

The Humorous Times

Newsletter of the International Society for Humor Studies

Winter 2007

Ralph Mueller, Editor

Volume 20, Issue 1

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Association News

Fall 2006 Ballot Results

The ISHS membership voted by mail in Fall 2006 on five amendments to the ISHS Constitution. These amendments included:

- (1) The Creation of an Associate Membership Status
- (2) Appointment Procedures for ISHS Newsletter Editors
- (3) The Creation of the Board Position of Historian
- (4) Articulated Procedures for Filling Board Vacancies
- (5) Articulated Procedures for Balloting

The ISHS Executive Secretary sent out ballots in mid-November and voting officially closed on December 31, 2007. The ISHS Constitution requires that two-thirds of the members voting on an amendment must approve that amendment for it to take effect. Of the 67 members who voted, 97% approved the Creation of an Associate Member Status, the Newsletter Editor Appointment Procedures, and the ISHS Historian Position. All voting members (100%) approved the Procedures for Filling Board Vacancies and for Balloting. The ISHS Constitution was revised in January 2007 to reflect these approved amendments.

New Board Members

Juan Garcia Cerrada, Carmen Valero-Garces, and Begona Carbelo Baquero joined the ISHS Executive Board in January 2007 as the co-convenors for the 2008 ISHS Conference in Alcala, Spain.

2007 ISHS Conference

Nineteenth International Society for Humor Studies Conference

Salve Regina University, Newport, Rhode Island, June 28 to July 1, 2007

Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island (USA) is delighted to host the 19th annual conference of the International Society for Humor Studies. The campus is located in the heart of Newport within walking distance of world class beaches, the famed Cliff Walk, and Newport harbor. The conference will host four days of plenary lectures, paper sessions, and workshops on humor studies, and special events will include an opening night wine and cheese reception, an improvisation contest, and a Conference banquet.

Call for Papers: For the 2007 ISHS Conference, scholars, professionals, and students are invited to submit 250 word proposals for papers, posters, colloquia, and workshops, and other forms of presentation related to humor research. **The deadline for submissions is April 1, 2007.** An ISHS Program Committee will evaluate all entries and will provide notification of acceptance by April 15, 2007.

All proposals should include:

- a copy of a completed registration form;
- the title and the type of the presentation (paper, poster, colloquium, or workshop);
- for individual papers, two copies of a 250 word (or less) abstract;
- for colloquia, an overview along with the presenters' names and copies of their abstracts;
- any technical or special equipment needs, and
- a statement indicating interest to chair a session.

Colloquia and workshops should be designed for 90 minute sessions with up to four presenters; individual papers should be planned for 20 to 25 minute presentations.

Proposals can be submitted electronically to mathiasnm@verizon.net or mailed to: Dr. Margaret Mathias, ISHS Conference Convener, P.O. Box 17186, Smithfield, RI 02917, USA.

Additional information and conference registration materials can be obtained at the Conference website at <http://www.salve.edu/humor>.

2007 ISHS Conference Update

By Margaret Mathias

Early registration for the 19th annual ISHS Conference continues. Participants have until March 15 2007 to take advantage of discounted registration rates. Registered delegates to date include ISHS members, students, and international scholars, who have already booked on-campus lodging and submitted paper proposals. It is an exciting time.

Submissions to date fall into three categories: ethnic and cultural dimensions of humor, the psychology of humor, and the analysis of humorous narratives. The program committee has scheduled Friday morning's plenary session, "Take Borat, Somebody Please!" This unique character and quasi-documentary format provide a focal point for the important examination of human nature, character type, morality, and ethnic humor. Complimentary papers will build on the subject matter. Get ready: Friday will knock your socks off.

The Conference provides a supportive environment for students who wish to understand laughter, humor, and the comic, and graduate students, who plan to attend the Conference, are encouraged to apply for a Graduate Student Award. (Award details can be found on the ISHS website at www.humorstudies.org.)

Finally, the city of Newport announced that the Tall Ships will be in port during the Conference. How lucky for us. It will be a gigantic celebration. To check out Newport and related topics go to www.gonewport.com.

Upcoming Events

16th Romance languages and literatures Conference: Humor and Laughter in literature and Film"

Binghamton University (SUNY), Binghamton, New York, March 23-24, 2007

A detailed program can be found on the Internet at <http://romance.binghamton.edu/archives/hlprogram.pdf>.

