



WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

# WASCH CENTER FOR RETIRED FACULTY

Newsletter Vol. 7, No. 2

Spring 2016

## PASTIMES AND PRESENT TIMES

By Al Turco

It is a fact of academic life that most of us know colleagues mainly through shared professional activity—courses taught, committees served on, faculty meetings attended, and other duties whose inutility (always excepting teaching) often does not become apparent until we no longer need to perform them. Of course we knew that our colleagues, like us, have extracurricular interests—this one plays golf; that one, chess; a third, the field. But these are mere for-instances; there are deeper waters, unsecret though often unknown. In the aggregate, evidence shows that if you can't make a living from a hobby, you may at least make a life.

What happens to our inspired eccentricities after retirement? Curious on this point, I emailed the grand list of emeriti faculty to see what news would emerge.

Quite a lot did. First, I needed to weed out a few replies of dubious import and questionable provenance – e.g., an amateur magician who claims to have yanked a grinning Karl Scheibe, feet first, out of a top hat. For the rest, I was surprised by the range and depth of responses – from pool playing to pool tending, from painting to poker to poetry – and that was just the P's.

What impressed me most is that every pastime described is a continuation, a reawakening, or a discovery alive and well in

the present tense – thus belying the stereotype that retirement necessarily means beating a slow retreat to the rocking chair. Our natural frailties aside, most of us are off our rocker. Sometime we play nearly hard enough to turn an avocation into a calling. Enough said. Let the thirteen responders below speak for themselves.

*Read about the Pastimes and Present Times of these retired Wesleyan faculty in this issue*

|                        |       |
|------------------------|-------|
| Allan Berlind.....     | p. 2  |
| Tony Connor.....       | p. 2  |
| Stew Gillmor.....      | p. 3  |
| Joyce Lowrie.....      | p. 3  |
| Laurie Nussdorfer..... | p. 4  |
| Dick Ohmann.....       | p. 4  |
| Paula Paige.....       | p. 8  |
| Joe Reed.....          | p. 8  |
| Phyllis Rose.....      | p. 9  |
| Karl Scheibe.....      | p. 9  |
| Vera Schwarcz.....     | p. 9  |
| Bill Stowe.....        | p. 11 |
| Al Turco.....          | p. 11 |

*...there are deeper waters, unsecret though often unknown...*

*Continued on page 2.*

**ALLAN BERLIND**  
**Puzzled**

One of my post-retirement hobbies is the construction of acrostic puzzles. I've been a solver of all types of word puzzles since I was in the crib. I made up my first crossword in high school and had it published in the school paper. I particularly enjoy acrostic construction because of the range of tasks and mental challenges it entails: finding quotations that are entertaining, surprising and/or provocative; manipulating an often uncooperative bunch of letters into interesting clue words, and then writing clue definitions that are neither too easy nor impossibly difficult. I made up my first acrostic many years ago, an arduous task without any special aids. After retiring, I reasoned that there must be good computer programs to help with construction, and found an excellent one called Acrostic 3 that is great for keeping track of progress and alerting the constructor to remaining problems that need to be resolved. I now keep my eyes peeled for promising quotations in pretty much everything I read, and also keep myself alert for thought-provoking clue words, particularly those which contain hard to use up letters. I've had puzzles published in the Argus and the Wasch Newsletter. I haven't tried to peddle them; so far my audience has been several enthusiastic and appreciative friends. I have not been able to convince the Alumni Bulletin to print any of the many Wesleyan-related puzzles I've made up. Perhaps they don't believe that a biologist can be a man of letters.

**TONY CONNOR**  
**Of Poetry and Pool**

Lately I've been playing pool – after a forty year break. I met Lowell Svennungsen when he was a Ph.D. candidate in ethnomusicology here. In his time he's practiced architecture, played in jazz bands, composed songs and painted. Now he plays pool with me – content to be termed an “old geezer.” (What other kind is there?) Here's the poem I've written about it..

“A Late Game”

We size up the pool table,  
my friend and I, both of us  
creaky from lack of practice,  
arthritic in certain joints,  
but keen to test our mettle,  
as in our earlier days  
of field-sports, girls and parties,  
locker-lore and drunken chants.

The Senior Center's new  
and this is our first visit.  
We buckle down to the game  
with self-confident vigour,  
Lowell grinds chalk on his cue,  
I reverse my cue and twirl it,  
then we bang balls at random,  
missing some altogether.

Three other old geezers  
are playing in slow motion  
beneath the wall-hung flat screen  
where Oprah's at full throttle.  
They mutter, “shit!”, “shot!”, “Jesus!”,  
shuffling to take position,  
one leant on a walking frame,  
one stiff-legged, one bent double.

I feather a cushion ball --  
the ghost of lost competence  
guiding my shot – which shrinks from  
the pocket. Lowell mis-cues,  
and his ball jumps the table,  
but I get my comeuppance  
there and then, when he hits form  
in a potting storm. I lose.

The three old geezers give up,  
arguing amicably  
as they leave, but we play on  
through the afternoon's boredom,  
the Center's edge towards sleep  
round Oprah's Celebrity.  
Only the desk guy stays on  
for our fumbled, final game.

*Continued on page 3.*

## STEW GILLMOR Vintage Pep

Rather than inflict a boringly coherent account of the outcomes of my release from teaching courses, sitting on committees, producing scholarly research et. al., I will offer a conglomeration of improbabilities traversing a lifetime of duties, follies, hobbies and headaches in amiable disorder.

