



NEWSLETTER

Bethesda, Md., Meeting To Focus on Creating Communities

Be ready for some surprises at the 2003 annual meeting of the Oral History Association Oct. 8-12 in Bethesda, Md. Located at the doorstep of the Nation's Capital, the conference will capitalize on the invigorating, multicultural climate of the region under the theme "Creating Communities: Cultures, Neighborhoods, Institutions."

An assortment of workshops for beginners and experienced oral historians will fill the day on Oct. 8, while the first full day of the conference, Oct. 9, will begin with a Pentagon tour of the site of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack and a

discussion of the oral history projects the attack spawned.

Also on Oct. 9, Thursday, community oral history projects from Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia will be featured. The day's sessions also will include a plenary session with Barbara Franco of the D.C. City Museum and an evening presidential reception at that museum.

The Friday morning featured activity will be a behind-the-scenes tour of the Library of Congress. Like the Pentagon, the Library of Congress is not available for tours on the weekend, so, in a departure from

previous OHA meetings, these tours are scheduled for Thursday and Friday mornings.

In addition to panels on Friday, special speakers include the recipient of the annual Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region's Forrest Pogue Award and staff from the National Museum of American History.

Friday evening dinner groups will have a chance to enjoy the many neighborhood and ethnic eateries in the metro area.

More panel sessions will be on tap Saturday as well as afternoon tours, which tentatively include a trip to Mt. Vernon, a tour of the U Street and Cardozo neighborhoods and a bike tour, weather permitting. (And October weather in the Washington, D.C., area is usually glorious!)

The conference will conclude Sunday after the annual business meeting, more panels and a plenary session on oral history programs and legal issues.



You, too, can enjoy autumn in the National Capital area when you attend the 2003 OHA annual meeting Oct. 8-12 in Bethesda, Md.

Copy Deadline Note

The next OHA Newsletter copy deadline is July 1 for the issue mailed to members Aug. 1. You can reach the editor at: ohaeditor@aol.com. Your stories are always welcome.



From Your President

By Arthur A. Hansen
OHA President

When OHA Executive Secretary Madelyn Campbell informed Council that the contract she had signed with the Hyatt Regency Bethesda, the 2003 annual meeting site, mandated that we hold our midwinter meeting there in February to be ensured of available discounted sleeping and meeting rooms, this news was met with a collective groan.

Not only did this month conflict with the start of academic terms for a number of Council members, but it also came a time when East Coast weather conditions were predictably inclement. Moreover, the only weekend in February when a near majority could attend was the second one, a good bet to coincide with the coldest interval of the year for the Washington, D.C., area.

But all of our worries were misplaced. Thanks to divine intervention of some sort, the long weekend of Feb. 7-9 proved to be an ideal time to hold our midwinter meeting, for the weather was stunning. (The very next week, of course, brought a bitter snowstorm, among the worst in years, so we were lucky to be in Bethesda during the proverbial lull before it hit.)

In addition to the prevailing mild temperatures and the clear skies, we were treated to gracious hospitality, nicely appointed rooms and tasty food at the first-class Hyatt Regency Bethesda, Md. Furthermore, on my several outings on foot from the hotel to get copying and e-mailing done and to dine with Madelyn and the other Council members, I discovered one of the many reasons why OHA Vice President Rose Diaz, in conjunction with Program Chair Roger Horowitz, riveted upon the theme of "Creating Communities: Cultures, Neighborhoods and Institutions."

As epitomized by the myriad restaurants with diverse international cuisines in the area, the sense of place that pervades and animates this walking urban space surrounding the conference site is that of a community whose people as well as its public activities are cosmopolitan and congenial.

Elsewhere in this issue you will learn (as we did at the midwinter meeting from Diaz, Horowitz and Local Arrangements co-chairs Renee Braden and Dave Winkler) just how the site and the program, including a panoply of exciting regional tours, complement and enrich one another. This Oct. 8-12 conference is one none of us will want to miss, especially since it will occur during the fall colors in the Mid-Atlantic region.

I would like to note several highlights of the midwinter meeting.

First, the Council welcomed new Council member Mehmed Ali and First Vice President Kim Lacy Rogers. Although a newcomer to the OHA, Ali is currently president of the New England Oral History Association and is affiliated with the Lowell National Historical Park as the coordinator for its Mogan Cultural Center. Two roles that he will play on Council for OHA are to strengthen its non-standing committees charged with strategically connecting OHA to state and regional associations and to the National Park Service.

As for Rogers, a Dickinson College historian, she is well known within our association as well as the International Oral History Association for both her distinguished scholarship and her administrative and editorial leadership. Her background will be invaluable as the coordinator for the 2004 OHA annual meeting to be held in Portland, Ore.

A second (collective) highlight emerged from the content of the several editors' reports submitted to Tom King, OHA Publications Committee chair.

From Jeff Charnley, H-Oralhist editor, we learned that the number of

subscribers to OHA's listserv had reached 1,452 by October 2002, about average for the H-Net lists, which range from a low of 16 members to a high of 4,905.

