

The Humorous Times

Newsletter of the International Society for Humor Studies

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Ralph Mueller, Editor

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Association News

2011 Election & Constitutional Amendments

In Fall 2011, the Society held its biannual Board elections through the internet service, *BallotBox Online*. With 170 returned ballots, Willibald Ruch (University of Zurich, Switzerland) received the majority of the votes cast for ISHS President. He will serve as ISHS President through December 31, 2013. Moira Marsh (University of Indiana, USA) and Graeme Ritchie (University of Aberdeen, Scotland) were elected as ISHS Board Members-at-Large and will serve through December 2015. We thank Elliott Oring for his service as ISHS President for 2010 and 2011 and Martin Führ and Sven Svebak for their roles as ISHS Board Members from January 2008 through December 2011. Our best wishes to the new ISHS President and Board members.

ISHS members also voted on fourteen amendments to the ISHS Constitution. These amendments included changes to Executive Board membership, to Board member voting status, and to officer terms. To pass, all proposed amendments had to be approved by 2/3 of the members who cast valid ballots. All amendments, with the exception of the amendment to change the Executive Secretary-Treasurer's Board voting status, received the necessary 2/3 vote to be adopted.

Additional election and amendment information is available on the ISHS News page at www.humorstudies.org.

Message from the New President

By Willibald Ruch, University of Zurich, Switzerland

It is an honor for me to have been elected to serve as president of ISHS for the period from 2012 to 2013. I would like to thank the past-president Elliott Oring and the outgoing members of the ISHS executive board for their service to the Society. Over the past two years Elliot and the board have accomplished a lot, as can be seen, among others, in the number of proposed amendments to the constitution approved by the ISHS members. This will have a lasting effect on ISHS and I am glad that during my term of office I will not only be supported by Elliott the past president but also by Martin Lampert our executive secretary. It is the executive secretary who keeps the president and other members of the executive board on task, and Martin has splendidly used his skills and personal qualities to make ISHS running smoothly. Also Martin runs the ISHS-website that has become a great source for humor researchers. I also am looking forward to working with the established, as well as new board members, Moira Marsh and Graeme Ritchie.

To me one of the most encouraging messages from the report by the executive secretary at the annual conference was the year-

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Next Issue

The next Humorous Times is May 2012. Please send information, contributions and announcements by May 15, 2012.

on-year increase of our membership. This trend is undoubtedly due to the efforts of ISHS over the past years to encourage and nurture young scholars and students. However, we should not rest on our laurels. Forging new opportunities by collaborating within and outside of our respective fields, this will ensure the continuing success. We can bring our colleagues from our disciplines to the ISHS conference and encourage them to extend their work into humor. In psychology several exciting new developments recently tied humor to other fields, such as positive psychology discovering humor as strengths of character or emotion psychology beginning to study laughter. Also, there are exciting joint efforts in computer science and research on humor and laughter, and humor research discovered the study of the humor talents and practitioners. Still it is my conviction that we should work more on the foundations of our discipline, such as a common terminology and the isolation of meaningful units that subdivide the field of humor. Obviously this will be an interdisciplinary enterprise, and I also hope that we will have more cross-disciplinary efforts at the ISHS conference rather than disciplinary symposia. Our young scholars form the human capital that will shape the future of humor research. Due to the generosity of Alleen and Don Nilsen we now, in addition to the Graduate Student award, we also have the DANYS awards, which will be granted at the annual conference to young scholars.

Our last two conferences organized by Xiaodong Yue at the City University of Hong Kong and by Patrice Oppliger at Boston University were milestones and I am looking forward to meeting you all at our next meeting hosted by the Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland in June 2012 with Wladyslaw Chlopicki as the organizer. I would also like to draw your attention to the *International Summer School & Symposium on Humor and Laughter*, which will take place in July 2012 at the University of Eastern Finland, Savonlinna, Finland. (see humoursummerschool.org/12/). These meeting places are the perfect venue for networking and developing new collaborations and strengthening humor research.