Invitational Colloquium on Humor Studies: Humour and Laughter in an Age of Terror

Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia, April 11- 12, 2007

The Flinders Humanities Research Centre will host the 2007 Invitational Colloquium on Humor Studies on Wednesday, April 11 and Thursday, April 12, at Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia. Colloquium organizers are Associate Professors Robert Phiddian (English) and Haydon Manning (Political Science). **The deadline for registration is Monday April 2 2007.** Further information on the colloquium can be found on the Internet at <http://media.arts.unsw.edu.au/ahsn/events/current/index.html>.

7th International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, Scotland, July 9-14, 2007

The 2007 Summer School is designed not only to fit the needs of new students and researchers preparing for careers that would be enhanced by a deeper knowledge of humor and laughter (in dimensions ranging from the philosophical through the physiological to the practical), but also for trained scholars in the natural sciences and humanities who are considering embarking on new investigations of humor/laughter-related phenomena.

The Summer School teaching faculty will include Prof. Christie Davies (UK), Dr. Christian Hempelmann (USA), Dr. Giseline Kuipers (Netherlands), Dr. Sharon Lockyer (UK), Prof. Elliott Oring (USA), Dr. Graeme Ritchie (UK), Prof. Willibald Ruch (Switzerland), Dr. Andrea Samson (Switzerland). The International Summer School and Symposium is endorsed by the International Society for Humor Studies (ISHS). The Symposium is a culminating session when Summer School participants give presentations of their own work.

A maximum of 30 places are available at the Summer School, so it is advisable to apply as soon as possible. **Deadline for the early registration discount is March 31, 2007.** For more information, send e-mail to issl07@csd.abdn.ac.uk or visit the Summer School on the Internet at <http://www.csd.abdn.ac.uk/issl07>.

Interdisciplinary Workshop on “The Phonetics of Laughter”

Saarland University, Saarbrücken, Germany, August 5, 2007

Research investigating the production, acoustics and perception of laughter is very rare. This is striking because laughter occurs as an everyday and highly communicative phonetic activity in spontaneous discourse. This workshop aims to bring researchers together from various disciplines to present their data, methods, findings, research questions, and ideas on the phonetics of laughter (and smiling).

The workshop will be held as a satellite event of the 16th International Congress of Phonetic Sciences in Saarbrücken, Germany. We invite submission of short papers of approximately 1500 words length. Oral presentations will be 15 minutes plus 5 minutes discussion time. Additionally, there will be a poster session.

Call for Papers: Please send submissions by e-mail to laughter@coli.uni-sb.de specifying “short paper” in the subject line and providing

- for each author: name, title, affiliation in the body of the mail
- Title of paper
- Preference of presentation mode (oral or poster)
- Short paper as plain text

Submission deadline for short papers is March 16, 2007. Notification of acceptance will be May 16, 2007. The early registration deadline is June 16, 2007. For more information, contact: Jürgen Trouvain, Saarland University, e-mail: laughter@coli.uni-sb.de. For details, see <http://www.coli.uni-saarland.de/conf/laughter-07>.

11th Conference on Luso-Hispanic Humor

Universidad de Santiago de Chile, November 28-30, 2007

Call for Papers: The International Society for Luso-Hispanic Humor is seeking proposals for papers and panels on any aspect of humor in countries where Spanish and Portuguese are spoken. **Deadline for proposals is April 20, 2007.** More information, see <http://www.xicongresohumorlusohispano.blogspot.com/>.

American Humor Studies Association at the MLA

Philadelphia Pennsylvania, December 27-30, 2007

Call for Papers: The American Humor Studies Association (AHSa) is soliciting papers for two symposia for the December 2007 Conference of the Modern Language Association.

Shadows in the Light: The Pleasure of Dark Comedy

Dark comedy, a subgenre of comedy and satire, treats topics and events usually addressed with grave seriousness—death, murder, war, drug abuse, etc.—in a humorous or satirical manner. Who can forget that subtle play between humor and terror upon reading works by Flannery O’Connor, Joseph Heller, or Kurt Vonnegut, who’ve popularized stories in which profound or horrific events are portrayed in a comic manner? For this symposium, AHSa invites critical submissions that examine the intricacies of dark comedy in any genre or singular work.

