

Focus on the Humanities

July 2012



(Visit our web site at www.mshumanities.org to learn more about us.)

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My Liberal Arts Education, Courtesy of MHC

This year, the Mississippi Humanities Council marks its 40th year of encouraging Mississippians "to learn, to think, to imagine; to honor our traditions while envisioning a better society; to instill a sense of ethical behavior and civic responsibility in our children; to learn about the larger world of which we are a part." To celebrate this anniversary, we will print a series of essays by current and former leaders in the humanities in Mississippi.



Harriet Decell Kuykendall
Advisory Board Member
Mississippi Humanities Council

My encounter with MHC began in the early 1970s, shortly after it was formed. I learned through the Mississippi Library Commission that my Great Books Discussion group, sponsored by the library in Yazoo City, could invite college teachers to meet with us. The Mississippi Committee for the Humanities, as it was called then, would pay the teacher a small honorarium and travel expenses. They called the teacher a "scholar," which I thought was pretty pompous. Our group had met for several years and many times I felt

we had said all we had to say, even when our assigned reading was profound. We took up the offer and the outside view sparked by our visitor gave our group immediately new life.

My grant writing to the Humanities Council, then headed by Cora Norman, became a regular activity. We in Yazoo City had programs on an array of topics. I learned about “throwing light, not heat” on the subject and that if we were on a controversial subject, it was *essential* that I choose presenters to represent both sides. I learned that my presenters should reflect our entire society when Cora said to me, “Harriet, don’t you know *anyone* that is not a white male to be on your panel?”

Read the rest of Kuykendall’s essay [here](#).

Applications Invited to Host Traveling Smithsonian Exhibit

The Mississippi Humanities Council is accepting proposals to host a traveling Smithsonian Institution exhibit entitled *The Way We Worked*, which addresses work in America over the past 150 years. This high-quality exhibit includes images, text and interactive components, documenting the lives of ordinary Americans: miners, teachers, doctors, agricultural workers, construction workers, industrial workers, military personnel, law enforcement officers, professional athletes, computer techs and myriad others, show that each is integral to the functioning of our economy and the defining of our culture. There is no exhibit rental fee, and financial assistance for programming is available. Professional and technical support is provided. Proposals for this exhibit, which will tour the state between October 2013 and July 2014, are being accepted by MHC until Friday, September 14, 2012. For further information, please contact MHC at 601-432-6752. For more information about the exhibit, please visit www.museumonmainstreet.org.



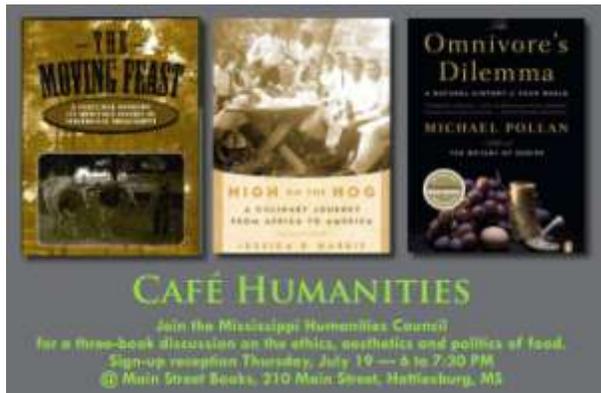
Photo: 1967. Two Worlds Combine. Mule-and plow assist in trenching pipes at NASA Test Facility in Hancock County, MS. (Collections of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.)

MHC Board Member’s School Graduates Most in Mississippi Community Colleges

Dr. William Lewis, president of Pearl River Community College and Mississippi Humanities Council board member, recently reported that PRCC earned the number one ranking among Mississippi community colleges for graduation rates. “Community colleges across America have received a challenging message from the U.S. Congress and from state legislatures,” said Lewis. “That message requires all institutions of higher learning to focus on and to increase the number of graduates and program completions.” To meet that challenge, PRCC is using a federal Strengthening Institutions grant to boost student retention and advisement, Lewis reported. The College also created a new recognition program for Pearl River graduates who have excelled during their careers: the Lifetime Achievement Hall of Fame.



FOOD: For Thought, For Life Book Discussion Series Planned in Tupelo, Hattiesburg



HATTIESBURG – Café Humanities, the Mississippi Humanities Council’s new book discussion series will begin Thursday July 19 at Main Street Books, 210 Main Street. The program is part of the “FOOD: For Thought, for Life” initiative, designed to reach as many Mississippians as possible with information about food issues and food culture in our state.