I can, at mediocre level, play several instruments: trumpet, valve trombone, euphonium, tenor sax, alto sax, sousaphone. I went to Antarctica as an undergrad for 14 months with an official Soviet expedition. I was pianist at the Central City, CO "Gilded Garter Saloon." I led tourists on the last cruise of a famous old Mississippi river boat from New Orleans to Natchez. I landed in the dark during a Congo civil war between Colonel Mobutu and Patrice Lumumba. I entered airport at Johannesburg with the most overweight baggage [8000 lbs.] in S. African history. I worked on and flew in WWII ex-Navy PBV amphibian and made large yagi antenna for Arctic radar experts. I helped on secret nuclear tests conducted from height of 200 kilometers; I was in Azores, bombs exploded over S. Atlantic. I was interviewed in Russian language on Voice of America, then had to re-do it in English because VOA editors said my Russian was too foul to use on air. I gained inner strength by eating boiled sheep intestines during l'Aid el Kebir holiday in Tunis. You think that's all?

Here's more. I danced, at age 3, with movie actress Anne Dvorak, in an Army amputee hospital in Texas. Fifty years later I played piano in a live benefit with Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, Jason Robards Jr., Bobby Short, Joan Collins, Kathy Lee Gifford, Phylicia Rashad. I moved one of our two houses (built circa 1720) 8 miles from Chester to Higganum rolling on 24 wheels along route 148 to route 81 to new address. I installed 100 foot telephone pole in our back field for my ham radio antennas.

Now back to music: I helped advise and play for more than 40 years in Wes Pep Band at baseball, football, hockey, basketball games (men and women's) and other special occasions. I drove stalwarts to Williams, Amherst, Trinity;

when we only had five guys, I played bass drum with one hand and trumpet with the other. Students, professors, alumni -- all welcome as regulars or guests. Marriages have been built in the Pep Band!

## 40 years in Wes Pep Band

Now retirement. Time to catch my breath, plant a vineyard, and make a small winery. The last two winters, the most severe in CT in over a century, brought heavy loss to our Riesling and Cabernet Franc vines. My basement full of pH, SO<sub>2</sub>, T.A., hydrometry, Malolactic Fermentation tools, plus three- and five-gallon glass carboys of wine in process. Wife, avid gardener, hopes this activity will keep me out of trouble; she won't let me climb the telephone pole anymore since I'm now 77. I may be a little crazy.

## JOYCE LOWRIE Opera-tunity

Brazil is the place of my birth. One might think that "samba" references that statement, but that is not the case. I was exposed, at a very early age, to classical music. My mother, who was also born and grew up in Brazil, came from a musical family. She remembered that when she was a little girl, the house in which the family lived in São Paulo was located across the street from the Teatro Municipal, the opera house that was built in 1911, and was modeled after the Opéra Garnier in Paris. She would sit on the steps, she claimed, and remembered hearing Caruso sing. When I came to the United States to attend college, I lived with my sister for ten months. An opera lover and singer herself, she listened regularly to the NBC announcer Milton Cross, who served the Met for 43 years. My avocational interest in opera, one might say, runs in my blood.

My  
avocational  
interest  
in opera...  
runs in my  
blood.

*Continued on page 4.*

Last year, I had the honor to be invited by Peter Frenzel and Walter Mayo, experts on opera, to join them in teaching one of the WILL Wasch Center courses. Titled “Three Operatic Femmes Fatales,” or as Walter called it familiarly, “Operatic Bad Girls,” we explored the motif of the “femme fatale” in Bizet’s “Carmen,” Saint-Saëns’s “Dalila,” and Richard Strauss’s “Salomé.” We focused on their origins and their previous analogues in literature, art, and popular culture, culminating in film noir. Among the pleasures of studying and enjoying opera is the opportunity to see and hear, right here in Middletown, the Met’s Saturday series of operas in HD. Among the audience is a small group of opera devotees, average age about 60. We’re in the vanguard.

**Laurie Nussdorfer**  
**Walking England’s Coastal Footpath**

Even before I retired I had become addicted to England’s extraordinary coastal trail, extending 630 miles along the entire southwest of the country (counties of Dorset, Devon and Cornwall). Now I can “train” and go whenever I please, and

I’ve been three times and am planning a fourth walk next May. Using a terrific website ([www.luggagetransfers.co.uk/](http://www.luggagetransfers.co.uk/)), I make my own arrangements for lodging along the section of the path that I’ve chosen and hire a company to pick up my bags each day and drop them off at my next night’s B&B. Sometimes I walk alone and sometimes with friends or family. Last summer my sister and I indulged our passion for Poldark novels by exploring Cornwall’s mining coast, which turned out to be close also to the lighthouse that inspired Virginia Woolf. By the way, I do train or practice year round; I have a three-mile climb right outside my door in upstate New York that I try to do several times a week.

**DICK OHMANN**  
**On the Cards**

In twenty years of retirement, I’ve played poker once a month or so, often in a game that started before I arrived at Wesleyan in 1961. My senior colleague, the late Ihab Hassan, asked me to join. Since high school I had enjoyed the aggression, deception and adrenaline rushes that characterize poker. Those rushes were substantial



*Laurie on the South Coast*

*Continued on page 5.*

in Middletown, where pots could grow well past \$100. John Cage, during his year at the Center for Advanced Studies, once raised me \$300—more than 3% of my annual salary. It's not good to consider the real value of chips, in the middle of a hand. I thought instead about my strong holding and Cage's stochastic style of play. I called. He showed a trash hand. According to Dick Winslow, Cage said he "liked to lose. Usually he succeeded."

