Brenner Wins Marshall Scholarship

“In the last few decades, the idea of spreading human rights throughout the world has become one of the most universally accepted goals in the Western world, even across the political spectrum. Still, we have yet to decide what rights these should be, and how we should go about making them real in the everyday lives of people,” says Alletta Sue Brenner, a Clark Honors College senior from Forest Grove who is the first UO student ever to be awarded the prestigious Marshall Scholarship.

Brenner plans to pursue degrees in international politics and African studies at the University of Edinburgh. She is interested in how nongovernmental organizations can influence the development and spread of human rights in practice as well as in principle. During her time in Scotland, she plans to study how several nongovernmental organizations in Niger are working to end the modern-day practice of slavery in that African nation. “When it comes to human rights, we have yet to resolve what seems to be an inherent conflict between moral universals and cultural relativism. I hope that through my work, I can help us resolve this dichotomy.”

Brenner is majoring in history and women’s and gender studies, with a minor in political science. She plans eventual- ly to enroll in law school where she will focus on human rights issues and international law.

Brenner developed an early interest in issues of social justice through a myriad of volunteer projects with her church and 4-H club, from raising money for UNICEF to taking clothing and food to local migrant farm workers. Since then, giving back to the community has become a way of life for her. “I firmly believe,” she says, “that those of us who have privilege in this world have an absolute responsibility to work for the greater good of the world. Growing up, I have never considered doing anything else with my life.”

Only forty Marshall Scholarships are awarded each year by the British government to U.S. students. The scholarship aims to foster U.S.-British relationships by supporting outstanding American students as they pursue advanced degrees in the United Kingdom.

“Alletta is an exceptionally gifted and hardworking student who entered the University of Oregon with great promise and has excelled in her studies,” says UO President Dave Froh- mayer. “She has brought great honor to the academic program of the university.”

A Class Act: Alumnus Gift Updates Classroom

Chapman Hall’s Room 307 underwent a startling transformation this winter. Gone are the scaled white walls, dull linoleum flooring, mismatched ‘70s student desks, ‘50s-era pull down maps and screens, and buzzing overhead fluorescent lights. In their place, the room now sports the same wainscoting and flooring found in the Clark Honors College hallway and library, new student desks to match, rich paint and upholstery colors, “schoolhouse” lighting fixtures, new window coverings, and most important- ly, modern classroom technology.

This renovation was accomplished thanks to a generous gift from CHC alumnus Doug Ragen ’64, who didn’t hesitate to come forward when Director Richard Kraus turned to alumni for help.

“Before the remodel, the room was a monument to higher education—circa 1930,” Kraus said. “It was embarrassing to view and undermined our otherwise vigorous recruiting efforts.”

Chapman 307 is one of two dedicated classrooms for Clark Honors College. It is the home for most sections of the required literature and history sequence taken by all CHC students.

“Installation of modern instructional equipment will have a major impact on our students. We already have wireless capability in our Chapman Hall library and lounge, and an up-to-date teaching setup in Chapman 307 as an important step in the modernization of the honors college,” Kraus said.

The classroom—now called the Ragen Room—was officially dedicated on March 17 with a reception and inaugural lecture by Professor Frances Cogan.

Thinker-In-Residence Program Launched

Trinity College professor Vijay Prashad visited Clark Honors College in April as the first “Thinker-in-Residence.”

The three-day program included classroom visits, student workshops, faculty discussions, and a public lecture.

Prashad began his visit with a CHC student discussion on race and class in America, followed by a lecture at the Jor- dan Schnitzer Museum of Art, “Ethnic Studies Inside Out,” that offered an analysis of the limitations of ethnic students in neo-liberal times. Prashad ended his visit with a student activist workshop entitled “The Corporatization and Racialization of the University.”

“Prashad was selected as the first “thinker” because of his scholarship on the intersections between South Asian and African-American communities, his interdisciplinary approach to questions of caste and untouchability, and his cogent analysis of contemporary race relations in America, says Mitchell.