According to MHC Executive Director, Dr. Barbara Carpenter, “Third only to air and water, food is an all-consuming necessity to sustain life, yet

something most citizens take for granted. This discussion series takes a look at food and culture, food and heritage, food and ecology and environmental concerns. Join us as we look at the delights of food, the reasons that ‘you are what you eat,’ and finally the serious issues regarding every aspect of food, from production to food choices to health issues and public responsibilities. “

The opening session will be a sign-up reception and introduction to Main Street Books’ collection of books on various aspects of food. Over the following six weeks, group members will read three food-related books and discuss their thoughts and ideas under the guidance of discussion leaders Jennifer McKay, co-owner of The Kitchen Table, and Allan Nation, a local writer who will discuss his book *The Moving Feast*. Discussion sessions will be held from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. on August 2, August 16, and August 30.

Public Input Sought for Delta National Heritage Area

In 2009, Congress authorized the Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area which includes 18 counties – Bolivar, Carroll, Coahoma, DeSoto, Holmes, Humphreys, Issaquena, Leflore, Panola, Quitman, Sharkey, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tate, Tunica, Warren, Washington and Yazoo. The goal of the Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area is to create a community-driven network to support historic preservation, natural resource conservation, recreation, heritage tourism and educational projects. The result will be sustainable economic development through heritage conservation.

From 2011 through 2013, work is under way to develop a management plan that will include activities to help achieve this goal. The public is invited to participate in the planning process by completing this [survey](#). Responses will be compiled and reviewed by the Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area’s board of directors and planning team and will contribute to developing the plan.

Save the Date: University of Mississippi to Host Cora Norman Lecture October 25

Dr. Cora Norman, founding director of the Mississippi Humanities Council, will deliver the lecture named in her honor, *The Cora Norman Lecture*, October 25 on the campus of the University of Mississippi, where the Council was originally founded. Dr. Norman’s lecture highlights one of several celebrations the Council is hosting across the state during its 40th anniversary year. Please watch the MHC website (www.mshumanities.org) for further details about the lecture, and please make plans to join us for this commemorative lecture in Oxford.

Have You Seen Our Events Calendar?

Did you know that our Calendar page is updated weekly with humanities events all over Mississippi? Even better, most events are free and open to the public! You can do everything from attending a book discussion series exploring the ethics, aesthetics and politics of food to watching folk dance performances by visiting teams from Peru and Egypt at the Yocona International Folk Festival in north Mississippi to joining any number of statewide events during Mississippi Archaeology Month. Keep coming back to our Calendar page; there will always be new events added each week for you to attend. Click this [link](#) to find a humanities program occurring in your community.



Next MHC Grant Deadline September 15, 2012

September 15, 2012, is the Council's next grant application deadline. Regular Grant proposals for amounts between \$1,500 and \$7,500 will be accepted in our office or postmarked by this date. Application guidelines and forms are available at www.mshumanities.org. Regular Grant deadlines are April 15 and September 15 each year. Regular Grant applications must be submitted a minimum of 12 weeks before the proposed program begins. The Council invites grant proposals that address one or more of four focus areas: Books and Reading, Mississippi History and Culture, Civil Discourse and Capacity Building.

MHC Welcomes Your Support

Mississippi Humanities Council programs are engaging, inspiring and free of charge. Your gift makes a big difference to our mission of cultivating an understanding of our history and culture throughout the state. You help us enrich peoples' lives through programs incorporating history, literature, music, politics, philosophy and other humanities-based disciplines that illuminate the human condition. Thanks to your support, we are able to serve all Mississippians: all ages, all geographic areas of the state, all walks of life.

A small gift of \$25 will purchase two books for children participating in the Mississippi Humanities Council's [Family Reading Bonds](#) program.

A larger gift of \$250 will fund a lecture in a school classroom, local library or civic club, by a member of the Mississippi Humanities Council [Speakers Bureau](#).

A \$2,500 contribution will underwrite a six-week [Family Reading Bonds](#) series, part of the Mississippi Humanities Council's literacy program.

A gift of any amount can support any one of our ongoing programs:

- [Oral History Projects](#)
- [Lecture Series](#)
- [Smithsonian Exhibits](#)
- [Public Humanities Awards](#)

To donate online, visit <http://www.mshumanities.org/Donor/Donations.asp>. Or call 601-432-6752.



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