Message from the Immediate Past President

By Elliott Oring, California State University, Los Angeles, USA

It is a pleasure to turn over the Presidency of the International Society for Humor Research to Willibald Ruch who has long been a formidable presence in humor research and in Society affairs. I also congratulate Moira Marsh and Graeme Ritchie who were elected to the Board and to Giseline Kuipers who begins her editorship of *HUMOR* with the 2012 journal issues. My thanks to Paul Lewis, Goh Abe, Bruce Findley, Sammy Basu, René Proyer, and Gil Greengross, who agreed to run for office. Although they were not elected, their willingness to serve the Society is truly appreciated. Executive Secretary-Treasurer Martin Lampert, of course, remains the Society's intrepid steersman and purser.

As for my own tenure as president, some of my goals were achieved. The ISHS Constitution was reviewed by the Board, and a series of proposed amendments to the document were approved by the membership. The result is that we have a more streamlined policy-making Board, a Board overwhelmingly elected by the membership, and a Board where potential conflicts of interest and ambiguities in authority have been reduced or eliminated. As Immediate Past-President of the Society, I continue to serve on the Board and will push for policies that enhance the financial resources of ISHS, seek its non-profit corporate status, and increase its visibility and status within the community of scholarly and scientific organizations.



Twenty-Fourth Conference of the International Society for Humor Studies Jagiellonian University, Cracow, June 25–29, 2012

Our Society's 24th international conference will take place at the historic Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland from June 25 to June 29. The Conference schedule will also include pre-conference tutorials on June 25th for those who have had little previous exposure to humor research and those who want to look for new research ideas. Tutors will include eminent humor researchers, Christie Davies, Jessica Milner Davis, Giseline Kuipers, Victor Raskin, and Willibald Ruch.

Online registration has opened, and ISHS members and individuals who register before April 15th are eligible for reduced registration fees. For travel information please visit the conference web site at <http://info.flg.uj.edu.pl/ishs2012/>

If you would like to host a future ISHS Conference, you can contact the Society's Executive Secretary at ishs@hnu.edu for more information on how to submit a Conference proposal. The Society is currently accepting proposals for an international conference for 2014.

Upcoming Events



12th International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter

University of Eastern Finland, Savonlinna, Finland, July 2–7, 2012

Professors Pirjo Nuutinen and Seppo Knuutila will organize the 12th International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter to be held in Savonlinna, Finland from July 2 to July 7, 2012. As in prior years, the Summer School will offer a one week program which will include a symposium where delegates present their research. The 2012 Summer School will have a team of speakers made up of recognized leaders in humor studies as well as past ISHS Graduate Student Award recipients. As an added bonus, the 2012 Summer School will take place at the same time as the famous Savonlinna Opera Festival.

This International Summer School is endorsed by the International Society of Humor Studies. More to see soon at the summer school website: <http://humoursummerschool.org/12/index.html>.

Thirty-Fifth Colloquium on Literature and Film: The Language of Humor in Literature and Film

West Virginia University, September 13–15, 2012

We are seeking submissions about the many ways that authors and filmmakers use humor in their works. Analyses may be about works in any language and time period, and may be presented in English, French, German, or Spanish. Topics include but are not limited to the following: Irony, Parody, Comedy, Political Satire, Great National Humorists and Their Works, Theories of Humor and Laughter, Challenges of Translating Humor, History of Humor, Humor as Resistance or Subversion, Humor in Minority Film and Literatures, Humor of Ethnic and National Identities, Countering Xenophobia and Prejudice through Humor, Comics, Cartoons and Graphic Novels, Gendered Approaches to Humor, Humor in Popular Culture, Humor in Documentaries, The Semiotics of Humor, Stylistics of Humor, Conversation Analysis, Dialect, Stereotype and Humor, The Actor's Contribution: Body Language, Delivery and Inflection, Puns and Word-Play: Linguistic Ambiguity in Humorous Literature, Pedagogical Approaches to Humor in Literature and Film.