Reeling with Laughter: Humor on the Silver Screen

Who doesn’t love sitting in the darkness of the movie theater, laughing side-by-side with like-minded patrons at situations of true wit and humor? Whether your forte is mockumentaries, campy classics, cult fare, or independent romps, you know the joy of that singular hilarity that draws you into the Cineplex for a rousing chortle with other die-hard fans. For this symposium, AHSa invites critical submissions that probe the humor of the silver screen, and proposals should consider some aspect of humor in relation to motion pictures.

Proposals for each symposium should be 100 to 250 words in length, and all submissions should be sent to Roxanne Schwab at schwabry@slu.edu by March 24, 2007.

Announcements

Humor Symposium at the 6th Asian-Pacific Social Psychology Conference

Xiao Dong Yue (City University of Hong Kong) requests possible contributions for a symposium on humor at the 6th Asian-Pacific Social Psychology Conference in Sabah, Malasia. If you are interested in this symposium, please send a 150 word summary to ssxdyue@cityu.edu.hk.

Art and Humor Course

Dr. Shari Klein (University of Wisconsin at Stout) is organizing a possible online summer course on humor and contemporary art. This course would address the social, psychological, and aesthetic functions of humor in art, and the role of artist as comic. Dr. Klein also plans to use her recent book, *Art and Laughter*, as a text. If you know of a program (psychology, humanities, education, etc.) where students could take an elective, and may have a need for a relevant and unique course, please contact Dr. Shari Klein at kleins@uwstout.edu.

Conference Reports

Kandai Waraiko Research Symposium

Osaka, Japan, December 3, 2007 (report from Till Weingaertner)

On December 3, 2006, Kansai University in Osaka (the host campus of the 2000 ISHS International Humor Conference) welcomed about 100 guests to the first Kandai Waraiko: A new research symposium which is planned to take place every year in the future. Sociology Professor Yoji "Gumon" Kimura initiated the Kandai Waraiko as part of his efforts to make his university into a leading site for humor research. The symposium promoted interdisciplinary research and offered researchers a chance to learn about and discuss the approaches of experts from different academic fields. Lectures were provided for the public and were meant to promote the general acceptance of the study and research of humor and laughter.

Teiichi Kawata (President of Kansai University) and Hiroshi Inoue (President of the Japan Society for Laughter and Humor Studies) welcomed visitors to the symposium, and lectures covered a range of approaches. Takashi Nozawa of Tsukuba University introduced his neuroscientific research, and Dr. H. Kimata reported about his experiences using laughter and humor in atopy-therapy. Professor Shinya Morishita of Kinjogakuin University gave a very lively speech about the sociological view of laughter and humor in European society and history. Lovers of Osaka-style comedy were happy to hear the lecture of Akira Fujita, who has been writing scripts for a number of famous comedians for many years. Comedy-fans became even happier when the famous comedian Yoshichi Shimada arrived and talked about his "Gabai Granny" books. These books are very popular in Japan and tell Shimada's memories about his grandmother who was able to live a life full of joy and laughter despite being poor. She incorporated humor into her philosophy of life.

After the lectures, the guests were invited to share a big laugh. Kansai University students performed a famous episode from Japanese mythology in which the sun goddess Amaterasu is called from a shelter by the big laughs of her fellow gods. The little play was arranged and directed by Professor Toshihiko Sekiya who is an expert of Kyogen, a comic version of the classical Noh theater.

After all, the Kandai Waraiko offered something new and interesting for everyone. The guests left with new ideas about laughter and humor, and maybe were even inspired for a happier way of living.

Humor in the News

Allen Klein to be inducted into the Hunter College Hall of Fame

We are happy to report that Allen Klein, ISHS member and President of The Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor has been selected to the 2007 Hunter College Hall of Fame.

The Hall of Fame was created 35-years-ago to honor graduates for significant achievements in their field. Only a dozen from thousands of Hunter's past graduates are selected for this honor each year. Several past recipients have been Nobel Prize winners. So now there will be a "Jollytologist" among them.

The Hall of Fame induction ceremony will take place on April 27 in New York City with the official announcement at a luncheon at the Grand Hyatt Hotel on April 28.

