



HERA

Humanities Education and Research Association

A professional organization for humanities teachers, scholars, and museum directors

2009-10 edition <http://www.h-e-r-a.org/> Published Fall, Winter, & Spring Volume I, Issue 1

*From Your HERA President
Therese Tomaszek,
Davenport University, Grand Rapids*

“Beginning”

When Alvin Toffler published *Future Shock* in 1970, it is unlikely that even he could have anticipated the pace at which knowledge would be produced, information managed, and communication disseminated in 2009. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and other social media proliferate. Wireless, portable devices speak to each other. Internet access has become commonplace in developed countries, hardly worthy of mention. In the age of the intelligent machine, we have come to realize that the world has become compressed. In the global village, societies are connected and interdependent. When the butterfly flaps its wings, we all feel the breeze. Business as usual is no longer an option.

In this, our first HERA newsletter, I want to welcome all of you and thank you for joining HERA in its inaugural year. I believe we are on the right track in offering a space that is inclusive where the barriers that separate can be broken down. At this intersection, secondary and post-secondary humanities educators, researchers of the East and West, museum directors, and independent scholars will meet and open up new areas of study and collaboration across disciplines. HERA will provide opportunities for the worldwide research, teaching, and understanding of the humanities with the intent of moving the body of knowledge forward in significant ways.

For those of you who were able to participate in our first conference in Chicago 2009, I hope your experience was valuable and fun and that you'll join us again in El Paso, Texas, for our 2010 conference “Intersections: Mind, Body, Time, Space.” For those who could not join us in Chicago, my Welcome is included in this newsletter as well as my presentation of a well-deserved award to the Friends of the Humanities, a group of women and men whose enduring support of the humanities sets a standard of excellence for all of us.



*Poets Sally Fiedler and Alice Derry at the 2009 HERA Conference.
Photo by Marcia Green*

In this newsletter, you will find a Call for Proposals for our El Paso conference. I hope that you will consider submitting a proposal for what promises to be an exciting time. I've always believed that humanities people are the most fun to be with at a conference – eager to lend support and lacking any pretension. Please do spread the word to your colleagues. While the conference is being advertised in leading academic journals and list-servs, our story is best told by caring humanities professionals like you.

I welcome your suggestions about how HERA can better meet the needs of our members and the communities they serve. I am very proud of HERA's members and its mission so I am also interested in your ideas about how we can be pro-active in growing our association. My e-mail address is Terri.Tomaszek@davenport.edu

I also want to thank the HERA board of directors for their continuing work, support, and good counsel on behalf of HERA. Without their help, I couldn't do my job well.

Finally, on a lighter note, a couple days ago I came across a quote by that philosopher of popular culture George Carlin, who said, “I put a dollar in one of those change machines. Nothing changed.” George had it right. The change is up to you because HERA is for you. May your relationship with HERA be long and rewarding.

Award Presentation to the Friends of the Humanities Presented by: Therese Tomaszek

The Friends of the Humanities are in their 20th year. In 1989, they began their work for the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. At the time they were comprised of a group of women who loved to audit college classes; and, when they realized that there was a classroom need for slides, videos, projectors, and CD players, they took on the responsibility to provide these necessary instructional materials.

Since then, the organization has grown into a 200-plus membership of women and men, and they have organized fundraisers and luncheons to raise money for the university humanities program. They have given over a quarter million dollars to the humanities at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette--and they are still giving.

Among notable gifts to the university is a Humanities Resource Center, an Endowed Professorship, and a Mathé Allain Endowment Fund for assisting faculty members with travel and course enhancement. In 1996, they established the Gloria Fiero lecture series, named to honor a long-time professor in the Interdisciplinary Humanities program. The series is designed to offer students an annual lecture or performance that draws on interdisciplinary talents and expertise.

Their support for new themes in interdisciplinary courses, funding of visual materials for classroom use, and efforts to bring notable speakers to the University have enriched the academic community and population of the area, and their giving has not stopped at the university or regional level. They have also generously contributed to the journal *Interdisciplinary Humanities* for the past six years while the journal was housed at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Moreover, they have generously pledged to continue funding the journal--even in these dire economic times--as it moves to the University of Texas at El Paso. For this, we are very grateful.

As a result of their impressive and enduring contributions, the Friends of the Humanities were recently honored by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities by receiving the Award for Institutional Support.