Charnley rotates his editorship bimonthly with three other skilled and devoted editors: Mary Larson, Kathryn Blakeman and Gene Preuss. Most importantly, the discussion threads on the listserv have become both more varied and more substantial, and moreover, these threads may be searched by keyword or by checking the monthly discussion logs on the H-Oralhist Web site.

From the editor of this **Newsletter**, Mary Kay Quinlan, Council was apprised that once again this year we will be treated to two 12-page issues and one 16-page issue. The last issue of the **Newsletter**, not surprisingly, attracted numerous complimentary messages from our membership. Quinlan has been our **Newsletter** editor for so long that we sometimes take her dedicated and professional journalism for granted. So it is especially warming when a member takes the time to either send her an item to publish or lets her know that her persisting editorial excellence is valued.

The report from Andy Dunar, **Oral History Review** editor, was also both enlightening and a cause for celebration.

On the one hand, Dunar shared the galleys for the table of contents for the upcoming issue of the **OHR**, which is a landmark special number devoted to the theme of "shared authority" in oral history and featuring four provocative articles by oral history scholars along with thoughtful commentaries by two seasoned oral historical theorists and practitioners, Linda Shopes and Michael Frisch. The critical reviews comprising the remainder of this issue showcase the extent and variety of oral history as a field of disciplined creative activity.

On the other hand, Dunar's report contained pertinent correspondence by him with representatives from the
(Continued on page 3)

OHA Members Meet With Cuban Oral Historians

By Bruce M. Stave
University of Connecticut

Madelyn Campbell, OHA executive secretary, and Bruce M. Stave, director of the Center for Oral History at the University of Connecticut, met with Cuban oral historians at the Centro Cultural Pablo de la Torriente Brau in Havana on Jan. 14.

The Centro Cultural is directed by Victor Casaus and has a number of objectives, including encouraging oral history and the study of memory. It publishes, among other works a magazine, *Memoria*, and has established a collection, "Palabra Viva: Voices of Cuban Culture." It also produces documentaries and is involved with digitalization.

The Cubans who attended the gathering included historians, anthropologists, journalists, writers and researchers. Their topics of investigation ranged from Cuban doctors who worked with Che Guevara in Africa to the history of Old Havana.

Through a translator, Sandra Gonzales of the Centro, issues common to oral history practitioners received spirited discussion. Topics included:

- +the reliability of oral history and memory,
- +the role of narrators and interviewers,
- +the difference between oral history and journalism,
- +the value of video as opposed to audio and
- +interviewing with and without a tape recorder.

All participants seemed to agree on the value of such cultural exchange, and Campbell will forward OHA material to the Cubans.

*Mark your calendar
for the
OHA annual meeting
in Bethesda, Md.
Oct. 8-12, 2003*



Bruce M. Stave, director of the Center for Oral History at the University of Connecticut (center left), and Madelyn Campbell, OHA executive secretary (center right), visit with Cuban oral historians in Havana. Sandra Gonzales, translator, is between Campbell and Stave. Photo: Madelyn Campbell

President's Column

(Continued from page 2)
History Cooperative and his own systematically developed case for why Council should authorize the OHR to become a participating journal in this cooperative. The Council was unanimous in its opinion that the OHA was very fortunate to have Dunar as the *Review's* editor.

A final highlight of the Council's midwinter meeting was the last item on the agenda. Thanks to Kim Rogers, the original agenda was augmented with a presentation to Council by Stephen Rhind-Tutt of the Alexander Spring Press. He discussed the concept of semantic indexing of discursive material like oral histories and the prospect of developing a comprehensive oral history index for the OHA, which would be fee-based and could provide a source of revenue.

Accordingly, the Council voted that OHA set up a task force, under the leadership of Rogers, to work collaboratively with Alexander Street Press to explore ways of developing such an oral history index.

Endowment Gifts Sought

The Oral History Association welcomes your tax deductible contribution to the Oral History Endowment, which helps fund special projects. Send your donations to: OHA, Dickinson College, P.O. Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013.

The OHA thanks these recent donors: Shirley Stephenson, Mary Palevsky and Mary Kay Quinlan.

Reach OHA Online

The OHA Web site is:
www.dickinson.edu/oha

The oral history electronic discussion list, H-Oralhist, is one of the H-Net affiliated scholarly lists. No dues or fees are required to enroll. To subscribe, send a message to: listserv@h-net.msu.edu with no subject and the following text: SUBSCRIBE H-ORALHIST
firstname lastname, affiliation.

Access the main H-Oralhist Web site at: <http://www.h-net.msu.edu/~oralhist>

Problems? Contact Editor Jeff Charnley at: charnl2@pilot.msu.edu

Coast-to-Coast Oral History Workshops Abound

Summer opportunities abound to expand your knowledge of the oral history craft. Weekend workshops, multi-week institutes and for-credit college classes geared for everyone from the novice oral historian to the advanced practitioner are offered around the country.

What follows is a brief description of summer oral history courses whose sponsors provided information to the **OHA Newsletter**. It is **not** a comprehensive list, but the editor encourages all organizations that offer oral history training programs to submit information for inclusion in future spring roundups. Submit details to ohaeditor@aol.com by March 1 for summer programs.