The quality of play was as low as the excitement was high, and the game cheapened as we aged. One can now toss in no more than \$40 in a round of betting--about a fortieth the size, in constant dollars, of John Cage's mighty wager. The game also became wilder, as adrenaline mingled with other substances, and as we abandoned our midnight curfew, often playing until dawn or after.

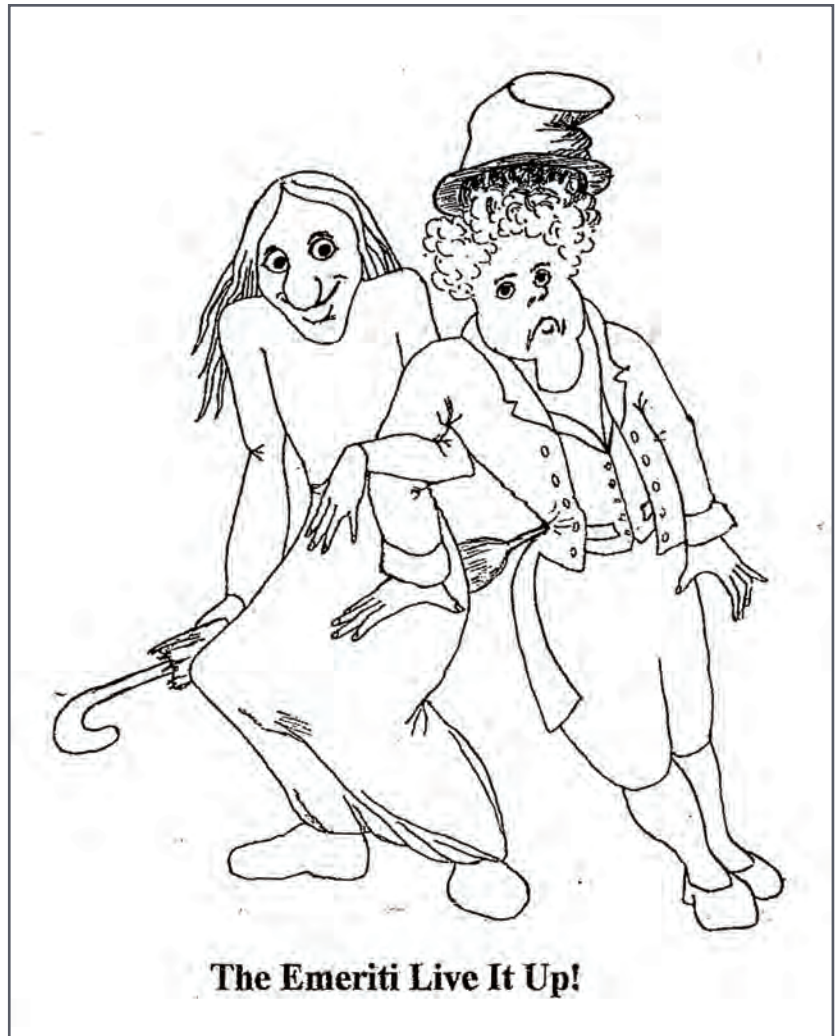
The only player currently teaching at Wesleyan is chemist Phil Bolton. Our group includes two women, one a tournament player. Many non-academics have been regulars. Bookstore owner Trumbull Huntington and Middletown Press publisher Woody D'Oench, were members when I arrived. Woody is now the game's convener. Others have included an Episcopal priest, a broker, a consultant, a car auctioneer, a behind-the-scenes Waterbury politician, a survivor of the Dutch underground, a mechanic, a man with a lawn-and-garden business, a security guard, and a couple of 1960s dropouts. Town-gown collaboration, united by a determination to take each other's money.

I vividly recall one unplanned encounter. On a hot night we opened the front door of 271 Court St. to let in some cool air. Around 10:00 in the morning three well-dressed Jehovah's Witnesses walked into the squalid-scene—droopy

players, cards, chips, cash, bourbon bottle, beer cans, overflowing ashtrays. "Oh, I see," said the lead Witness, "we'll come back another time." They never did.

Foxwoods opened its poker room in 1992. Many home games folded. Ours continues, though many of our number have died, moved, or quit. The convocation is no longer in Middletown, and we follow casino rules. So is it the same game, philosophers?

The adrenaline and silliness still work, for me. Getting the former without the latter from organized tournaments, I take two or three poker vacations a year at Foxwoods, when offered a free room.



**The Emeriti Live It Up!**

*"The Emeriti Live it Up!" Drawing by Lewis Carroll*

*Continued on page 8.*

# The Wesleyan Institute for Lifelong Learning Spring 2016

In the spring semester the Wesleyan Institute for Lifelong Learning will offer seven regular courses plus a one-day program. The courses are listed below together with times and dates. For more complete descriptions of the courses and the one-day event, cost, and enrollment information, please visit [www.wesleyan.edu/will](http://www.wesleyan.edu/will) or call the Wasch Center at 860/685-2273.