I have asked some members of HERA to share their thoughts about the Friends. Lisa Graley, an English professor at University of Louisiana at Lafayette, observed, "They're still attending classes, and they make the best students! Well-read and well-traveled, they always do their homework and are enthusiastic learners. In fact, according to Lisa, "a lot of the time I'm learning from them."

According to Mary Ann Wilson, who holds an endowed professorship from the Friends, they have "a long history of enriching the cultural life of Lafayette. They are the bright spot in our humanities courses: always prepared and eager to learn, bringing their life and travel experiences to bear on the texts we teach. I wish all our students were like them."

Louisiana poet laureate Darrell Bourque, who previously held the Friends' endowed professorship, wrote, "The Friends of the Humanities is one of the most remarkable community groups I have ever worked with. They represent the kind of vital force we need in all communities – they are generous and civic-minded and they have a powerful effect on whatever activity they become engaged in – and the activities are many and varied."

Gloria Fiero wrote, "I cannot resist relating this memorable experience. One semester, I was teaching an introductory Humanities course attended by 30 freshmen and a dozen Friends who attended the class regularly. At mid-term, as I handed out exams to the class, one student looked around the room and, noticing the absence of the Friends at mid-term exam time, asked where the ladies were. "They audit the course," I explained. He scratched his head and replied, "You mean they COME to class even if they don't HAVTA?" Gloria added, "If there were more organizations like the Friends, Humanities education in this country would assume its primacy as the enterprise that cultivates and enhances our humanity."



*Sylvia Bienvenu, accepts the award from HERA president **Therese Tomaszek** at the 2009 HERA conference. Photo by Geoffrey Green.*

Such is the spirit of giving that characterizes the Friends, and such is their belief in the importance of quality in humanities education and scholarship. It is therefore fitting that we of the Humanities Education and Research Association present this award to honor the distinguished history of contributions made by the Friends of the Humanities. Accepting for the Friends is Sylvia Bienvenu, President of the Friends of the Humanities.

Welcome, HERA Conference 2009 Therese Tomaszek

Good evening, and welcome to the 2009 HERA conference, *Nature and the Humanities: Interdisciplinary and Intercultural Perspectives*. It is an honor to be among you tonight to share your enthusiasm for the humanities and to learn from your teaching, scholarship, and experiences. Duties kept me away from attending all the sessions today, but I was able to sit in on some of them. Listening to the presentations was truly uplifting and good for my spirit. I hope that you had similar experiences and that you will consider submitting your papers to our journal *Interdisciplinary Humanities*.



Keynote speaker Curtis White with HERA president Therese Tomaszek at the 2009 HERA conference. Photo by Geoffrey Green..

I am glad that you have joined us at HERA's first conference, and I hope that, by its end, you will want to spread the word about HERA and encourage your colleagues to become members.

I want to take a moment to recognize the work of two HERA members who have done so much to make this conference possible. First, I want to thank Doug Sjoquist, the Program Chair, for his masterful organization of topics, presenters, times, locations, and all the details that must be negotiated to create a successful program. I also want to thank Marcia Green, our Executive Director and CFO. Everything you see and do at this conference, in one way or another, is a result of Marcia's work. She dedicated more time and effort than I can imagine and did it all so gracefully. Marcia held all the parts together and kept us moving forward. I am so grateful that she is our executive director. Marcia, thank you very much.

It is spring and here we are in Chicago, a few steps away from Lake Michigan, at a conference entitled *Nature and the Humanities*. How appropriate. The seasons and HERA are beginning afresh. Change is in the air. Ralph Waldo Emerson once said about the nature of change, "The majority of men are bundles of beginnings," but his dear friend Henry David Thoreau remarked, "Things do not

change, we change." To which, a more recent author, John Galsworthy, adds, "Beginnings are always messy."

Beginnings are, indeed, messy, especially for a new humanities association, especially in 2009 when, in the world outside of education and the academy, questions arise about the value of the humanities. We know it's a hard time for the humanities when even the dean emeritus of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Stanley Fish, writes in his *New York Times* essay "Think Again" (2008):

You can't argue that a state's economy will benefit by a new reading of 'Hamlet.' You can't argue – well you can, but it won't fly – that a graduate who is well-versed in the history of Byzantine art will be attractive to employers (unless the employer is a museum). You can talk . . . about 'well rounded citizens,' but that ideal belongs to an earlier period, when the ability to refer knowledgeably to Shakespeare or Gibbon or the Thirty Years War had some cash value.