Readers who cannot find convenient programs in this brief listing should check with state or regional oral history organizations and state or local historical societies in their areas for local or regional workshops. State and regional organizations also are encouraged to list their upcoming workshops in the **OHA Newsletter**.

Here, in chronological order, are some of this summer's choices and information on how to get more details or apply for the programs. Enrollment for most of the programs is limited to allow optimum class participation.

Kenyon College Gambier, Ohio June 10-12, 2003

The Ohio Association of Historical Societies and Museums, the Ohio Historical Society, the Ohio Humanites Council and the Rural Life Center at Kenyon College are collaborating to sponsor the third annual Oral History Institute.

The goal of the institute is to introduce the theory and practice of oral history to those with little or no training in the field.

Four experienced oral historians are scheduled as presenters:

+Donna DeBlasio, Center for Historic Preservation at Youngstown State University;

+David Mould, Ohio University;

+Steve Paschen, Archival

Services, University of Akron and

+Howard Sacks, Kenyon College.

Fees: \$100 per person, including two overnight room stays, six meals and all workshop materials.

For information, call or e-mail the Ohio Historical Society's Local History Office: 800-858-6878 or oaism@ohiohistory.org.

Application deadline: April 30.

Columbia University New York City June 16-27, 2003

With the theme "Telling Lives: Memory, Orality and Testimony in Oral History," the Columbia University Oral History Research Office Summer Institute will focus on ethical, methodological and theoretical challenges of documenting the power of testimony and oral history to shape public discourse and strengthen communities whose histories have been silenced within dominant historical paradigms and media accounts.

Faculty will include:

+Alessandro Portelli, University of Rome;

+Silvia Salvatici, Archives of Memory Project, Florence;

+Linda Shopes, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission;

+Steve Rowland, CultureWorks;

+Revan Schendler, Smith College;

+Mary Marshall Clark, director, Oral History Research Office;

+ Jessica Wiederhorn, associate director, Oral History Research Office and

+Ronald Grele, director emeritus, Oral History Research Office.

Fees: \$1,000 per person. Housing is available in air-conditioned dorm-style suites at \$40 per night for a

shared room, \$55 for a single.

For information, visit the Summer Institute Web site:

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/oral/summer.html>.

Also, you may call Wiederhorn at: 212-854-4012.

Application deadline: May 10.

Portland State University Portland, Ore. June 23-July 17, 2003

OHA past president Charles Morrissey will teach a three-credit course, listed as a practicum in public history/oral history through Portland State University's Extended Studies summer program. The course meets in the afternoons Monday through Thursday. Students may take the course for graduate or undergraduate credit.

Fees: \$392, undergraduate; \$860, graduate students.

For information, call the PSU Extended Studies office at 800-547-8887 or check its Web site: www.summer.pdx.edu.

Applications will be accepted first-come, first-served beginning May 5.

San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum San Francisco, Calif. July 9-13, 2003

The San Francisco Performing Arts Library and Museum and the LEGACY Oral History Project present the eighth annual Oral History Training Workshop for the Performing Arts at the SF PALM's new location in the War Memorial Veteran's Building, San Francisco Civic Center.

Formerly focused on oral history for dance, this summer's workshop expands its outreach to music, theater and all performing arts disciplines.

Participation is open to performers and educators in all disciplines; librarians, archivists, writers and critics; historians, sociologists and anthropologists interested in refining their field work methods and members of the general public who want to help preserve the rich and diverse, but ephemeral, heritage of the performing arts.

LEGACY Project Director Jeff Friedman is the seminar leader.

Fees: \$350 plus \$25 materials fee for early registration by May 9; \$400 plus \$25 materials fee thereafter.

For information, including details about lodging options, call LEGACY's Program Manager Alyson Belcher at 415-255-4800, Ext. 823, or e-mail: alysomb@sfpalm.org.

Application deadline: May 9 for discount rate.

University of California Berkeley, Calif. Aug. 10-15, 2003

The Regional Oral History Office [ROHO] at the University of California, Berkeley is offering a one-week advanced institute on the methodology, theory and practice of oral history. This intensive workshop will take place at the Townsend Humanities Center on the UC Berkeley campus.

Institute leaders include:

- +Richard Cándida Smith, ROHO director;
- +Lisa Rubens, ROHO historian;
- +Ana Maria Mauad, Universidade Fluminense Federal, Rio de Janeiro and
- +Jeff Friedman, Director of the LEGACY Dance Project.

The institute is designed for graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, college faculty, and independent scholars planning to use oral history interviews as part of a research project. This institute is geared, as well, to community historians and others who are engaged in ongoing oral history work.

The six-day institute will cover project planning, preparation for interviewing, interview techniques, analysis of completed research projects and the opportunities afforded by digital video and Web archiving.

Seminars, workshops and discussions will be geared to the specific research interests of participants and will provide a platform for the engagement of the faculty's expertise. The institute director and faculty will integrate participant projects into their presentations.

Fees: Tuition is \$700. Housing and most meals must be arranged separately, but a range of housing options in the Berkeley community is available.