## THOMAS JEFFERSON: INTEGRITY IN THE INDIVIDUAL LIFE AND THE MEANING OF "GREATNESS"

**Richard Voigt**

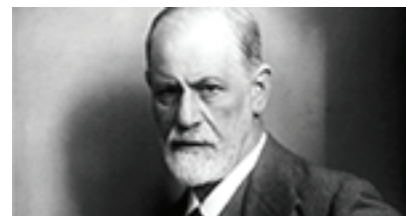
Four Tuesdays, February 23, March 1, 8 & 15, 6-7:30pm  
Butterfield Room - \$100



## FROM FREUD TO FACEBOOK: 100 YEARS OF PSYCHOTHERAPY IN AMERICA

**Steve Bank**

Three Thursdays, April 14, 21, 28, 4:30-6pm  
Butterfield Room - \$70



## THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH

**Herb Arnold**

Five Mondays, March 28, April 4, 11 & 18, 25; 4:30-6pm  
Butterfield Room - \$110



## THREE GREAT MYTHS: OEDIPUS, PERSEPHONE, AND DIONYSUS

**Elizabeth Bobrick**

Six Thursdays, March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 & April 7,  
6:30-8:30pm  
Butterfield Room - \$175



## BIRTH OF THE MODERN: PARIS, NEW YORK AND THE AGE OF ABSTRACTION (1848-1948)

**Richard J. Friswell**

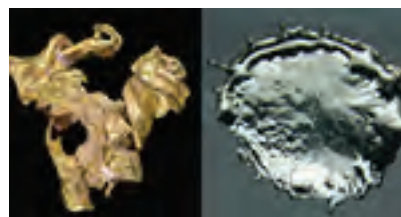
Five Tuesdays, April 26, May 3, 10, 17 & 24, 6-7:30pm  
Butterfield Room - \$110



## GEOLOGIC RESOURCES AND THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIETIES IN WESTERN EUROPE

**Jelle Zeilinga de Boer**

Four Mondays, May 2, 9, 16 & 23; 4:30-5:30pm  
Butterfield Room - \$70



## A SHAKESPEAREAN ROMANCE: THE WINTER'S TALE

**Al Turco**

Four Mondays, February 29, March 7, 14 & 21, 6:30-8pm  
Butterfield Room - \$100



# The Wesleyan Institute for Lifelong Learning Spring 2016

## KNOWING AND ENJOYING THE CONNECTICUT RIVER

**Jelle deBoer, Mark & Mindy Yuknat**

Spend a day on the Connecticut River aboard the Riverquest cruiser enjoying commentary on the history and ecology of the river. Learn about the geology of the river valley, birds and fishes, and some history of the river's shipping and commercial importance. Hear the latest news and discussion about the health of the river. Staff includes Captain Mark Yuknat and his wife, Mindy Yuknat who own and operate the Riverquest. The day also will feature Jelle DeBoer, an authority on the geological history of the river. Box lunches will be provided. The present plan is to have lunch on one of the beaches at Selden Island.



*Saturday, May 14, 2016 - \$125*

9:30–10am Sign in: Riverquest dock in Haddam  
10am – noon Cruise, with a stop in Essex  
Noon–1pm Lunch on Selden Island  
1–4pm Cruise, with a stop and visit to Gillette Castle  
4pm Disembark



## PAULA PAIGE Literary Excavations

Since my retirement, I've become involved in two areas that might seem unlikely for an adjunct professor of Romance Languages and Literatures. The first, writing and translating, is no surprise for those who know me. I've published a second translation from the Italian—a collection of stories by a nineteenth century journalist and novelist, Matilde Serao (1856-1927) --whom I would call an early feminist. And I'm writing fiction too. So far, only one of my short stories has been published, although I've been patted on the head with several honorable mentions in literary magazine contests. I'm now exploring possibilities on the Internet.

Secondly, my basement has yielded some startling literary surprises. My late husband, D.D. Paige, who was an Ezra Pound scholar and intimate in the decade following the Second World War and the editor of *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound*, left behind many letters written to him by Pound and his wife Dorothy Shakespear -- as well as by Ernest Hemingway, Wyndham Lewis, T.S. Eliot and other luminaries. Most of the correspondence took place during the period when Pound was "incarcerated" in St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, from '46 to '58, although some letters date from Pound's Fascist period. Douglass did give his side of the correspondence to Yale, but unaccountably left Pound's in the basement and never told me. Many letters were filed but others were in an unlikely vault--a paper bag in a closet! All very mysterious.

So, with the help of my partner Carver Blanchard -- lutenist, guitarist and tenor -- I have been dealing with the Beinecke at Yale and the Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin, trying to find good homes for this material.

Maybe the inspiration for a story?

## JOE REED My Two Careers

For me, painting is less a second career than a parallel career. I've been painting for almost as long as I have taught. It began with four water colors for Prof. Frederick A. Pottle, my mentor and later collaborator at Yale, and Marian Pottle, the Boswell bibliographer. They were in Maine for the summer; we redecorated their bathroom as thanks for a summer we spent in their house in New Haven. I worked on my Boswell volume (*Boswell, Laird of Auchinleck, 1778-1782* ed. with F. A. Pottle, Volume 3 of the Yale Edition of his private papers, in the Sterling Library.) The bathroom walls needed that finishing touch: herbal watercolors. I painted four. I moved from water colors into acrylic on masonite and from there to acrylic on aluminum panels: my series of ants in history, one of which sold to the Duke of Bedford; a hundred-some alphabets, currently in collections including those of Robin Williams, Elizabeth and Daniel P. Moynihan, as well as one I designed for Nancy and Colin Campbell; the Custer and Mrs. Whistler paintings and... and... I've had shows at Wesleyan, in New York and Washington DC, London and New Delhi. My etchings are currently available via a dealer in Boston. You can see my work at <http://www.josephreed.net>



Joseph Reed. Mrs. Whistler in Purdah. 1983.