Prashad joined the faculty of Trinity College in 1996. He previously had taught at Cornell and Syracuse universities. A native of Calcutta, India, and a former correspondent for New Delhi Television, he has a doctorate from the University of Chicago.

Doug Ragen ’64 is called to the podium during the inaugural Spring Celebration dinner to accept the Clark Honors College’s thanks for his generous support.
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ROBERT D. CLARK HONORS COLLEGE
320 CHAPMAN HALL
1293 UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
EUGENE OR 97403-1293
TELEPHONE (541) 346-5414
FAX (541) 346-0125
E-mail: scholars@uoregon.edu
http://honors.uoregon.edu

From the Director

We have just sent out admissions letters to the class of 2010. The applicant pool was very strong, and if recent experience is a guide, we can look forward to an impressive bunch of articulate, accomplished, and intellectually curious new students. We usually have between 800 and 900 applications for 175 places, a ratio which makes us comparable to such fine liberal arts colleges as Bowdoin, Amherst, Davidson, Claremont McKenna, Carleton, and Pomona.

We want to be as fair and even-handed as possible in assessing these applications. We try very hard to judge the whole person and not to reduce everything to a number. In addition to grades and standardized tests, we consider teacher recommendations, student essays, and extracurricular activities, and we include a measure of how hard the student has pressed to take advantage of the academic opportunities offered by her school.

One trend that makes admissions work difficult is the movement against class rankings. We’ve all read the stories about apparently demented lawsuits over whose child should be valedictorian, and most of us probably have some sentiment against competitively ranging each student in order, as if the resulting numbers could ever capture a person’s value. Many schools have responded by declining to include class rank in their grade transcripts. Yet class rankings are actually important when making admissions decisions.

In an age of inflated grades, class rankings are one of the only ways we can tell how to interpret the significance of grades. If Ferndale High School only provides grade-point average without class rankings, we cannot tell if Ferndale’s grading standards are generous or demanding. With class rankings, we can better make sense of the grades and what they mean. Without them, the place of standardized tests becomes ever more prominent. And we do know that these tests have many problems, including a startling correlation with family income. So if you want to heighten the role of the SATs, lobby your school to withhold class rankings. If you want colleges to have access to a broader set of measures upon which to base their admissions decisions, grit your teeth and urge that class ranks be included on transcripts.

Fighting Platypuses?
Students compete in academic civil war

Seven Clark Honors College students went head-to-head against a team of students from Oregon State University’s honors college on the quiz show “High Five Challenge” on April 15 in Portland.

Sarah Koski (captain), Chris Carlson, Eva Sylwester, Scott Montanaro, Amanda Henrichs, Will Seymour, and Jimmy Hastings were chosen to represent the honors college based on their academic standing and personal statements. The team chose the platypus (odd duck) as its mascot.

Teams were asked to answer ten questions in ten categories such as academics, trivia, sports, and arts and entertainment.

Though the CHC team came up short in the competition, losing to the OSU honors college 2,140 to 2,580, they had a fun day and hope to return next year, said Seymour.

The competition will be broadcast on Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB) on Sunday, June 18.

Blog On

The Clark Honors College Student Association (CHCSA) has started a blog to provide timely news relevant to the Clark Honors College community online. The Platypus, named for the mascot chosen last spring to reflect CHC students’ status as “odd ducks,” has so far included reports of student association meetings, photos from student events, and the occasional essay on students’ nonacademic interests.

To access The Platypus, go to http://chcsa.blogspot.com. During its first month, it’s been updated no fewer than twice a week, so check often and feel free to leave comments on the entries.

