

# The Humorous Times

Newsletter of the International Society for Humor Studies

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Ralph Mueller, Editor

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## ISHS Conference



### 23rd Conference of the International Society for Humor Studies

*Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, July 5-9, 2011*

The 2011 ISHS Conference will be held from July 5 to July 9, 2011, on the campus of Boston University in Boston, Massachusetts. Individuals who wish to present at this year's conference can submit proposals for papers and panels online through March 15, 2011 on the Conference website, [www.bu.edu/com/humor](http://www.bu.edu/com/humor). Inquiries can be sent to the Conference Convenor, Patrice Oppliger at [ishsinfo@bu.edu](mailto:ishsinfo@bu.edu).

The first day of the Conference will be devoted to pre-conference symposia, and the Conference will conclude with the Society's Annual Membership Meeting. Additional information can be found on the Internet at [www.bu.edu/com/humor](http://www.bu.edu/com/humor).

### 2011 Conference Awards and Scholarships

In 2006, the ISHS Executive Board established Scholarly Contribution and Graduate Student Awards (GSA) to acknowledge individuals presenting notable humor research at ISHS Conferences. These awards include **stipends to cover Conference fees**, and up to four awards may be given annually, depending on available funding. Scholarly Contribution Awards (SCA) are intended to honor individuals who have made outstanding contributions to humor research through high quality publications, conference presentations, and other scholarly activities. SCA recipients present their research in a Conference plenary session. Any ISHS member may submit SCA nominations to the ISHS Awards Committee.

All ISHS graduate student members, planning to attend the 2011 ISHS Conference in Boston, are eligible to apply for a GSA. As part of their conference application, interested students must submit (1) a letter of intent to compete for a GSA, (2) a description of their research program within humor studies, (3) a presentation proposal, and (4) all required registration materials and fees. GSA recipients present their work at a special session of the annual conference and receive (1)

a certificate of achievement, (2) a stipend to reimburse their Conference registration fees, and (3) waived fees to selected ISHS-endorsed seminars and workshops.

## Upcoming Events



### **24th Conference of the Association for Applied & Therapeutic Humor Conference**

*Buena Vista Palace Hotel, Orlando, Florida, April 7–10, 2011*

AATH conferences focus on current scientific humor research, as well as applications of humor in corporate, health care, and educational settings. The theme of the 2011 AATH Conference is *Humor, Health, and Happiness: A Laughter Matter*. The Conference will be held at the Buena Vista Palace Hotel & Spa. For more information, visit the AATH Conference page at [www.aath.org/conference.htm](http://www.aath.org/conference.htm).

### **Laughter and Humor in Interaction Conference**

*Emerson College, Boston, June 23–24, 2011*



Presentations and papers will concern topics such as the sequential organization of laughter, laughables, humor in everyday talk, and how laughing and humor-related actions shape identities and relationships. For more information, visit the conference website at <http://www.emerson.edu/academics/professional-studies/courses-and-workshops/laughter-and-humor-conference>.

## Upcoming Summer School



### **11th International Summer School on Humor and Laughter**

*University of Tartu, Estonia, August 15-20, 2011*

The next International Summer School and Symposium on Humor and Laughter will be held at the University of Tartu in Estonia in August 2011. The local organizer will be Dr. Liisi Laineste and her team at the Estonian Literary Museum. International Summer Schools are intended to provide students and established investigators planning research projects on humor an opportunity to develop a strong foundation on the existing theoretical and methodological issues related to the scientific study of humor. For more information on the 2011 Summer School, contact Liisi Laineste at [liispet@gmail.com](mailto:liispet@gmail.com). For information on future and previous International Summer Schools, visit the Summer School homepage at [www.humoursummerschool.org](http://www.humoursummerschool.org).

## Humor in the News

### **SPSP Preconference on the Psychology of Humor, January 26, 2011**

*From Andrea Samson*

The first Humor Preconference at this year's Annual meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) in San Antonio, Texas was a success! Prof. Rod Martin gave the introductory talk, and three symposia covered topics of psychopathologies of humor, the dark side of humor, and intra/interpersonal dynamics of humor. Approximately 50 people attended and 14 posters were presented. The 2011 Humor Preconference Organizing Committee consisted of Sean Guillory (Dartmouth College), Thomas Ford (Western Carolina University), Andrea Samson (Stanford University), Nina Strohming (University of Michigan), Chuck Tate (San Francisco State University), and Julie Woodzicka, Washington and Lee University. The plan is to continue humor preconferences at the SPSP conference.

### **Antigonish Review's Blue Heron Poetry Contest**

*From Lorene Birden*

Canada's Antigonish Review sponsors the Blue Heron Poetry Contest. This year's third prize winner was Patricia Young for "The Shortest Distance," a poem about laughter. The poem was published in Antigonish Review 163.

### **Alleen and Don Nilsen Retire from ASU**

*From Don Nilsen*

Dear ISHS participants:

I'm writing to tell you that Alleen and I are planning to retire from Arizona State University at the end of this semester. We realize that this is sudden, but we will remain as active in the future as we have been in the past giving presentations on humor theories, humor in literature (especially in young adult literature), visual humor, political humor, linguistic humor, satire, irony, paradox, parody, and other fun topics for the Arizona Humanities Council, and for library groups, senior citizen groups and other social groups around Arizona who are interested in hearing us speak.