For more of Joe Reed's art, please visit <http://www.josephreed.net>.



## PHYLLIS ROSE Pondkeeper

There seems a natural tendency, as one ages, to find more in less. My own world in a grain of sand is a fishpond, here in Key West, nine by sixteen feet, a former cistern. I began with goldfish, cherishing and naming each one: Red Buttons, Red Grooms, Scarlet O'Hara, and so on. When they died – for they did die, no matter how much care I gave them – I buried them and inscribed their names on the autograph tree. But gradually it got to me. They would reach a tremendous size, and then they would die. I switched to koi, which I don't find nearly as interesting as goldfish, but which live longer.

My koi got so big I wanted to give some away and via Craigslist offered them free to a good home. A man in Miami was willing to drive the three hours to Key West to take one of my platinum ogons, but first he wanted to see the fish on FaceTime, and when he did, he told me I had a pregnant fish needing immediate help. I had to induce her to lay her eggs by filling the pond with palm fronds and lowering the temperature for three days with bags of ice: when the water warmed up again the fish would be fooled into thinking it was spring. I did this, and on the fourth day, the pregnant fish laid her millions of eggs, all over the pond fronds. Three weeks later she died anyway.

Another time, two local koi fanatics spotted a diseased fish and offered to operate. They scooped the fish up, anaesthetized him with oil of clove, cut out the tumor, sewed him up, slowly revived him, and re-introduced him to the pond. Three weeks later, he died.

I still mobilize myself for major threats to my ecosystem, like herons, but when the fish die, I put them directly in the garbage. I still love my pond – the movement of the fish, the spread of the ferns, the water itself – but, as Montaigne said, to philosophize is to learn to die, and the same can be said for pondkeeping.

## KARL SCHEIBE Second Wind



When I was in third grade, just 9 years old, my father urged me to begin playing the oboe, lending me his oboe, which he had played in his youth. I persevered at it, culminating in several performances with the school band. But we moved to another town after that year, and there was no instruction available in my new school. I put my oboe away.

As I approached retirement, I noticed an ad for a Loree oboe in Middletown. I bought it—with an elementary lessons book and some reeds, and began to practice on my own. Little progress was evident.

After I retired in 2005, I resolved to get in touch with Libby Van Cleve, who comes up to Wesleyan from Yale once a week to offer oboe instruction. Libby graciously took me on as a student—ending a sixty-year hiatus in my woodwind career. Under her guidance, I progressed moderately well.

We worked out two performances at the Wasch Center— including a Bach sonata—together with my colleague David Westmoreland in Chemistry. I also began to play occasionally in church, accompanying hymns.

For eight years I studied with Libby, but just a year ago suspended my lessons. I do continue to play a bit and enjoy the diversion. The oboe is a difficult and unforgiving instrument. But I rather enjoy the challenge of playing it. I also enjoyed hugely the association with my teacher and take some pride in my modest accomplishments under her tutelage.

## VERA SCHWARCZ Chinese Calligraphy

*Free of Ego, of Students, of Career—  
Just for the Fun of it.*

I would like to say that writing poetry is my post-retirement avocation. But, truthfully, it has been the core to my writing life for over 20 years. The latest volume, dedicated to Jason's memory, will be showcased at the

*Continued on page 11.*

## A SALUTE TO KARL SCHEIBE: GRATIAS MAXIMAS TIBI AGO

At the end of the spring semester, Karl Scheibe, Professor of Psychology, emeritus, will retire from his position as Director of the Wasch Center for Retired Faculty. It will mark ten years of careful stewardship: controlling its operations, keeping its books, and developing new programs. His actions have been governed by his unerring judgment, his administrative talents, and—not least—his easy amiability. Under his steady hand the institution has flourished.

Karl was one of the Center's founders, a group of distinguished faculty members in or near retirement that convened in 2002 to discuss the feasibility of a center for retired faculty. They were encouraged in their efforts by Bill and Sue Wasch, who had been considering a major gift to Wesleyan and now decided that it should be used for the establishment of a new center. Karl, with his knowledge of Wesleyan's inner workings and sure sense of how to get things done, was a natural for director of the new entity. To no one's surprise, he was duly appointed.

It was a bumpy road, but eventually a house at 51 Lawn Avenue became available and construction began in early 2003—forty years after Karl's arrival at Wesleyan. It was officially opened at a dedication ceremony in November of 2005.

Since then the Center has flourished. Karl has



*Karl Scheibe, Director of the Wasch Center since 2005*

provided energetic leadership—selecting the speakers and performers for the lecture series (seven per semester), putting together the film series, finding the instructors for the Wesleyan Institute for Lifelong Learning program, administering grants to retired faculty members, and—perhaps most important—helping us to keep a sense of connectedness to one another.

And the list goes on. All hail to Karl!

**Aintza! Slava! Glory!**  
**Glória! Kunnia! Heerlijkheid!**  
**Gogoniant! Dicsöség! Kudos!**

Wasch Center on Wednesday March 2nd, 2016.

So, I have another secret love I want to share: Chinese calligraphy. Having retired from teaching about China for 40 years is a relief. The political intrigues and repeated brutalities of Chinese history wore me out. What lingers after all these decades is a very private affection for the music of the brush. When I was a young graduate student at Yale, I took calligraphy from a master teacher and was very bad at it. I gave it up over the years as “not for me.”