—Eva Sylwester

Honor Roll

Senior Kate Lenzler and her team won the 2005 Student Achievement in Natural Hazard Risk Reduction award. Lenzler, who was the only nongraduate student on her team is a senior in the planning, public policy and management (PPPM) program. The project, part of the University of Oregon’s Community Planning Workshop (CPW), won the statewide award in recognition of its exceptional merit in the field of natural hazard risk reduction. The CPW team members were recognized for their work on the Lane County Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

Senior Amelie Brazelon has been awarded a Fulbright scholarship for study in Germany during the 2006–7 academic year. Brazelon, who grew up on a Fall Creek, Oregon, blueberry nursery, is an English major and biology minor whose thesis is a business plan for improving fruit bearing plant variety development.
Alumni Profile: Cartoonist Jan Eliot

Cartoonist Jan Eliot ’77, in jeans and slippers, greets a visitor to her studio but the illusion that cartooning is not real work ends there. On this chilly Eugene afternoon, Eliot is steeped in work, busier than ever overseeing final production for the daily servings of Stone Soup, adding finishing touches to the standalone Sunday version of the cartoon and putting tool belts on characters Joan and Val to help promote Habitat for Humanity’s Women Build and Girls Build programs.

Eliot recently signed a ten-year contract with Universal Press Syndicate to publish Stone Soup, her second since the strip was first picked up in 1995. Fans of the cartoon (an estimated eight million readers) will be glad to know that sisters Val and Joan and their collective families will be around for a while. The strip is currently published in about 150 newspapers nationally and a handful of international publications.

Early Successes, Setbacks

The need to laugh at the challenges of single parenting led to her first cartoon series, Patience and Sarah, which ran for five years in a few weekly and monthly newspapers and earned Eliot an offer for syndication. But the contract would mean risking too much control over her work, and she refused. Discouraged, Eliot gave up cartooning for a few years, until 1988, when she decided to launch a new comic strip, Sister City. This time Eliot landed a weekly spot in the Eugene Register-Guard, where it ran for five years.

Sister City widened Eliot’s audience and gave her the confidence to approach Universal Press Syndicate. While they initially rejected Sister City (they had enough female perspective with Cathy Guisewite, Lynn Johnston, and Nicole Hollander), Eliot continued sending the series to them every six months for four years until they offered her a development contract. Eliot changed the name from Sister City to Stone Soup and added several characters. The development contract also gave her time to learn how to boost production from four cartoon strips a month to twenty.

Stone Soup found an audience at twenty-five newspapers in 1995 and quickly grew to the 100-plus number that allows cartoonists to make a living. Over the past ten years Eliot also has published five anthologies of Stone Soup. The most recent, Not So Picture Perfect, came out in summer 2005.

“It’s like being the lowest paid professor at Cambridge,” Eliot says of her relative position in the hierarchy of syndicated cartoonists. With 2,400 potential markets for comic strips, she says “many, many cartoonists would like to be in my position.” The majority of syndicated features appear in 100 to 500 papers. Only a small handful appear in 1,000 to 2,000 papers. Stone Soup now runs in 150 papers, in nine countries.”

Characters Work for Charity

Encouraging women to take a hand in home ownership is the goal of Eliot’s recent work for Habitat for Humanity International. In 2005, following a Stone Soup series that had Joan and Holly helping build a house for a homeless family, Habitat for Humanity contacted Eliot to see if she would be willing to lend her characters to the cause. Since then, Eliot has worked on posters and ads with Val, Joan, and Holly swinging hammers and operating power tools to promote Habitat’s Women Build and Girls Build programs.

“It was a perfect match,” Eliot says of her Habitat work, though she recognizes it adds to the creative load and deadlines that keep her busier than ever.

Still, she manages to eke out four-and-five-day weekends as much as possible, travel often with husband Ted, and appear for book signings and speaking engagements. After instructing her fourteen-year-old intern Olivia on which work needs scanning today, Eliot sits down at her light table and crosses slippered feet.

“It really is as good as I hoped it would be.”

Honors College Kept Work Meaningful

A graduate of Clark Honors College, Eliot says the Independent Scholars program was a perfect way to combine her interests (English and women’s studies) and finish her degree after a six-year gap. When Eliot came to the UO as a transfer student she undertook was focused.