Of course we will continue to advise, and mentor our PhD, MA, MTESOL, Honors, and regular students as long as we have our ASU offices. We will also try to be as supportive as we can be to the English Department in order to make this transition as painless as possible. We have truly had an exciting and profitable tenure in the English Department at A.S.U. And yes, we plan to remain very active in ISHS!

We hope to remain in touch with our university friends as we ride off into the sunset. Actually, we're kind of looking forward to seeing what lies on the other side of the mountain.

## Thirty Five Years of Humor Conferences

The history of scholarly international humor conferences dates back to a conference held in Cardiff 35 years ago. In this issue, Don Nilsen, ISHS historian, provides a short history of ISHS.

In the following newsletters we would like to publish impressions about the early years of contemporary humor research. If you attended conferences in the 1970ies and 1980ies, and if you are willing to talk about the promises and problems of early humor research in an email interview, please contact us via email at [ralph.mueller@unifr.ch](mailto:ralph.mueller@unifr.ch).

### A Short History of the International Society for Humor Studies

*From Don Nilsen*

Between 1976 and 1985 there were international humor conferences in Cardiff, Wales (1976, Antony Chapman and Hugh Foot), Los Angeles, California (1979, Harvey Mindess and Joy Turek), Washington, DC (1982, Rufus Browning, Larry Mintz, and Herb Cummings) Tel Aviv, Israel (1984, Avner Ziv), and Cork, Ireland (1985, Desmond McHale).

In 1980, Alleen and Don Nilsen invited Art Buchwald to visit the ASU campus and talk with some ASU professors about starting a humor organization. What resulted from that conference was a three-state conference under the title “Western Humor and Irony Membership,” because it was developed “on a WHIM.” In 1982 this organization went international, and changed its name to “World Humor and Irony Membership.” Under the WHIM rubric we hosted six conferences at Arizona State University, and a year after each conference we published our proceedings under the title of WHIMSY: “World Humor and Irony Membership Serial Yearbook.” Because each paper at the conference was condensed from ten pages to less than two pages, we called them “concretes” rather than “abstracts” of the presentations. In 1988, Victor Raskin took the conference to Purdue University; in 1989 Margaret Baker and Jesse Crisler hosted the conference at BYU-Hawaii. It was at BYU-Hawaii that some conference attendees complained that they had trouble getting their universities to pay for them to attend conferences about WHIMSY, so the name became the more serious International Society for Humor Studies (ISHS). From 1990 to 1993 ISHS held conferences in Sheffield England (1990, Mark Glazer), Saint Catharines, Canada (1991, Anne-Marie Guilmette), in Paris, France (1992, Judith Stora-Sandor and Nelly Feuerhahn), in Luxembourg (1993, Larry Sherman).

Since half of our membership were US citizens, and the other half were not, and since most of our conference proposals were coming from foreign countries, it was soon decided that we should alternate the conference sites so that on even numbered years our conferences would be in the US and on odd numbered years our conferences would not be in the US, or vice versa. So 1994 in Ithaca, New York (Mary Ann Rishel) was followed by 1995 in Birmingham

England (George Paton); and 1996 in Sydney Australia (Jessica Milner Davis and John McCallum) was followed by 1997 in Edmond, Oklahoma (Amy Carroll); and 1998 in Bergen, Norway (Sven Svebak) was followed by 1999 in Oakland, California (Martin Lampert); and 2000 in Osaka, Japan (Hiroshi Inoue and Goh Abe) was followed by 2001 in College Park, Maryland (Larry Mintz); and 2002 in Forlì, Italy (Delio Chiaro) was followed by 2003 in Chicago, Illinois (Judith Kaplan-Weinger and Richard Hallett); and 2004 in Dijon, France (Lorene Birden) was followed by Youngstown, Ohio (Salvatore Attardo); and 2006 in Copenhagen, Denmark (Martin Fuhr) was followed by 2007 in Newport, Rhode Island (Margaret Mathias); and 2008 in Alcala de Henares, Spain (Juan Garcia Cerrada, Carmen Valero-Garces and Begona Carbelo Baquero) was followed by 2009 in Long Beach, California (Amy Bippus); and 2010 in Hong Kong (Xiaodong Yue) will be followed by 2011 in Boston, Massachusetts (Patrice Oppliger); and 2012 in Krakow Poland (Wladyslaw Chlopicki) will be followed by 2013 somewhere in the United States.

In 1988 Victor Raskin published the first issue of *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research*, and this is now the premier journal in the field of humor studies, with Salvatore Attardo functioning as the Editor-in-Chief, Victor Raskin functioning as the Editor-at-Large, Giseline Kuipers as the Associate Editor, Amy Bippus, Jessica Milner Davis and Giovannantonio Forabosco functioning as Book Review Editors, and Martin Lampert functioning as the Executive Secretary of ISHS. In the meantime, the WHIMSY concretes have become the more traditional conference abstracts, and as Kurt Vonnegut would say, “so it goes....”

## New Humor Research Book

Sachiko Kitazume (2010): *How to Do Things with Humor*. Tokyo, Japan: Eihosha. ISBN: 978-4-269-77041-6.

## Contributions and Submissions

Next issue is due in Spring 2011. Please send information, contributions and announcements to [ralph.mueller@unifr.ch](mailto:ralph.mueller@unifr.ch).



*For more ISHS news, visit us on  
the web at [www.humorstudies.org](http://www.humorstudies.org).*