Now, away from the academic world and Chinese students and colleagues to watch and judge, I pick up the brush on most mornings and grind the ink slowly to some Chinese music on my phone. For the past 6 months, I have been practicing only 9 characters—the first line of the Confucian Analects:

學而時習之不亦說乎

*To learn and over time to have something become second nature, what greater joy is there?*

The English is wordy, clumsy, but my brush sings to me of something deeper. I may never do more than this one line. I can imagine, it may carry me for years.

I have no need for rice paper or fancy seals (though I own both). I do this for no good reason at all but the soft scratching sound of brush on used printer paper. And the slowing of breath on days otherwise mobbed by grim news from the outside world.

### **BILL STOWE** **On the Wing**

And now for something completely different, I thought when I retired. So these days, between keeping up with recent ecocriticism, auditing courses in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, and volunteering with local environmental organizations, I travel in search of birds.

Karin and I have seen Golden-winged Manakins and a Golden-headed Quetzal on the slopes of the Andes, toucans and Scarlet Macaws in Costa Rica, Darwin’s finches in the Galapagos, spoonbills on the Norfolk (UK) coast, and Bald Eagles right here in Princeton.

On my own I’ve racked up Scarlet Ibis in Trinidad, motmots and antbirds in Panama, Great Kiskadees in South Texas, and Great Skuas on tiny Fair Isle in the North Sea between Shetland and the Orkneys. Next February, if all goes well, I’m hoping for a Red-headed Tanager in the mountains near Oaxaca, Mexico.

There’s writing, too. Last fall NJ Audubon published my anthology of NJ nature writing entitled *Pete Dunne’s New Jersey*, a tribute to a well-known birder and prolific author who was the founding director of NJA’s Cape May Bird Observatory.

### **AL TURCO** **In Their Own Write**

The very thought of autograph collecting used to turn me off because of disdain for celebrities – be they athletes, entertainers or Nazis (the last a favored category for some). But around two decades ago I was gifted a “blue book” from 1935 which contained an essay on Oscar Wilde – unremarkable except for having been written at the Boston Latin School by a student named Leonard Bernstein. Tucked inside was a scrawled list of his favorite novels (including Mann’s *The Magic Mountain*) and plays (“O’Neill: anything”), along with a mediocre grade sheet. The future Lennie had signed each page at the top. Signatures stranded in white space have never appealed to me; what *does* is the elusive charm known as “interesting content,” and here it was.

Since then I’ve haggled with dealers and placed stingy bids at auctions in hope of nabbing the right stuff dashed off by classical composers. I’ve lost a few, won a few. Among the latter is a mash note written in 1921 to a novice soprano by Puccini -- self-described as “this little man who has his age [63] on his conscience ... but you have given me adequate proof.” (Undoubtedly she had.) Then there’s a darkly inked two-sided postcard (circa 1905) from the overworked Director of the Vienna State Opera, saluting an associate with

*Continued on page 15.*

# Necrology

## **John Barlow**

Jon K. Barlow, Professor of Music, Emeritus, died in December at the age of 73 after a long illness. After graduate studies at Cornell he joined the Music Department in 1966, just as it was striking out in new directions, especially in the area of World Music. His scholarly writing and research and the courses he taught focused beyond the traditional study of music and its sister mathematics, but explored, usually in great depth, baseball, film studies, Wittgenstein, Kepler, Faulkner, Ives, Cage and many others. He interrupted his Wesleyan teaching with a two-year stint of teaching in Tanzania. He was an especially effective team teacher as well as a brilliant pianist. Jon continued an active program of research during retirement. He prepared an annotated translation of Johannes Kepler's *Harmonices Mundi*. He also worked on an alternative translation of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* based on his view that the consistency of terminology in Wittgenstein's German allows the *Tractatus* to be read as formal logic as well as natural language. The family does not plan to have a memorial service, but has requested that memorial contributions be made in Jon's name to Middlesex Hospital, 28 Crescent Street, Middletown CT 06457.

## **Bill Firshein**

William Firshein, the Daniel Ayres Professor of Biology Emeritus, died in December at the age of 85. He had taught at Wesleyan for 47 years to his retirement in 2005. He earned a B.S. at Brooklyn College and his M.S. and Ph.D. at Rutgers. He was an expert in the field of molecular biology. For many years

he taught a popular general-education biology course that culminated in a book, *The Infectious Microbe*, published by Oxford in 2014. He was a founding member of the Molecular Biology and Biochemistry Department and served as its chair for seven years. Memorial donations may be made in his name to the Wesleyan Memorial Fund and sent to the care of Marcy Herlihy, University Relations, 318 High Street, Middletown CT 06459. A memorial service was held on January 25.

## **Ihab Hassan**

Ihab Hassan, former professor of English, died at the age of 89. Ihab, after earning an M.S. in engineering and a Ph.D. in English Literature joined the Wesleyan faculty in 1954, and was an influential member of the English department throughout the 1960s. He left in 1969 to join the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, where he was Vilas Research Professor of English and Comparative Literature until his retirement in 1999. He was the author of more than fifteen books and many more articles. He is most known for his work in post-modernism. A prolific and influential writer, he held many visiting professorships and was awarded several honorary doctorates.