“I loved being a student so much and every bit of it mattered to me so much. At the same time it was a stretch. So [the Independent Scholar program] worked well because it allowed me to feel that everything I did was meaningful to me,” Eliot said.

After graduation, Eliot took on a variety of jobs from car sales to copy writing, eventually working as a designer for an Eugene advertising firm. But as a single mom, Eliot was hoping to work from home. She began sending out cartoons to newspapers, magazines, and greeting card companies. While early sales were encouraging, she still needed to hang on to her day job.
Henry Alley’s “The Rembrandt Brotherhood,” runner-up in the Richard C. Hall Short Story Contest, was accepted by Harrington Gay Men’s Quarterly Fiction. His literary article, “Paul Dullower and Three of His Contemporary Children,” is due out in Papers on Language and Literature. His short story collection, “In the Worlds of Sephardah,” was released in Spanish by the Association for Jewish Studies (AJS) annual meeting in Washington, D.C. In addition, Ballbuena organized and chaired the first panel on Francophone Jewish literature at the Annual Center for South Asian Studies Conference at the University of California–Berkeley. In March, she attended the juried advanced fiction workshop run by the well-known editor, Tom Jenks.

In December, Monique Balbuena presented the paper “Returning to a Spanish Linguistic Past: Juan Gelman and His Use of Language in ‘In the Worlds of Sephardah’” at the Association for Jewish Studies (AJS) annual meeting in Washington, D.C. In addition, Balbuena organized and chaired the first panel on Francophone Jewish literature at the Annual Center for South Asian Studies Conference at the University of California–Berkeley. In March, she attended the juried advanced fiction workshop run by the well-known editor, Tom Jenks.

Louise Bishop’s article, “Raising Authority: Father Chaucer and the Vivicifiation of Print,” will appear this year in the Journal of English and Germanic Philology. She also is giving a paper, “Natural Passion and Moral Virtue: Pecock and Truth,” at the New Chaucer Society Congress in New York City in July 2006.

Joseph Fracchia spent the fall working on his book, Historical Materialism as Corporal Semiotics, at the University of Bremen in Germany. In November, he delivered a lecture entitled “The Capitalist Labor Process and the Body in Pain” at the Philo-sophy Today conference at the University of Ceth in Rethymnon.

David Frank and Kay Piccard of Florida State University will publish Frames of Evil: Holocaust as Horror in American Film with Southern Illinois University Press in 2006. One reviewer writes that the book’s “well conceived argument concerning the reciprocal relations among Holocaust and horror representation in film is applied in a nuanced and flexible way to a variety of texts, and the implications are given a full and expansive airing. The book provides a definitive treatment of a subject that has been noticed by several writers, but until now has never been fully explored.” Frank’s students, Aaron Don aldson and Jason Lear, who are members of the forensics pro-gram Frank oversees, reached the semifinals at the World Universities Debating Championship in Dublin, Ireland. The two out-performed 320 teams from thirty countries to achieve standing as one of the top eight teams in the world.

Toral Gajjarawala recently presented a paper on Dalit literature entitled “Laboring Bodies, the List, and Elisions” at the annual Center for South Asian Studies Conference at the University of California–Berkeley. In March she presented a paper entitled “Some Time between Revisionist and Revolutionary: Reading History in Untouchable Caste Fiction” at the annual meeting of the American Comparative Literature Association at Princeton. She also is currently working on a translation and essay on the Deconstruction of Nationalism: An Anthology of Hindi and Urdu Texts to be published in the fall by Perma-nent Black.

Dayo Nicole Mitchell has been elected as editor to the executive committee of the Forum on European Expansion and Global Interaction. She also has recently given papers at the Huntington Library (“Traveling Troublemakers: Speculations on a British West Indian Civil Service,” for the aforementioned forum), and at the North American Conference on British Studies (“The Colonizer’s Children: British Attitudes Toward Race-Mixing”).

