grateful for the Humanities Center’s generous support of my research. Thanks also to Julia, Melissa, and Peg, who make the Center a friendly and welcoming retreat.

OHC Fostering New Collaborations with the Sciences

For many years the OHC has had as one of its goals the creation of a closer working relationship with science departments and programs on campus. During the 2007-08 academic year, we partnered with Environmental Studies to bring Bill McKibben and Stephen Schneider to campus to speak about climate change and global warming. In addition to giving a public lecture that drew more than 700 people to the EMU Ballroom, McKibben delivered the keynote address at the Environmental Studies fall convocation and met with the ENVS students and faculty. Then in March, Stanford scientist Stephen Schneider gave a clear

and compelling public lecture about global warming as our 2007-08 Clark Lecturer, and while on campus both he and his wife, Terry Root (also a biologist and climate scientist from Stanford), gave interviews for “UO Today” and visited extensively with science faculty and students from several departments.

In the coming year, we will be partnering with Environmental Studies again, this time to bring filmmaker Annie Leonard to campus in October as the ENVS Fall Convocation keynote speaker. There will be a public showing and discussion of Ms. Leonard’s short film, “The Story of Stuff.” We will also be

working with Biology to host a speaker series in honor of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin (1809-1882), as well as the 150th anniversary of the publication of Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* (1859). In the spring of 2009, we hope to host Harvard author, physicist, and filmmaker Peter Galison in a talk on Einstein and a discussion and showing of his film, *Secrecy*. Many of these collaborations are being made possible through the Center’s **Endowment for Public Outreach in the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities**. Keep an eye on our web site and our quarterly newsletters for more details about these and other science-related events!



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We are deeply grateful for the generous support of our many friends and donors, all of whom help to make our programs possible. If you enjoy our public programs, watching *UO Today*, or supporting faculty and students at the UO, we hope you will consider making a gift to the Center! For more information, please call us at (541) 346-3934, or (541) 346-1001.

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