For information, look under "events" on the Web site: <http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/>

Application deadline: April 28.

Vermont College Montpelier, Vt. Aug. 11-15, 2003

If you can't make it to Portland, Ore., but want to learn oral history from Charles Morrissey, this is your second chance this summer. The long-time OHA member has been teaching oral history in Vermont every summer since 1975.

The workshop covers research preparation, interviewing techniques, project management, fund raising and legal and ethical issues.

Fees: Tuition is \$350 before June 15 and \$395 thereafter. Room and board on campus also is available for an extra fee.

For information, call or e-mail Rick Zind at 800-336-6794 or rick.zind@tui.edu.

Application deadline: June 15 for discount rate.

Executive Secretary's Report

By Madelyn Campbell

It's hard to believe that spring is here and that 2003 is well underway.

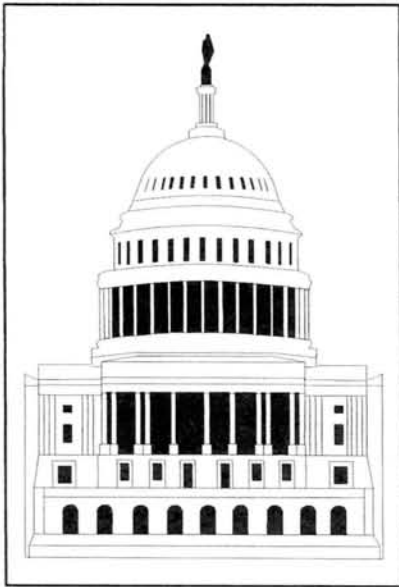
The association ended last year in excellent financial health with a carryover balance in our operating budget of \$53,514 and a balance in the Endowment Fund of \$117,111. These are the highest reserves for OHA in recent years. Membership renewals and attendance at our annual meetings are the keys to maintaining our financial stability.

So I encourage you to attend our next annual meeting in Bethesda, Md. It is the perfect way to stay in touch with colleagues and to support OHA. This year's meeting will be held at the Hyatt Regency Bethesda and although the full program booklet will not reach you till mid-July, you may reserve a room now by calling the Hyatt at 301-657-1234. Make sure you ask for the OHA special rate of \$155/single/double.

It's going to be a great conference, and Bruce Stave and I may have played a small role in bringing the Cuban poet, filmmaker and oral historian, Victor Casaus, to our upcoming meeting. Bruce and I met with Casaus in Havana, and the OHA Council has voted to support his travel to the meeting. We are all hoping he will be able to obtain the necessary visa.

Soon, hopefully, the OHA will be launching its new Web site designed by Jesse Greenberg and facilitated by Internet Presentations Group. Thanks to Charles Hardy's coordination of this project, we will have a new look and a Web site that we hope will become less static and more informative. I hope you will visit it later this summer. That Web address is: www.dickinson.edu/oha.

Serving the association continues to be a great pleasure for me. Please call me at 717-245-1036 if you have any questions or suggestions.



Washington Update

By Bruce Craig
National Coalition for History

Editor's Note: The National Coalition for History serves as a national advocacy office in Washington, D.C., for historical and archival professions. It is a consortium of more than 50 organizations, including the Oral History Association. Here are selected excerpts from recent "NCH Washington Update" columns.

Library of Congress Plans To Save Digital History

The Library of Congress has received congressional approval to spend nearly \$100 million on a program that seeks national solutions to ensure the collection, long-term storage, preservation and rights protection of the nation's digital heritage. The effort is known as the Plan for the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program.

The challenge of preserving digital information is vexing. Some statistics:

+As of January 2002, there were more than 550 billion public pages on the World Wide Web.

+Some 7 million pages are added

to the Web every day.

+The average life span of a Web site is 44 days.

+44 percent of the Web sites available in 1998 disappeared by 1999.

Presidential Tapes Focus At Kennedy Library Meeting

Presidential historians, former advisers, first-family members, archivists and journalists convened recently for two days at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston to discuss the historical importance of secretly recorded White House tapes. They also pondered what presidential tape recordings have already added to history and what yet-to-be-released tapes may show.

The halls of the Kennedy Library reverberated with the scratchy tape-recorded voices of Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard M. Nixon.

Archivists from several presidential libraries gave glimpses of what future tape releases are likely to show.

Kennedy Library archivists expect that unreleased tapes of Kennedy's Oval Office and Cabinet Room meetings probably will offer insights into the 1963 Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the administration's relations with Latin America and dealings with foreign heads of state.

Lyndon B. Johnson Library archivists expected future LBJ tape releases will shed light on the Vietnam peace talks in 1968 and on the president's decision not to seek re-election.

President Nixon's still unreleased tapes seized by Congress during the Watergate investigation are expected to reveal 1972 discussion relating to the end of the Vietnam war.

Archivist of the United States John Carlin gave an update on the National Archives and Records Administration's attempts to "recover" the missing 18 ½-minute gap in Nixon's famous Watergate-era tape.

Several historians lamented how

brief a period in the history of the American presidency the tapes cover. The Roosevelt tapes, for example, cover only a few weeks in 1940. Several also expressed the proverbial warning against the journalists' temptation of using "sound bites" without knowing the broader context of discussions.