Still, we are here together because we know that questions of science and technology, economy and commerce, politics and globalization are not separate from profoundly human interests, needs, and purposes. Today's urgent questions are intimately connected to the humanities as are all human endeavors.

The humanities have always been a place of dialogue between and across all content areas and perspectives, an intersection where today's burning issues can be addressed and where we can become better decision makers and engaged citizens. What we can know grows exponentially each day, but the humanities inform that knowledge. The humanities help us to figure out what we ought to do with all that we know.

In the poem "Chicago Picasso," poet and novelist Gwendolyn Brooks wrote about people's ambivalent relationship with art:

Does man love art? Man visits art, but squirms.
Art hurts, art urges voyages –
and it is easier to stay home,
the nice beer ready.

The same may be said of the humanities. The humanities can make people squirm because the humanities do not suffer complacency gladly. They urge voyages when it's easier to sit back and snooze.

Yet, no one here tonight is complacent. We are the first ones on the gangplank, tickets in hand, eager for the trip to begin. Fellow travelers, as HERA begins her maiden voyage, it is my pleasure to accompany you. I want to thank you for taking time from your busy lives to participate in HERA's first conference. I know that it will be the beginning of a wonderful journey.

Interdisciplinary Humanities

The Humanities Education and Research Association's Scholarly Journal: *Interdisciplinary Humanities* is a refereed scholarly journal, published twice a year.

There is the possibility that some authors will be asked to revise and re-submit for consideration in future issues. When submitting to *Interdisciplinary Humanities*, remember all essays and poems should be interdisciplinary in nature. Essays should not exceed 6,000 words and should be formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style.

Subscriptions are included as a benefit of membership in the Humanities Education and Research Association. Libraries and institutions may subscribe for \$100.00 per year.

Submit articles and Creative Works to co-editors, Stephen Husarik shusarik@uafortsmith.edu and Lee Ann Westman, lewestman@utep.edu. Don't forget to include your e-mail address. Check HERA's website under JOURNAL to obtain information on upcoming editions.

Spring 2010 - Nature and the Humanities, based on the papers delivered at the 2009 HERA conference in Chicago. Please contact co-editors Stephen Husarik (479.788.7555, shusarik@uafortsmith.edu) or Lee Ann Westman (915.747.5028, lewestman@utep.edu) for further information. Deadline Nov, 1 2009.

Fall 2010 – Utopia/Dystopia – Guest Editor David Hatch. For a special issue of *Interdisciplinary Humanities*, we seek academic papers from a broad range of disciplines that address **utopian/dystopian literature, historical attempts** to create utopia, or the **philosophical writings** that underpin each of these efforts. We will also consider **creative fictional engagements** of utopian themes and **creative non-fiction** essays about utopia. In particular, this issue will explore the definitions of and boundaries between Utopia and Dystopia. Submissions are due by May 1, 2010. Length: 6,000 words. Inquiries, double-spaced manuscripts, and creative works in any genre should be sent to davidahatch@live.com

Spring 2011 – Incarnation: The Body and the Sacred. Guest Editor Annette Allen, director of the Humanities Doctoral Program at the University of Louisville. Please send essays to Dr. Annette Allen, IH Guest Editor, Division of the Humanities, 213 Humanities Bldg., University of Louisville; Louisville, KY 40292. Word limit: 6,000 words. Deadline: Nov 1 2010.

Calling all Book Reviewers!

IH editors are looking for well written book reviews of new publications that educators might use in interdisciplinary classrooms or scholarship. These can be

scholarly works as well as textbooks that examine themes and ideas across disciplines. This is an excellent opportunity for young scholars and graduate students to publish! Please submit reviews to Wynn Yarbrough. wynnyarbrough@hotmail.com

2010 Conference

Intersections: Mind, Body, Time, Space
March 11-13, 2010,
Camino Real Hotel, El Paso, Texas



The 2010 conference of the Humanities Education and Research Association will take place at one of the most dynamic intersections in the world—the border crossing of El Paso, Texas and Juarez, Mexico. Constant traffic across this border port and the lively interchange of people and ideas through its gates has given birth to a regional identity that blends the Mexican and U. S. populations in a unique Southwestern Culture.