Please submit 300-word proposals for papers and/or panels by April 1, 2012 [sic!] to WVUCOLL@MAIL.WVU.EDU. The program will allow twenty minutes for the reading of each paper with additional time for discussion. Include a cover letter containing the proposal's title, complete contact information, and institutional affiliation. Department of World Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics/205 Chitwood Hall/Morgantown, WV 26506/304-293-5121

The Taboo Conference: TaCo2012

Forlì, Italy, October 25–27, 2012

In a world that seems continuously to be pushing the envelope of what is acceptable to the inhabitants of specific linguistic and cultural contexts, this interdisciplinary conference acknowledges the importance of investigating taboos and their reinforcement/breaking in various areas of language, culture and society, and across different cultures. Possible topics include Sex and sexuality, death and the afterlife, sickness and disability, scatology/bodily fluids, deformity/otherness, blasphemy, etc. Keynote speakers include Christie Davies (Univ. of Reading), Don Kulick (Univ. of Chicago), Brett Mills (Univ. of East Anglia), Jessica Milner Davis (Univ. of Sidney). This conference is ISHS endorsed.

The 19th AHSN Colloquium

University of Newcastle, NSW Australia, February 7–9, 2013

The 19th AHSN Colloquium will be held at the University of Newcastle, NSW, from February 7–9, 2013, convened by Conjoint Prof. Michael Ewans FAHA and Mr Michael Meany. The conference theme is “Humour and Creativity.” For Call for Papers and Workshops, see the AHSN website.

LAFAL 3 – Entertainment Discourse Beyond Humour Studies

University of Łódź, Poland, March 21–23, 2013

Humour, inherently associated with funniness, amusement, and laughter, has attracted scholarly interest for centuries. Over the past three decades, humor studies have been developing at full tilt, with innumerable publications being released each year.

The first symposium of LAFAL (Linguistic Approaches to Funniness, Amusement and Laughter), held in 2010, was focused on linguistic approaches to different types of humor. The second LAFAL symposium will be part of the 2012 International Society for Humour Studies Conference, held in Kraków (see above). The third LAFAL symposium (2013), entitled “Entertainment Discourse Beyond Humour Studies,” is convened to provide a forum for linguists who are interested in concepts and language issues of relevance to humor research but who may prefer to address those without employing the well entrenched humor theories. The primary objective will be to explore multifarious phenomena which, viewed from a certain angle, appear to be humorous and, thereby, to enhance methodological tools used in humor research across a variety of linguistic disciplines.

For further information, please visit the Internet at <http://ia.uni.lodz.pl/pragmatics/lafal-3/>. Submission deadline is October 2012.

Recent Events

18th Annual AHSN Colloquium on “Varieties of Humour and Laughter”

Australian National University, Canberra (University House), February 3-4, 2012

By Jessica Milner Davis

The 18th Annual AHSN Colloquium took place on the theme, “Varieties of Humour and Laughter”, from 3–4 February 2012, at University House, ANU, hosted by the School of Cultural Inquiry. The program was the largest ever held with 40 papers and 3 workshops. 52 delegates attended the 2-day event. Program and abstracts are at: <http://www.sydney.edu.au/humourstudies>.

Keynote Speaker was Dr Christopher G. Rea, Assistant Professor of Chinese Literature in the Dept of Asian Studies at the University of British Columbia, who is visiting the Australian Centre on China in the World, ANU, working on the literary and cultural history of laughter in modern China.

One important function of the AHSN is to provide a cross-disciplinary forum for students researching humor-related topics. This year, 10 graduate students presented accounts of their work on topics ranging from puns in Old Norse to religious values in Christian stand-up comedy. The Colloquium was accompanied by an exhibition of original cartoons by contemporary Australian cartoonist, Eric Lobbecke.

SPSP Preconference on the Psychology of Humor

San Diego, January 26, 2012

By Sean Guillory

The second Humor Preconference for the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) took place at SPSP’s annual meeting in San Diego, CA. Bob Mankoff gave an invited talk on using aspects of crowd sourcing to get at reliable and externally valid humor qualities from the New Yorker caption contest. The three additional symposia covered topics of laughter’s relationship to humor, humor’s use in emotion regulation, and a round table discussion of contemporary humor theories. Participating speakers included Nina Strohminger (University of Michigan), Andrea Samson (Stanford University), Josef Parvizi (Stanford School of Medicine), Marina Davia-Ross (University of Portsmouth), Michael Owren (Georgia State University), Ursula Beermann (University of California at Berkeley), Christine Harris (University of California at San Diego), Greg Bryant (UCLA), Salvatore Attardo (Texas A&M Commerce), and Thomas Veatch. A third humor preconference is planned for the 2013 SPSP conference in New Orleans.