But in the end, speakers noted that the tapes show an aspect of history that written records often can't reveal.

Bills Call for Studies Of Various Historic Sites

Rep. Michael F. Doyle, D-Pa., and cosponsors have introduced a bill to establish a **Steel Industry National Historic Site** to preserve resources associated with the former United States Steel Homestead Works in Pennsylvania.

Rep. Major R. Owens, D-N.Y., has introduced a bill to study the feasibility of creating a **National Education Museum and Archive**. The bill recognizes that there is no central location, agency or archival repository responsible for focusing on America's education history.

Rep. Frank Pallone Jr., D-N.J., has introduced the **United States Life-Saving Service Heritage Act**, design to "inventory, evaluate, document and assist efforts to preserve surviving United States Life-Saving Service stations," which provided humanitarian assistance to shipwrecked mariners.

Sen. Harry M. Reid, D-Nev., and Rep. Joel Hefley, R-Colo., have introduced companion bills in the Senate and House to direct the Interior Secretary to conduct a study to identify sites and resources and recommend alternatives for commemorating and interpreting the **Cold War**.

Similar legislation passed the Senate and House in slightly different versions in the last congressional session but did not win final passage. The new Cold War theme study bills are identical.

Tennessee Senator Promotes History, Civics Education

Freshman Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., has introduced the American History and Civics Education Act, designed to “put American history and civics back in its rightful place in our schools so our children can grow up learning what it means to be an American.”

Modeled after a program Alexander initiated when he was governor of Tennessee in the 1980s, the bill would authorize teacher and student summer institutes that would seek to “inspire better teaching and more learning of the key events, persons and ideas that shape the institutions and democratic heritage of the United States.”

Under the bill, the National Endowment for the Humanities would administer what Alexander envisions as a four-year, \$25 million program.

The legislation also would authorize the creation of a “national alliance of American history and civics teachers” and would use federal funds to link them, via the Internet, to share best teaching practices.

In his floor statement introducing the legislation, Alexander attributed a decline in emphasis on American values and principles to greater attention being placed in schools on what he termed “so-called reforms” during the 1960s and 1970s—multiculturalism and diversity.

“During this time,” Alexander said, “many of our national leaders contributed to this drift toward agnostic Americanism....”

“These leaders celebrated multiculturalism and bilingualism and diversity at a time when there should have been more emphasis on a common culture and learning English in unity.”

Alexander’s comments immediately struck a raw nerve in the civil rights community.

Some leaders found the senator’s words unsettling at a time when minorities chafe over racially

insensitive remarks by former Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss.

Nashville attorney and civil rights activist Fred Ramos said: “To criticize multiculturalism and bilingualism sounds very nationalistic and betrays the fact that Lamar Alexander did not grow up in a multicultural society....From his perspective, becoming more American means becoming more white.”

Speaking to reporters in response to criticism, Alexander bristled at the association of his comments with Lott’s remark and bluntly stated: “Unity is more important than diversity.”

Coming at a time when America is poised for war, the strong patriotic overtones in Alexander’s speech won the praise of several colleagues.

Fellow Tennessean and GOP leader Bill Frist said of Alexander’s speech: “This concept of unity, this concept of patriotism, this concept of the essence of what being American is all about has been a real focus for all of us throughout our lives.”

Comment from Tennessee newspaper editorial writers was less laudatory. The Tennessean in Nashville, for example, editorialized: “The need for a common culture should never exclude diversity that made this country great. A history lesson for Congress would be in order before the legislation is passed.”

Study Finds Americans Know About Constitution

A study prepared for the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia has concluded that while most Americans do not have detailed knowledge about the Constitution and Bill of Rights, they have nonetheless absorbed its core values of protecting the rights of all citizens.

The study, conducted by Public Agenda, a nonprofit organization dedicated to nonpartisan public opinion research, found that nine out of 10 Americans also believe

America should be a land where children are taught both the good and the bad about their history.

The conclusions of the national survey of 1,520 adults sharply contrast with several recent studies by conservative-leaning think tanks.

“There’s a widespread myth among the nation’s intelligentsia that Americans are ignorant about what the Constitution stands for and would throw away the Bill of Rights, if left to their own devices,” said Deborah Wadsworth, president of Public Agenda.

“The truth is most Americans have absorbed the principle that these rights are essential and have to be balanced,” she said.

The study found that most Americans understand more about the Constitution than many give them credit for. Nearly 60 percent recalled efforts by their secondary school teachers to instill in them a knowledge of the Constitution.

While most Americans may have a hazy recall of specific facts, the study found, the vast majority have absorbed the basic principles embodied in that document.

Among other findings:

+A majority of Americans—65 percent—believe that citizens who are rich or powerful have more rights and freedoms than others do. African Americans were significantly more likely to hold that view—76 percent.

+With respect to protection of other rights, 50 percent of Americans believe it is just as important to protect the rights of the accused as it is to put the guilty in jail.

+Another 18 percent said it is important to protect the rights of the accused, “even if this means some guilty people are let go.”