The Camino Real Hotel is an historic hotel with a Tiffany dome in the lobby restaurant and bar. It is located in downtown El Paso, just a few blocks from Juarez. http://www.caminoreal.com/elpaso_i/main.php

El Paso is an inexpensive and safe place to visit. It is the 4th safest city in the country. There are local sites and restaurants to enjoy with the conference. Conference plans include:

- A tour and a reception at the El Paso Museum of Art, which is across the street from the hotel.
- A plenary session on a newly-published work by Langston Hughes

Proposal Submissions: All proposals or panels should include names, institutional affiliations, addresses, and email and phone contact numbers of presenter. All proposals should include paper title(s) and a one paragraph abstract for each paper proposed either singly or as part of a panel. Proposals are due by November 15, 2009. For more information, see the Call for Proposals at the end of the newsletter.

Member Updates

James Chichetto traveled to Lithuania for a number of reasons, both academic and spiritual. He visited the homes and museum of many writers and poets, notably, Antanas Baranauskas and Maironis as well as a number of churches and historical sites in Vilnius, the capital, and Kaunas, the second largest city. He notes, “Most moving of all sites were the ‘Hill of Crosses’ (Seduva), site of the Lithuanian resistance movement to Communism; Manor and Palace of Verkiai (Vilnius); the old Jewish Quarters in Vilnius, a beautiful part of the city, yet haunting reminder of the once thriving Jewish community that resided in that district and was later wiped out during the Holocaust; Dzūkija National Park; Christ Resurrection Church and Town Hall (Kaunas); and Mass at Gates of Dawn Church and Cathedral of St. Casmir (Vilnius).”

Suzanne Gut and Terri Tomaszek have received a grant from the Michigan Humanities Council to expand on the Language Partners Project that they presented at the HERA conference in Chicago. Davenport University humanities and ESL students will collaborate with client students at the Literacy Center of West Michigan to document the stories of recent immigrants to the Kent County area. In connection with the 2009-10 Great Michigan Read of the memoir *Stealing Buddha's Dinner*, this oral history project will result in the production of a booklet of biographies and interviews as well as a DVD that explore issues of cultural understanding, contemporary history, and immigration stories.

John Otterbacher's memoir *Sailing Grace* was released for international distribution in July. The international edition is entitled *Outrageous Grace*. While publication of the book continues in the U.S., the publisher Adlard Coles (London) will expand its audience to markets in the British Isles, Europe, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa. Recent news and information about *Sailing Grace* can be found at <http://www.sailing-grace.com/>

Sharon Vriend-Robinette is co-chairing a conference sponsored by the West Michigan Presidents' Compact Committee. To be held on September 24 – 25 in Grand Rapids Michigan, the Conference on Diversity: Pedagogy and Scholarship Across the Disciplines supports the Compact, which was signed by thirteen West Michigan college presidents, by “Promoting Anti-Racist and Multicultural Efforts in Higher Education within West Michigan.”

Louis Silverstein's book *Encountering Life's Endings* was published in April 2009 by Xlibris. The book encompasses practical, psychological, philosophical, cultural and spiritual aspects of death and dying viewed

through the prism of the passing of Silverstein's mother (94), father (89), brothers Al (69), Joe (46), Eddie (44), numerous friends and colleagues, as well as the highly acclaimed course on the subject of life's endings that Silverstein teaches.

Stephen Husarik presented a paper titled “How Beethoven's Music Contributed to the Growth of Musical Terminology” at the 7th International Humanities conference in Beijing, China. Husarik also combined extended travel through China with an online course where students followed his itinerary and used material Husarik generated from his travels in their projects. The projects and Husarik's experiences were subsequently combined into a public presentation on China called “Adventures in China: The Dragon Is Awake” given August 4, 2009.



Traditional emperor's greeting in full costume at the front gate of the citadel of Xi'an. Photo by Stephen Husarik.

HERA Newsletter Items

The HERA newsletter is published three times a year and features conference and journal updates, information about HERA members, web sites about interdisciplinary teaching and scholarship, reports on effective teaching strategies, travelogues, and other brief information that would be relevant to humanities educators. **Send your newsletter items to:** Jim Bell, HERA Newsletter Editor, School of Communications, Grand Valley State University, 1 Campus Drive, Allendale, MI 49401 or via email at: bellja@gvsu.edu (email is the preferred method).

The production of this newsletter is made possible by the support of the School of Communications and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Grand Valley State University, Anthony Thompson, Director and Fred Antczak, Dean.

HERA Mission Statement

The Humanities Education and Research Association is organized as a non-profit 501(c) 3 organization, exclusively for charitable, research and education purposes.