Art Buchwald Remembered

Art Buchwald, who satirized the follies of the rich, the famous and the powerful for half a century as the most widely read newspaper humorist of his time, died January 17 in Washington. He was 81. Mr. Buchwald's syndicated column was a staple for a generation or more of newspaper readers, not least the politicians and government grandees he lampooned so regularly. His life was a rich tale of gumption, heartbreak and humor, with chapters in Paris, Washington, and points around the globe.

Once described as a "Will Rogers with chutzpah," Mr. Buchwald found enthusiastic readerships on both sides of the Atlantic. Early on, he became nearly everyone's favorite American in Paris for his satirical column in the European edition of *The New York Herald Tribune*. When he returned from overseas to write a new column, from Washington, he became even more popular. At its peak, it appeared in some 500 newspapers.

He delighted in stirring the pot—never maliciously, always vigorously. The world was mad (or at least a little nutty), he said, and all he was doing was recording it. He did it so well that he was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for commentary in 1982 (from the *New York Times*, January 19, 2007).

Past Buchwald columns can be found on the Internet at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/style/columns/buchwaldart/>.

Recent Publications

New Books on Humor

Wallace Chafe (2007). *The Importance of Not Being Earnest: The Feeling Behind Laughter and Humor*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 167 pages. € 99.00 / US\$ 59.00, ISBN: 978-9-02724-152-8.

The thesis of this book is that neither laughter nor humor can be understood apart from the feeling that underlies them. This feeling is a mental state in which people exclude some situation from their knowledge of how the world really is, thereby inhibiting seriousness where seriousness would be counterproductive. Laughter is viewed as an expression of this feeling, and humor as a set of devices designed to trigger it because it is so pleasant and distracting. Beginning with phonetic analyses of laughter, the book examines ways in which the feeling behind the laughter is elicited by both humorous and nonhumorous situations. It discusses properties of this feeling that justify its inclusion in the repertoire of human emotions. Against this background it illustrates the creation of humor in several folklore genres and across several cultures. Finally, it reconciles this understanding with various already familiar ways of explaining humor and laughter.

ISHS Members receive a special 50% discount off the regular price on *The Importance of Not Being Earnest*.

Jessica Milner Davis, Ed. (2006). *Understanding Humor in Japan*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press. 249 pages. US\$ 29.95, ISBN: 0-8143-3165-3.

A book presented in English with a collection of perspectives on the special rules and conventions of the use of humour and laughter in Japan. The book is fully-referenced with many Japanese-language examples and illustrations. Contributors include Goh Abe, Jessica Milner Davis, Hiroshi Inoue, Masashi Kobayashi, Heiyo Nagashima, Shokichi Oda, Kimie Oshima, Joel F. Stocker, Makiko Takekuro, Rokuo Tanaka, and Marguerite Wells.

Stephen E. Kercher (2006). *Revel with a Cause: Liberal Satire in Postwar America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 572 pages. US\$ 35.00, ISBN: 978-0-226-43164-2.

Stephen Kercher here provides the first comprehensive look at the satiric humor that flourished in the United States during the 1950s and early 1960s. Focusing on an impressive range of comedy—not just standup comedians of the day but also satirical publications like *MAD* magazine, etc.—Kercher reminds us that the postwar era saw varieties of comic expression that were more challenging and nonconformist than we commonly remember.

Allen Klein (2006). Three Jollytologist Books from Gramercy Press (US \$ 6.99 each): *TeacherLaughs* (ISBN: 0-51722-818-0), *ParentLaughs* (ISBN: 0-51722-817-3), & *WorkLaughs* (ISBN: 0-51722-819-7).

TeacherLaughs, *ParentLaughs* and *WorkLaughs* are filled with hilarious and witty anecdotes about teaching and learning, about the funny side of parenting, and making a living. Therapeutic humor expert "Mr. Jollytologist" Allen Klein has selected these quips, quotes, and anecdotes to keep teachers, students, parents and workers laughing even on the hardest days.

Sheri Klein (2007). *Art and Laughter*. London: I. B. Tauris. 168 pages. £14.99 / US\$ 24.50, ISBN: 978-1-85043-931-8.

This book investigates the surprisingly neglected role of humor in contemporary art. *Art and Laughter* looks back to comic masters, such as Hogarth and Daumier, and to Dada, Surrealism, and Pop Art, asking what makes us laugh and why. It explores the use of comedy in contemporary US and UK art from satire and irony to pun, parody, and bawdy humor.