+A total of 65 percent of those polled said their belief that their Constitutionally based right to privacy has either been lost or is under serious threat.

But most Americans viewed banks and credit card companies as a bigger threat to their personal privacy than the federal government.

STATE AND REGIONAL REPORT



OHMAR Set to Elect Officers, Visit New York

Members of Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region were scheduled to elect new officers as part of their agenda at a spring meeting in New York City on March 28-29.

The slate of officers included:

+President—Roger Horowitz,
+Vice President—David Winkler,
+Member-at-large—Richlyn

Goddard,

+Nominating Committee—Pam Henson.

Also scheduled for the spring meeting were technical workshops co-sponsored by the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts and sessions at Hunter College focusing on oral history and Sept. 11, 2001, and oral history and historic preservation.

Montana War Brides Tell Their Stories

The Montana Historical Society has completed 15 interviews in its Montana War Brides series, which focuses on women who came to the United States after World War II from England, Wales, France, Australia and Germany.

The women talk about their war experiences, courtship during wartime, efforts to marry and come to the States, challenges of becoming part of new families and communities as well as efforts to retain their cultural identities. The project is expected to include 10 more interviews.

Michigan Historians Plan Many Workshops

By Geneva Wiskemann
Michigan Oral History Assn.

The Ides of March may be heralding the passing of the I-o-n-g Michigan winter of '03. With the spring sunshine comes more and ever more requests for help from experienced oral historians and would-be practitioners.

The Michigan Oral History Association is offering workshops in Detroit on May 5, at Dorr in Eastern Allegan County on May 10 and Mackinac City on May 17.

The workshop team members are filling other dates for presentations about the oral history components of the Veterans History Project, the Automobile National Heritage Area's Motor Memories and how to conduct and preserve successful recorded interviews.

I am also putting together a conference in partnership with the Michigan Department of History, Arts and Letters, which is scheduled at Lansing on Oct. 25 during Family History Month.

Museum Director Has Oral History Experience

Brent D. Glass, an alumnus of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill oral history program, has replaced oral historian Spencer Crew as head of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

Glass came to the Smithsonian from Pennsylvania, where he headed the state's Historical and Museum Commission. Glass earned his Ph.D. at UNC, Chapel Hill, and worked in the university's award-winning oral history program.

After leaving the Smithsonian, Crew was named head of the new Underground Railroad Museum in Cincinnati.

Tejano Voices Project Features New Web Site

The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries announce a new Web site permitting access to digitized oral history interviews with Mexican-American public figures in Texas.

The interviews were conducted by Jose Angel Gutierrez, UTA political science professor and former director of UTA's Center for Mexican American Studies. They emphasize the personal stories and struggles of Tejano leaders, many of whom are the first individuals of Mexican descent in their communities elected or appointed to government office.

The interviews uniquely reflect the history of the Tejano community as it pressed for an end to racial segregation in Texas and access to political power in the post-World War II period.

The Web site provides background information on the Tejano Voices Project and features a page devoted to each interviewee where the researcher may view several images of the interviewee, read a brief biographical note and summary of the interview and choose to see the full text of the interview transcript or play the audio file of the entire interview. Interviewees also can be identified by geographic location.

The TexTreasurers program of the Texas State Library and Archives provided grant funding to support the cataloging of 77 interviews. The UTA Libraries contributed staff and equipment to digitize the interviews and create the Web site. An additional 81 interviews are in UTA's Special Collections but have not yet been catalogued and digitized. Those interviews are listed on the Web site and will be added as funds become available.

Enjoy Tejano Voices at:
<http://libraries.uta.edu/tejanovoices/>.

Community College In Tucson Begins Oral History Project

The Community and Oral History Center at Pima Community College, Tucson, Ariz., has embarked on a new oral history project titled "They Prepared the Tucson Liberators for War: Rosie/Rosita and Their Compatriots at the B-24 Modification Plant from 1942-1945."

The plant sprang up in Tucson in the spring of 1942 as a direct result of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Project planners seek to identify and interview people employed at the plant as well as crew members who flew the planes in combat.

For information about the project, call Alex Kimmelman at 520-206-7314.

Recent Publications Reflect Regional Wealth Of Oral History Work

Editor's Note: The following potpourri of recent publications that rely on oral history reflects the wealth of oral history work in varied regions of the nation and the world.

Legendary Texas Law Prof

By Michael Widener
University of Texas at Austin

A half-century of transformations at the University of Texas School of Law are retold by the late Gus Hodges in an oral history interview recently published by the Jamail Center for Legal Research.

"Gus M. Hodges: An Oral History Interview" contains three extensive interviews conducted in 1986.

"Gus Hodges was one of the most colorful and best loved professors in the history of the University of Texas School of Law, said Roy Mersky, law professor and Jamail Center director.

Hodges (1908-1992) discusses

student life at UT during the Depression, the rise of the law school to national prominence and the increasing diversification of the faculty and student body.

The interviewer, H.W. Brands, is the author of several highly acclaimed biographies, including "The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin," a 2002 Pulitzer Prize finalist, and "T.R.: The Last Romantic," a biography of Teddy Roosevelt. Brands is a professor history at Texas A&M University.