Roxanne Przniak presented a paper titled, “Trecento Tus-can in Eurasian Context: Politi-cal Economy in the Making of Translocal Intellectual Spaces” at the European Social Science History Conference in Amsterdam, March 22–25, 2006. She will be in China and Mongolia in July 2006—the 800-year anniversary of the beginning of the Mongol Empire—to continue research on this paper topic.

Daniel Rosenberg recently returned from the University of California–San Diego, where he spoke at a conference on the French historian and cultural theorist Michel de Certeau, and from the Modern Language Association meetings in Washing-ton, D.C., where he delivered a paper on the history of the library. Meanwhile, he has been getting ready for an upcoming fellowship year at Princeton University. Rosenberg’s ar- ticle “Joseph Priestley and the Graphic Invention of Modern Time” will appear this year in Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture. Another essay entitled “Artificial Memory” is forthcoming in Historic Occasion from the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art.


Southworth Joins Resident Faculty

Helen Southworth joined the Clark Honors College resident faculty in January as assistant professor of literature. A visiting professor since 2001, Southworth grew up in a small town in Hertfordshire just outside of London where she attended an all girls’ school. She received her B.A. in French literature from the University of London and completed her Ph.D. in comparative literature at the University of Southern California.

Her recent book, The Intersecting Realities and Fictions of Virginia Woolf and Colette, received attention this winter in Virginia Woolf Miscellany. The book is a comparative study of Woolf and Colette—two seemingly diametrically opposed European authors. “We find intriguing chapters,” writes reviewer Patricia Laurence, “where borders are collapsed—national, cultural, aesthetic, and personal—between these two writers who are consciously or unconsciously part of a network of international—textual analysis of these subjects is based on the common relationships that presumably would have provoked a ‘shared set of concerns and ideas’ between the women.”

Southworth teaches the introductory literature sequence in courses in twentieth-century literature. She will be teaching a Colloquium on Black British Literature. She will be teaching courses in twentieth-century literature between the women.

Southworth teaches the introductory literature sequence and courses in twentieth-century literature. She will be teaching a Colloquium on Black British Literature. In addition, she is the faculty adviser to the Creative Arts Journal at the Clark Honors College.

Of her classes and students, Southworth said, “I like to persuade the students that their literature class is one of their more fun classes. Reading is a delight. I hope they go away from the class with as great a passion for literature as my own.”

—Jessica Goodburn ’09

Book Pics

Recommended Reading from the CHC Faculty


Friends and colleagues gathered in the Robert Donald Clark Honors College Library last fall to wish Adjunct Assistant Professor Dennis Todd a happy retirement and to view slides of his sailing trip from Olympia, Washington, to Glacier Bay, Alaska.

Todd, who came to the honors college in 1984, has taught many Clark Honors College science courses, including the innovative honors college science sequence, as well as Frontiers in Medicine. He will continue teaching and advising students part-time.

Dennis Todd Retires


This is the story of the marketing campaign that created Aunt Jemima (of pancake mix and syrup fame) in the early twentieth century. In graduate school, I bought this book because it was cheap, but I read it just for fun and enjoyed it. Someday, I hope to offer a course on Race, Empire, and Advertising, in large part so that I can teach this book. It’s fewer than 200 pages, but beware—by the time I finished the book, I was craving pancakes.

—Dayo Nicole Mitchell

Using Charitable Gift Annuities to Support the Honors College

Hal Abrams, J.D., LL.M., senior director of gift planning in the UO Office of Development, has provided the following Q&A to show how you can support the Clark Honors College while increasing your income for your needs.

Q: I have some money invested in certificates of deposit (CDs) and I plan to leave some of these funds to the Clark Honors College in my will. Any ideas?

A: You bet! Consider transferring some of these funds into a UO Foundation charitable gift annuity (“gift annuity” for short). Depending on your age, a gift annuity can make annual payments to you that exceed the interest rate you are receiving from your CD. What’s more, a portion of your contribution is tax deductible.