Guest Lecture for ASHN by Dr Barak Kushner

University of Sidney, December 13, 2011

By Jessica Milner Davis

A Guest Lecture for the AHSN, in conjunction with the Oriental Society of Australia, and the Chinese Studies Centre at University of Sydney, was given by Dr Barak Kushner, Senior Lecturer in modern Japanese history at the University of Cambridge and Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, on Monday 13 December 2011. His topic was, "Nothing to laugh at: Chinese humor and the image of Japan". Like Dr Rea (above), Dr Kushner is a contributor to *Humour in Chinese Life and Letters: Modern and Traditional Approaches* (eds. J. Milner Davis and J. Chey, forthcoming HKUP, 2012).

Humor in the News

The Humor Code

By Sean Guillory

An interesting project is currently underway by Professor Peter McGraw of the University of Colorado and Denver-based writer Joel Warner. They travel the world in search of what makes things funny. Recent posts on their blog, *The Humor Code* (www.humorcode.com), talk about auditioning to be a professional laughers for a sitcom audience, going to Scandinavia to interview the cartoonist whose depictions of Mohammed sparked outrage throughout the Arab world, and meeting with comedians currently in the West Bank. The blog also looks at aspects of professional humor (e.g. an interview with the former co-writer of *Chappelle's Show* about his creative process) and provides discussions on how current humor theory can be applied in the field. More information on this project can be found at www.humorcode.com.

The Israeli Association for Humor Studies

By Arie Sover, Ashqelon Academic College

The Israeli Association for Humor Studies was founded in 2009 by Dr. Arie Sover. The association aims to promote humor and laughter research in Israel and abroad. It has established two new refereed e-journals: *Humor Mekuuvan: A Research Journal in Humor Studies*, which is mainly in Hebrew, but also publishes papers in English, and has a board at the national level, and *The Israeli Journal of Humor Research: An International Journal* in English and possibly French. The *Israeli Journal of Humor Research* is open-access and free of charge for both the authors and the readers. Prominent specialists from a broad fan of disciplines have joined the international advisory board, and this enables this journal to carry out the refereeing process by resorting to highly competent referees.

For more information, please visit the Internet at <http://www.israeli-humor-studies.org>. You are cordially invited to submit papers. Editor-in-Chief is Arie Sover (ariesover@gmail.com). Submissions should be sent to the associate editor, Dr. Ephraim Nissan (ephraimnissan@hotmail.com)

Best Wishes

Lucy Pickering and Salvatore Attardo are set to be married on June 8th of this year. The ceremony is set to take place in Dallas. We wish the two humor studies titans a life of wedded bliss.



**For more ISHS news, visit us on
the web at www.humorstudies.org.**

New Books on Humor

Chiaro, Delia (ed.) 2010. *Translation, Humour and Literature*. London: Continuum.

This volume examines the issues of translating humor within a range of different literary traditions and across various languages. It begins with an analysis of humor and translation in every day life, including jokes and cross-cultural humor, and then moves on to looking at humor and translation in literature through the ages. Despite growing interest and a history of collaborative study, there has been little translation studies scholarship published in this area. This collection features a comprehensive introduction by the editor, which covers strategies and techniques for translating humor as well as the pragmatics involved. The book will appeal to scholars and postgraduates in translation and interpreting studies and humor studies.

Chiaro, Delia (ed.) 2010. *Translation, Humour and the Media*. London: Continuum.

This volume looks at the intersection of the two disciplines as found in the media – on television, in film and in print. From American cable drama to Japanese television this collection shows the range and insight of contemporary cross-disciplinary approaches to humor and translation. Featuring a diverse and global range of contributors, this is a unique addition to existing literature in translation studies and it will appeal to a wide cross-section of scholars and postgraduates.