Vanishing Virginia Farms

Vanishing family farms in the nation's second-fastest growing county is the focus of "It's Just a Way of Life: Reminiscing About the Family Farm," published by the Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum in Sterling, Va.

Based on interviews with local residents involved in agriculture through the 20th century, the book documents the experiences of farmers who thrived and then struggled on small, family-run farms in a county that is a fast-growing part of suburban Washington, D.C.

Former dairy farmer Jim Brownell told an interviewer: "Most farmers aren't in it for the money. They farm till the money runs out. It's just a way of life."

For information on ordering the book, call the museum at: 703-421-5322.

Nantucket Islanders

"We Are Nantucket: Oral Histories of Life on Nantucket Island" by Nancy A. Newhouse is a recently released collection of 33 oral history interviews spanning most of the 20th century that illuminate living, working, summering and retiring on the island.

The interviews reflect the hearty work ethic, Yankee thriftiness and simplicity, value for family and

community, humor and a pragmatic approach to life in a geographically isolated locale.

Newhouse credits "Doing Oral History," by OHA past president Donald Ritchie, for steering her in the right direction as she sought to "preserve precious memories" of long-time Nantucket Islanders. For information about ordering a copy of the book, visit the Web site: www.wearenantucket.com.

Japanese Elders

In "Memories of Wind and Waves: A Self-Portrait of Lakeside Japan," Dr. Junichi Saga, an acclaimed Japanese oral historian and medical doctor, draws on interviews of 33 elderly men and women in his hometown to tell the story of a community where poverty and hardship are balanced by simple, satisfying pleasures and close family and neighborhood ties.

The book illuminates a way of life changed forever by pollution, mechanization and the modernization of the 20th century.

Translated into English by Juliet Winters Carpenter, Saga's book depicts a disappearing way of life and the colorful characters who inhabited the shores of Lake Kasumigaura.

The book is a companion to Saga's 1987 award-winning work "Memories of Silk and Straw."

Saga's book is published by Kodansha International.

Eastern Shore Crab Pickers

"It's How You Pick the Crab: An Oral Portrait of Eastern Shore Crab Picking," by OHA member Kelly Feltault, is available from the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.

The book is based on oral history interviews with crab pickers, packing house owners and others and documents the industry's cultural and economic history.

For information, call the museum at 410-745-2916.

Opening the Door to Understanding: Houston's Plans for Holocaust Oral History

By Leta S. Schoen
Houston, Texas

"When people hate each other, hate leads to murder. To prevent it, we have to learn not to hate each other."

Those are the wise words of Irving Reifer, a survivor of the hate that spawned the Holocaust. When he gave his oral history to Holocaust Museum Houston (HMH) in 1996, it was his way of helping people learn not to hate each other. To me, his and all the other testimonies there have special significance in these volatile times of religious conflicts, terrorism and threats of war.

Driving Irving back and forth from home to the Holocaust Museum to work on his interview, I heard him speak at length of his reasons for giving his oral testimony. The Holocaust was the pivotal point in his life—"nothing was ever the same again," he said in one interview—and he hopes his words will make a difference.

He, like the other 200-plus survivors, liberators and rescuers who narrated their stories for HMH, shared those memories to teach the world of the horrors of their experience—always with the hope that in some way they can help to prevent it from happening again.

If the stories are put on a shelf and left to gather dust, that will hardly happen.

Laudably HMH has recently embarked on a program to bring its entire oral history collection up to Oral History Association standards. Each of the interviewees has a Houston connection; they are the foundation of and *raison d'être* for HMH.

Like regional Holocaust museums all over the world, they illuminate Holocaust history at the local level. Unlike large museums and oral history collections, they are grass

roots and bring the experience close to home.

HMH has a simple plan, but one that fulfills its mission and reflects the name of the primary museum exhibit: "Bearing Witness: A Community Remembers." Houston is that community.

The HMH plan includes:

- + Standardizing and editing properly the written transcripts and including them in loose-bound books with abstracts, legal releases and finding aids;

- + Building a fully integrated database that is searchable by keyword and field;

- + Linking them to the HMH Web site, which will include streaming video, audio clips and full transcripts, all presented in a searchable format.

This plan addresses what the narrators envisioned: safeguarding and revealing their histories to a wide audience.

Archivist and Curator of Collections Lisa Moellering has long recognized the obligation HMH owes to the people who gave their oral histories.

"When we seek out and accept the oral testimony of anyone, we have a duty to preserve and protect those memories properly," said Moellering.

In the case of Holocaust participants, this responsibility is far greater than usual. Surely, when these people weep while sharing their often gut-wrenching memories, we must promise to treat them properly. Even the HMH release speaks to the difficulty of giving this testimony, holding the museum harmless for any "emotional duress."

Susan Llanes-Meyers, the museum's executive director, feels that researchers of all ages deserve easy access to these testimonies. Physically coming to the museum is not always possible. But with Internet access, HMH will bring them in virtually.



Irving Reifer, 1945, Germany, after liberation. Photo: HMH Archives

HMH hopes to complete the project within a year of receiving funding, which Llanes and Linda Toyota, development officer, are seeking.