Q: I am sixty years old. What benefits would I receive by contributing $50,000 in cash?

A: You could receive an annual annuity of $2,850 (5.7 percent of your contribution). The older you are at the time of the contribution, the greater the payment. A seventy-year-old could receive 6.5 percent and an eighty-year-old, 8 percent. The American Council on Gift Annuities sets these rates.

Q: I do not need the income now, but may in five years after I retire.

A: Consider funding a deferred gift annuity. By delaying the initial payment, you can receive a much higher annuity payment.

Q: Can I contribute appreciated stock that’s paying me a low dividend?

A: Absolutely. Many people fund gift annuities with stock that has risen in value because the transfer does not incur any capital gains tax.

In addition to being the director of gift planning at the UO, Hal Abrams has a background as an estate planning attorney as well as a degree in taxation. Abrams says he will answer more questions about gift planning in future issues of the Scholar. We encourage you to contact Abrams and his colleagues with any questions about gift planning. He can be reached at (541) 346-1687 or (800) 289-2354. Send e-mail to the Office of Gift Planning at giftplan@uoregon.edu.
Class Notes

Ginny Clark Reich ’64 (French) joined the Clark Honors College Alumni Advisory Council this spring. Reich, who is the daughter of founder and namesake Robert D. Clark, recently retired after thirty-one years as an instructor and head of the French department at Lane Community College. In 1990, Reich was nominated by her students and received the Instructor of the Year award. She later was awarded Instructor of the Year by the Confederation of Oregon Foreign Language Teachers and then by the Pacific Northwest Council of Foreign Languages.

Judy Bicknell ’68 (mathematics) recently became a CFA (Chartered Financial Analyst) charterholder, a professional credential achieved through three years of rigorous study and examinations. While completing the study, which Bicknell compares in intensity to that of her undergraduate days, she wrote, “I was very fortunate to have the broadly based and exacting honors college core curriculum in my background as I undertook an entirely new line of study.” Bicknell and her husband, Neil, were featured in CFA Magazine this fall as one of the “Most Analytical Families,” and as an extremely productive married couple team in their field.

Michael Boehmke ’77 (mathematics) was recently named the Richard G. Cornell Collegiate Professor of Biostatistics at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where he has been on the faculty since 1984. He is director of the University of Michigan Center for Statistical Genetics and the Genome Science Training Program.

Eric Benjaminson ’81 (history) is serving as deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in the southern African nation of Namibia. He recently wrote of his interest in recruiting Namibian students to the UO and the honors college.

David Gwynn ’82 (geology) has been working as a financial planner and investment adviser for the last twenty years. He became a certified financial planner in 1994 and last year returned to Eugene to join Wells Fargo Private Client Services as a financial consultant. Previously, he owned his own investment management firm in Scottsdale, Arizona. Gwynn invites fellow HC grads to call him at (541) 484-3150 or toll free at (888) 294-9289.

Heidi Binder ’94 (French) started a master’s program in intercultural relations at the University of the Pacific and played on the USA women’s team at the World Ultimate Frisbee Championships in Finland in August 2004. She got married in August 2003 and honeymooned in Japan.

Lauren O.H. Baldel ’99 (PPPM) is living in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where she recently joined the law firm of Meyer, Unkovic & Scott LLP. A member of the American, Pennsylvania, and Allegheny County bar associations, Baldel completed her Juris Doctor degree in the University of Pittsburgh School of Law. She received multiple awards during that time, including the CALI Excellence for the Future Award in Legal Writing, Evidence, and Legal Research, the School of Law Outstanding Achievement Award, and the Dean’s Scholarship. In addition, while in school, Baldel served as topics editor for the University of Pittsburgh Law Review and as a legal writing teaching assistant.

Tell Us Your News

The CHC community of scholars wants to hear from you. Please note changes in your address, employment, career development, professional activities, or personal life that you want to share with your classmates and colleagues.

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EMAIL: scholar@uoregon.edu