## **Gene Klaaren**

Eugene Klaaren, Associate Professor of Religion, Emeritus died in December at the age of 78. Gene taught at Wesleyan from 1968 until he retired in 2006. He earned a B.A. at Hope College, M.A.s from both Western Theological Seminary and Emory University, and a Ph.D. from Harvard. Gene's courses introduced students to central Christian thinkers in the history of theology and philosophy, from Luther to Kierkegaard,

Calvin to Hume and Jonathan Edwards, and Schleiermacher to Nietzsche. Over the years he broadened his academic interests, regularly visiting Africa to study indigenous African religions as well as Christian theological formations that combined political action and religious belief and practice. His great passion was in showing the forms of belief that sustained secularity and the vitality of the theological discipline from the early modern through the postmodern age. This dynamic intertwining of secular sciences and the religious imagination is captured in the title of Gene's highly regarded book, *Religious Origins of Modern Science: Belief in Creation in Seventeenth Century Thought*. Donations may be made either to the Wasch Center for Retired Faculty, Wesleyan University, 51 Lawn Avenue, Middletown CT 06459 or to South Church, UCC, 9 Pleasant Street, Middletown CT 06457.

### **Jack McIntosh**

John S. McIntosh, Foss Professor of Physics, emeritus, died on December 13, 2015 at the age of 92. He received his Ph.D. from Yale and came to Wesleyan in 1963 to help develop the new Physics graduate program. He was chair of the department several times. He earned an international reputation in the area of nuclear physics. He also won fame as a paleontologist. He was honored in 1975 when he identified the correct skull for the Apatosaurus (then known as Brontosaurus) in 1975. In 2010 he was honored for his newly discovered species named *Abydosaurus mcintoshi*, and in 2011 with *Brontomerus mcintoshi*. Donations in his memory may be made to the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology, attn.: Serena Weisman, Executive Director, 9650 Rockville Pike, Bethesda MD 20814. A memorial service

was held in December at Holy Trinity Episcopal church.

### **Jan Miel**

Jan Miel died October 6, 2015 at the age of 84. He studied Sanskrit at Harvard College, earning his B.A. there in 1952. During his years in the military he was in army intelligence. At that time he wrote a grammar of the Sinhalese language. After demobilization he enrolled in the Princeton graduate program, studying musicology and French. He received his doctorate in French and taught briefly at Goucher College before coming to Wesleyan. He was a Professor of French and of Letters in the College of Letters. His principal scholarly work was *Pascal and Theology*. Additionally he published many scholarly articles on literature and literary criticism. Donations in his memory may be made to Grace Episcopal Church, 55 New Park Ave., Hartford CT 06106 or Oddfellows Playhouse, 128 Washington Street, Middletown CT 06457.

### **Carl Schorski**

Carl Schorski, the Dayton-Stockton Professor of History, Emeritus at Princeton University, died this past September. He was 100. He received degrees from Columbia and Harvard before being awarded a Ph.D. from Harvard. After serving in the OSS during World War II, he taught at Wesleyan from 1946 to 1960. He was chiefly known for his study of turn-of-the-century Vienna as the radiating source of modernist thinking. He won a Pulitzer Prize in 1981 for his collection of essays, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*. He also was among the first recipients of the MacArthur Awards. After leaving Wesleyan he taught at Princeton until his retirement in 1980. He was made an honorary citizen of Vienna in 2012.

# SPRING 2016 FILM SERIES

All showings are in the Butterfield Room at 3 pm.

*Joe Reed and Yoshiko Samuels have selected another round of significant films for the spring semester. Screenings will be on the first Tuesday of each month in the Butterfield Room of the Wasch Center.*

*Tuesday, February 2, 3:00 p.m.*

## **TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD**

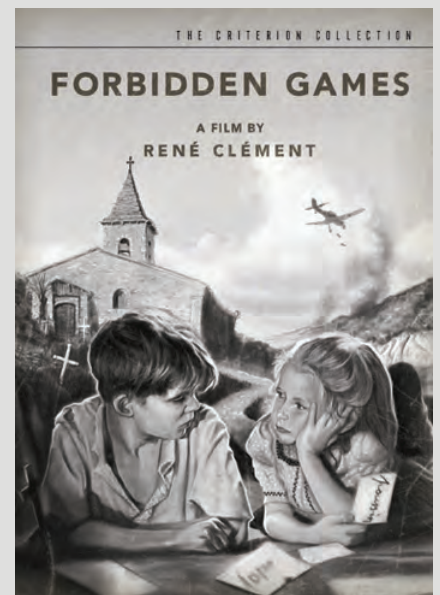
(1962) directed by Robert Mulligan. Gregory Peck, Mary Badham. 130 minutes.



*Tuesday, March 1, 3:00 p.m.*

## **FORBIDDEN GAMES** (1952)

directed by Rene Clement.  
Georges Poujouly, Brigitte Fosse.  
In French with English subtitle.  
86minutes.



*Tuesday, April 5, 3:00 p.m.*

## **THE KING OF MASKS** (1996)

directed by Wu Tianming. Zhu Xu, Zhou Renying. In Mandarin Chinese with English subtitle.  
102 minutes.



*Tuesday, May 3, 3:00 p.m.*

## **THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN**

(1960) directed by John Sturges,  
Yul Brynner, Steve McQueen,  
Charles Bronson. 123 minutes



“Hearty greetings ... from your coughing, sweating, totally run-down ... Gustav Mahler.” Still more distressed was Felix Mendelssohn in 1809, laid up in bed for two months in Surrey, pleading to an intimate friend: “I cannot live without my dear yellow pain medicine ... Do bring the brown bottle when you come.”