The value of these testimonies is apparent. Each interviewee was touched differently than any other person who witnessed or experienced the horrors of this genocide. Preserving their stories is a *mitzvah* of the highest order. We are in the 11th hour of collecting and protecting these valuable testimonies. The interviewees are aging and may soon be lost for further consultation.

The Holocaust Museum Houston has embarked on a plan that will set a first-class example of the proper handling of Holocaust oral histories, which smaller, local collections all over the United States can use as a model.

Professional oral historians can pave the way by educating community Holocaust organizations of the value and uniqueness of their local oral history collections and by endeavoring to assure that those testimonies of people in their communities who survived the hatred are preserved and shared with future generations.

Colleague Remembers OHA Scholar From Argentina

By Federico Guillermo Lorenz
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Dora Schwarzstein, an outstanding presence in the field of oral history and a member of the Oral History Association, died unexpectedly at the best of her career on Nov. 6, 2002.

Her name is known worldwide by many distinguished colleagues and her activities are reflected in her many publications and projects. In Argentina, it is due mainly to her efforts that oral history is respected as a research field. She introduced some key elements of its methodology in a compilation published in 1991, which is still a handbook for junior colleagues and students.

Her interests covered a wide range of activities. As director and

founder of the Oral History Program of the University of Buenos Aires, she gave courses and conducted seminars and workshops in many places in her country, encouraging interest in the potential as well as the dilemmas of interviewing.

Under her direction, the program was involved in two great projects.

First was a two-year plan for applying interviews in the teaching of history, which involved eight members of the Oral History Program, six primary schools, two secondary schools, their teachers, librarians and headmasters and, moreover, 470 students, who planned, scheduled and conducted classroom projects and interviews. The project must be seen as a materialization of the social involvement of historians and its results show the many uses for

teaching offered by the practice of interviewing.

Secondly, in a task in which Dora stayed until the very last moment, she directed us in the construction of the Oral Archive of Memoria Abierta, a network of human rights organizations. Open to the public since December 2002, its catalogues show 300 interviews on the experiences of state terrorism, political involvement, exile and the inferno of clandestine concentration camps.

Again, the importance of this project, in which Dora and all of us were—~~are~~—deeply involved, can be taken as a symbol of the deep concern of Dora Schwarzstein with her profession and society, and to realize the great loss caused by her death, not only for history, but for our daily life.

OHA Pamphlet Order Form

Add to your professional reference library the Oral History Association's pamphlets. OHA members get a 10 percent discount for orders of 10 or more copies. Clip and mail this coupon, with your check made out to OHA, to:
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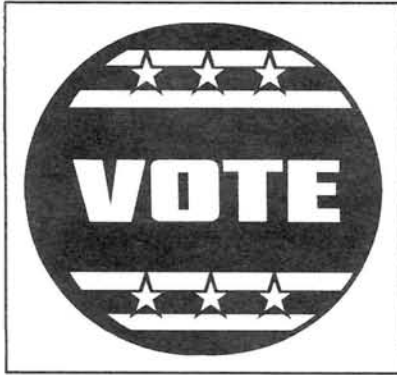
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2004 Slate Presented

By **Kim Lacy Rogers**
OHA Nominating Committee

The OHA Nominating Committee is pleased to present the following candidates for first vice president and two Council seats.

For first vice president: **Rebecca Sharpless**, Baylor University.

For one Council seat:

Horacio Roque Ramirez, University of California Los Angeles, or **Celia Alvarez**, independent

scholar, Santa Cruz, Calif.

For the second Council seat:

John Wolford, Missouri Historical Society, or **Mary Ann Larson**, University of Nevada.

OHA members also will elect members to the Nominating Committee. Three two-year positions are to be filled. Members will vote for one person from each of three places.

Place 1: **Laurie Mercier**, Washington State University-Vancouver, or **Lu Ann Jones**, University of North Carolina-Greenville.

Place 2: **Todd Moyer**, National Park Service, or **Chuck Bolton**, University of Southern Mississippi.

Place 3: **Mary Ann Villarreal**, University of Utah, or **Dawn Hinton**, Saginaw Valley State University.

The OHA election will be by mail ballot sent this summer to each OHA member in good standing. Biographical information and statements from each of the nominees will be included with the ballots.

The Nominating Committee and Council will accept additional nominations for officers, Council members and Nominating Committee members in the manner described in the OHA bylaws. (See section 9, paragraph 2, on page 61 of the 2000 **Membership Directory** or the OHA Web site:

<http://www.dickinson.edu/oha/ConstitutionBylaws.htm>.)

A petition signed by 20 or more OHA members in good standing may be submitted for each nomination, stating the particular office for which the nomination is made.

A petition nominating a first vice president or Council member must be in the hands of the Nominating Committee by June 15. (Send to: Gloria Cuadraz, 1108 West MacKenzie Dr., Phoenix, AZ 85013.)

A petition nominating a candidate for the Nominating Committee must be sent to the OHA Council by June 15. (Send to: Kim Lacy Rogers, Dickinson College, P.O. Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013.)

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