Giselinde Kuipers (2006). *Good Humor, Bad Taste. A Sociology of the Joke*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. 293 pages. € 98.00 / US\$132.30, ISBN: 978-3-11-018615-4.

This sociological study of the relationship between humor and social background explores the relationship between humor and gender, age, regional background, and especially, humor and social class in the Netherlands.

ISHS Members receive a special 30% discount on Good Humor, Bad Taste through April 1, 2007.

Till Weingärtner (2006). *Manzai. Eine japanische Form der Stand-up-Comedy*. 572 pages. € 9.90, ISBN 978-3-89129-826-8.

“Manzai” is a popular form of Japanese stand-up-comedy. This book offers a general introduction into the genre and its history. The focus is on the analysis of manzais by the contemporary comedians Yumeji Itoshi and Kimi Koishi. This analysis provides some insights into the comical routines of manzai, its humorous mechanisms and popular humor in Japan.

Recent Journal Issues on Humor Research

HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research, Volume 19, Issue 4

The Fall 2006 Issue of the Society's journal highlighted the following three research articles:

Dana N. Klein & Nicholas A. Kuiper, Humor styles, peer relationships, and bullying in middle childhood. pp. 383-404.

Shahe S. Kazarian & R. A. Martin, Humor styles, culture-related personality, well-being, and family adjustment among Armenians in Lebanon. pp. 405-424.

Ronald A. Berk & Joy Nanda, A randomized trial of humor effects on test anxiety and test performance. pp. 425-454.

Journal of Pragmatics, Volume 39, Issue 1

The January 2007 issue of the *Journal of Pragmatics* focused on applied linguistics with the following four humor related articles:

Pamela Rogerson-Revell, Humour in business: A double-edged sword: A study of humour and style shifting in intercultural business meeting, pp. 4-28.

Jennifer Coates, Talk in a play frame: More on laughter and intimacy, pp. 29-49.

Pamela Hobbs, Judges' use of humor as a social corrective, pp. 50-68.

Deborah Cao, Inter-lingual uncertainty in bilingual and multilingual law, pp. 69-83.

Studies in American Humor, Volume 13

In 2006, *Studies in American Humor* published its 13th volume with a retrospective issue on the careers of several humor scholars. This issue contained the following reflections:

Janice McIntire-Strasburg, Introduction. Humor is serious business, pp. 3-10.

Louis J. Budd, Walter Blair, pp. 11-20.

Hamlin Hill, Walter Blair through the ages, pp. 21-28.

Shelley Armitage, Ham Hill: Nobody's fool, pp. 29-36.

Jack Rosenbalm, Through travail and laughter. Jack Meathenia and American humor, 37-44.

Mary Ann Wimsatt, Humor, Simms, Baldwin, and me. *Studies in American Humor*, pp. 45-56.

Larry Mintz, My m-risible career. *Studies in American Humor*, pp. 57-60.

David E. E. Sloane, How I won my Charlie. *Studies in American Humor*, pp. 61-70.

David B. Kesterson, reflections and confessions of a humor scholar, pp. 71-78.

Michael J. Kiskis, Jim Smiley's Yaller one-eyed cow. Or my twenty four years, pp. 79-86.

Arthur Asa Berger, I laughed last, and I lasted, but I took some blows along the way, pp. 87-98.

Gary A. Fine, Humor me, pp. 99-106.

Elliot Oring, The making of a humorologist. *Studies in American Humor*, pp. 107-114.

Eric Solomon, From comedy to parody. American humor and [part of] a career, pp. 115-120.

Judith Yaross Lee, A scholarly life in humor. *Studies in American Humor*, pp. 121-136.

Daniel Royot, A French chuckle for life, pp. 137-148.

Mahadev Apte, My research on humor. An anthropologist's reflection, pp. 149-154.

Alleen P. Nilsen & Don L. F. Nilsen 25 years of developing a community of humor scholars, pp. 155-166.

James E. Caron, Dr. Comic Laughter, or, How I stopped worrying and learned to love feeling like Rodney Dangerfield, pp. 167-176.

Judith Yaross Lee, The Year's working in American Humor Studies, pp. 177-215.

Contributions and Submissions

Next issue is Spring 2007. Please send information, contributions and announcements to ralph.mueller@unifr.ch.
Information about new moves in your career, awards, completed PhDs etc. are welcome!