The hand of an ill Mendelssohn (aged twenty) falters at the close of a note to his dear friend Charles Klingeman:

“O Quinin, Gebieter, Opium”

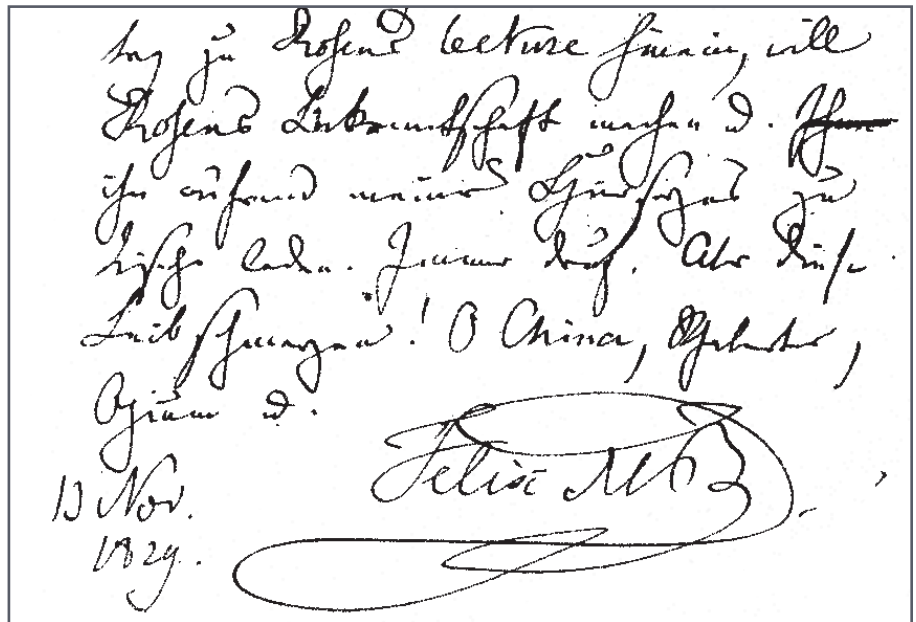
(O Quinine, Lord & Master, Opium)

Quinine was often mixed with opium to heighten its effect. Mendelssohn is only calling for a medicine popular at the time. His “Felix” is legible, but he hardly makes it past the first syllable of his surname—finishing, though, with a pleasing artistic flourish.

Holograph hunting is not just for the 1%; many retired professors pursue hobbies at least as expensive. Play your cards right and there may be “finds” no more costly than a local bon vivant blows during an adrenalized poker weekend. Liszt, Verdi, Wagner – all available in the low four figures.

Once you get back to Schubert and Mozart, life gets harder: the institutions got there first. But a two-line scribble signed “LVB” will set you back only fifty grand (did he ever receive that much for a symphony?).

No doubt this lure of these embrowned jottings qualifies as an oddity; but I would not willingly pass up the chance to glimpse, through a small window, a moment in the quotidian life of a musical genius beneath whose hand once lay a scrap of paper now held (*very carefully*) in mine.



Mendelssohn's letter to Klingemann

## WESLEYAN'S ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

In the spring of 2011 the Wasch Center, in collaboration with the office of Special Collections and Archives, established an oral history project for Wesleyan. The objective is to develop a set of recorded and transcribed interviews with senior members of the Wesleyan community in order that these might comprise a permanent part of our history. The interviews are meant to be personal reflections of the course of entire careers at Wesleyan. Transcriptions of the interviews are to be available in the Wesleyan archives and will be accessible as well through the WESCHOLARS website.

In the first year of the program five interviews were conducted by students who were selected and trained for this job. An additional set of nine interviews

have now been done by Nancy Smith, former editor of the Wesleyan Alumnae/i Magazine, now retired, and Leith Johnson, University Archivist. All of these interviews have been transcribed and are in the process of final editing. Those interviewed include Herb Arnold, Bill Barber, Dick Buel, Bill Firshein, Tony Connor, Gertrude Hughes, Jerome Long, Donald Meyer, Dick Miller, Richard Ohmann, Pete Pringle, Joe Reed, Kit Reed, Robert Rosenbaum, Yoshiko Samuel, Paul Schaber, Richard Slotkin, and Jerry Wensinger. The objective of the oral history program is to collect the memories and perceptions of people with the greatest amount of lived experience at Wesleyan, and along the way to honor those members of the community who have made enduring contributions to our collegial life.

# WASCH CENTER ENDOWMENT

Over the ten years of our existence, the Wasch Center has received a number of gifts from retired faculty members, alumni, and others. We are building an endowment that we hope might eventually allow the funding of professional travel and research expenses for retired faculty members, including the maintenance of computers. If you are considering either a bequest to Wesleyan or an annual gift, you might designate such gifts, in full or in part, to be credited to the Wasch Center. One-time contributions, in any amount, are, of course, always welcome. If you have questions about this, you can contact Karl Scheibe (ext. 2273) at the Wasch Center or Mark Davis (ext. 3660), who is Director of Planned Giving for University Relations.



Wasch Center for Retired Faculty  
Wesleyan University  
51 Lawn Avenue  
Middletown CT 06459  
abello@wesleyan.edu  
(860) 685-3005

## Editorial Board of the Wasch Center Newsletter

Peter Frenzel, Chair  
Allan Berlind  
Joyce Lowrie  
Jerry Long  
Paula Paige  
Karl Scheibe  
Al Turco  
Jerry Wensinger  
Duffy White