Geybels, Hans & Walter van Herck (Eds.): *Humour and Religion. Challenges and Ambiguities*. London: Continuum, 2011.

Exploring how religions contain (implicit) references to the finitude and relativity of the human condition, and why humor and spirituality fit well together, contributors discuss what the meaning of humor in different religions is - Did it evolve historically? How does it function? How is humor related to the realization of spiritual goals?

Looking at religions from an external perspective, the contributors then analyze the way religion interacts with humor in society. How does a religion respond to sarcasm and irony? Are there limits to mockery and making fun of believers? Does humor have a pacifying effect when societal tensions run high or does it intensify the sensitivities? (<http://www.continuumbooks.com/books/detail.aspx?BookId=157692>)

Kindt, Tom: *Literatur und Komik. Zur Theorie literarischer Komik und zur deutschen Komödie von Lessing bis Tieck*. Berlin: Akademie, 2011.

A wide-spread opinion in literary and cultural studies assumes that it is not possible to find a general definition of humor. This study reviews this assumption, and calls for a return to a universalistic analysis of humor in literary studies. The first part develops an incongruity theory of humor, based on recent linguistic and psychological humor research. The second part investigates comedies from G. E. Lessing, J.M.R. Lenz, A. von Kotzebue and L. Tieck.

Wild, Barbara (ed.): *Humor in Psychiatrie und Psychotherapie: Neurobiologie, Methoden, Praxis*. Schattauer, Stuttgart, 2011.

This volume discusses the place of humor in therapy. It comes a foreword by O. Kernberg and chapters from: Dr. med. Gerhard Buchkremer, Dr. med. Irina Falkenberg, Dr. Paul Mc Ghee, Dr. phil. Peter Hain, Beat Hänni, Prof. Dr. phil. Dr. med. Rolf D. Hirsch, Dr. med. Eckart von Hirschhausen, Dr. phil. Noni Höfner, Prof. Dr. phil. Verena Kast, Prof. Dr. med. Reinhart Lempp, Dr. med. Dorothee Mutschler, Dr. med. Alexander Rapp, Prof. Dr. phil. Willibald Ruch, Christel Ruckgaber, Prof. Dr. med. Ulrich Sachsse, Prof. Dr. med. Josef Shaked, Prof. Doris Titze, Dr. rer. soc. appr. Michael Titze.

New Articles on Humor

Since Summer 2011, *The Humorous Times* mentions articles which appeared in our journal or which have been published by researchers who have been active within the ISHS. Please inform us about your publications!

Abel, Millicent/ Jason Flick: "Mediation and moderation in ratings of hostile jokes by men and women". In: *Humor* 25,1 (2012), 41-58.

Bashirova, Nailya: "Irony in Intertexts in Modern English and Russian Press". In: *On-line proceedings of the conference "San Zeno che ride" in San Zeno August 2010*. <http://www.comunesanzenodimontagna.it/il-paese/san-zen-che-ride-interdisciplinary-humor-conference/>

Canestrari, Carla: "The perception of humor in short verbal texts". In: *On-line proceedings of the conference "San Zeno che ride" in San Zeno August 2010*. <http://www.comunesanzenodimontagna.it/il-paese/san-zen-che-ride-interdisciplinary-humor-conference/>

Capatâna, Nora: "German Humour: Lost or Saved in Translation? On Translating German Humorous Verse". In: *On-line proceedings of the conference "San Zeno che ride" in San Zeno August 2010*. <http://www.comunesanzenodimontagna.it/il-paese/san-zen-che-ride-interdisciplinary-humor-conference/>

Caucci, Gina M./Roger J. Kreuz: "Social and paralinguistic cues to sarcasm". In: *Humor* 25,1 (2012), 1-22.

Cerritelli, Rino /Matteo Andreone: "Humorous Thinking Research". In: *On-line proceedings of the conference "San Zeno che ride" in San Zeno August 2010*. <http://www.comunesanzenodimontagna.it/il-paese/san-zen-che-ride-interdisciplinary-humor-conference/>

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