The mission of the organization is to:

- Promote the worldwide study, teaching and understanding of the humanities across a range of disciplines.
- Support the interchange of research and the scholarships of knowledge, teaching and service in the humanities through conferences, publications, and related activities in a worldwide context
- Provide additional forums for the exchange of ideas regarding humanities education in schools, colleges and universities, libraries and museums, and other contexts

For more information go to www.h-e-r-a.org

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Donate

Your donation is tax deductible and will help promote the worldwide study, teaching and understanding of the humanities across a range of disciplines. We need your help to keep the Humanities strong and thriving.

Send your donation to: HERA, P.O. Box 777, Pacifica, CA 94044-4206

Interested in Joining HERA? HERA Membership Application

Membership/Subscription Application

Membership includes: *Interdisciplinary Humanities* (HERA's journal is published two times a year.) HERA's newsletter is published in the fall, winter, and spring.

Send your completed application with a check to the address listed below. All memberships begin January 1 and end December 31. Please check appropriate category.

Check appropriate category

___ Individual 1-year membership: \$80

___ Employee of Institutional Member, 1-year membership: \$65

___ Joint 1-year membership: \$120

___ Full time student membership: \$40

___ Retired: \$40

___ Library memberships to *Interdisciplinary Humanities*: \$100

___ Institutional 1-year membership: \$500

Institutional members are recognized in conference materials and on the HERA website. Individuals employed by institutional members enjoy reduced membership and conference fees. A 1-year membership fee for an employee of an institutional member is \$65.)

Name:

Affiliation:

Specialization or Special Interests:

E-mail address:

Preferred Mailing Address:

Work phone/Home phone numbers:

Enclose check for category indicated above, made out to:

Humanities Education and Research Association

Send to: HERA, P.O. Box 715, Pacifica, CA 94044-4206

Call for Papers:
Intersections: Mind, Body, Time, Space
March 11-13, 2010, Camino Real Hotel, El Paso, Texas

The 2010 conference of the Humanities Education and Research Association will take place at one of the most dynamic intersections in the world—the border crossing of El Paso, Texas and Juarez, Mexico. Constant traffic across this border port and the lively interchange of people and ideas through its gates has given birth to a regional identity that blends the Mexican and U. S. populations in a unique Southwestern Culture.

Modern constructs of personal and national identity that separate people from one another have created misunderstandings and hostility among many groups of people and are reflected even in the narrow focus in the academy. Both peoples and ideas have struggled for dominance and privilege. However, the traditions of knowledge were not created by separated paths but by the layering and intersecting of streams of enlightenment and discovery. Aristotle taught that it was the interaction of people that brought out the best and most rational in humanity. His assertion is reflected in the idea of the American contradiction that—for almost 4 centuries—has been the cultural legacy of the El Paso border area. This year's HERA conference seeks to explore this age old premise that discourse is the catalyst of creativity and humanity achieves its true greatness in identifying and celebrating layers of creativity through oral, symbolic, and written communication.

HERA invites papers on art, music, literature, philosophy, gender studies, religion, cinema, media studies, cultural studies, museum studies, psychology, anthropology, biology, sociology, geography, geology, or history that speak to the discoveries initiated in these meetings. What does it take to create such intersections of bodies, minds and souls?

What have been the results, and what do we now realize from those points where different elements or genre or approaches have come together?

Are the humanities and the sciences different, unrelated spheres? Are there new, creative ways for science and the humanities to grow and to benefit humanity by taking note of the other? Is it even possible for science and the humanities to live in harmony with one another?

Is there room for cooperation over issues that are not technical problems but deep cultural transformations that can be explored historically and empirically?

Whose social implications can be examined; and whose underlying assumptions can be challenged and reconsidered?

Just as significantly, how is it possible to perpetuate the results of original and spontaneous unions, incorporate them into society and employ them to invigorate the stagnating elements of our educational system and our cultural traditions?

While sponsorship of the HERA conference comes from a majority of colleges and universities, HERA recognizes that the cultural and educational issues in the humanities do not stop at the campus gate. For that reason, all teachers and interested educators from the primary and secondary levels are encouraged to submit proposals and to make plans to attend the 2010 HERA Conference.

Proposal Submissions: All proposals or panels should include names, institutional affiliations, addresses, and email and phone contact numbers of presenter. All proposals should include paper title(s) and a one paragraph abstract for each paper proposed either singly or as part of a panel. Proposals are due by November 15, 2009.

Please send all proposals by email to **both:** Dr. Marcia Green, email: mgreen@sfsu.edu and Dr. Ronald Weber email: rweber@utep.edu. For other registration and program information consult the HERA website at www.h-e-r-a.com