The Play's the Thing!

Photo by Rick Mokler

Ophelia (Elizabeth Knacke) is caught between Hamlet (Stephen Terrill) and Fortinbras (Joh Zuber)

NEWSLETTER OF THE UCSB HISTORY ASSOCIATES

Historía

VOL. 17, NO. 4 • MARCH 2004

UCSB and the 'Big Box'

Conference Will Focus On Wal-Mart Effect

WAL-MART IS NOT only the largest corporation in the world, but also the most controversial.

Unionists blame the company for precipitating a bitter, four-month long Southern California grocery strike and for sending thousands of U.S. manufacturing jobs to China.

Small town merchants and government officials denounce Wal-Mart big box stores for sucking the life out of main street U.S.A.

And a series of high-profile lawsuits charge the company with abuse of immigrant workers, discrimination against women employees, and the firing of union advocates.

To understand how and why this $250 billion retail giant is changing the face of America, a dozen experts will join UCSB faculty in an all-day conference to be held on Monday, April 12.

Entitled "Wal-Mart: Template for 21st Century Capitalism," the conference aims to explore the impact of the world's largest private company on global trade, community development, and the U.S. standard of living.

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But Will Associates 'Catch the Conscience' Of a Post-Modern King?

FINE DINING AND prize-winning entertainment are on tap Friday, March 12, for the UCSB History Associates' second annual fund-raising theatre program at Santa Barbara City College.

Beginning at 6 p. m.in SBCC's John Dunn Gourmet Dining Room with a meal prepared by chef Charles Fredericks, formerly of Bouchon Restaurant, the evening will conclude with a performance of Lee Blessing's "Fortinbras" in SBCC's Garvin Theater.

Inspired by the character of Fortinbras, the prince of Norway who appears on the scene at the end of Shakespeare's "Hamlet," Blessing's play portrays the lead character as a prince of action, in contrast to the brooding and indecisive Dane.

In this sense, it is like Tom Stoppard's "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern," which turns the tables on Shakespeare's play by making the two messengers the center of action and relegating Hamlet to a minor role.

But where Stoppard's play was comedy for its own sake, Blessing's came with a sting. When it debuted in 1991, the U. S. was dealing with the aftermath of war in the Persian Gulf, and Blessing turned tragedy into highly relevant farce by depicting Fortibras as a post-modern ruler whose invasion of Poland had ended in disaster.

"Fortinbras" was chosen by *Time* magazine as one of the year's 10 best plays.

Director Katie Laris of the SBCC Drama department will meet with the History Associates before the production to discuss the staging of Blessing's play and the way she and the cast developed the characters.

With directing credits in New York and Portland, Oregon, Laris holds an MFA degree in Theater Directing from Columbia University..

Cost for the evening, at $75 per person, includes dinner, theater ticket and a $30 tax-deductible contribution to the History Associates scholarship fund.

Reservations may be made through the UCSB Office of Community Relations at (805) 893-4388.

Logevall Blasts U.S. Foreign Policy

THE UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL election will be a referendum on the George W. Bush Administration's go-it-alone approach to foreign policy, according to Prof. Fred Logevall.

Prof. Fredrik Logevall

In a hard-hitting speech to the UCSB History Associates last month, Prof. Logevall said that the current administration "has embraced unilateralism to an unprecedented degree" in American history.

There has always been a belief in American "exceptionalism," Prof. Logevall said, but the nation's earliest Presidents insisted this country should lead by example, not force.

"There is a difference between being a leader and being a boss," he said. "I'm not sure the current President understands this."

Reviewing the evolution of U. S. foreign policy, Prof, Logevall pointed to Woodrow Wilson as the President who finally broke with the policy of making anything other than temporary alliances with other nations.

With the League of Nations, Prof. Logevall said, Wilson "embraced the idea of mutilateral collective security."

His "disastrous mistake" was to refuse to work with the U. S. Senate, which ultimately refused to ratify the League treaty.

Nevertheless, Prof. Logevall said, Wilson was "one of the most important foreign policy makers in U. S. history," and all Presidents from FDR to Clinton believed that the U. S. had to work with other countries to have a successful foreign policy.

They all believed that the U. S. was exceptional, he said, and that there were times when this country would have to act unilaterally.

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Two Talks to Close Cold War Studies Program

AS THE FINAL events in an active program sponsored by the Cold War Studies Center, Prof. Logevall will speak on U. S. Cold War diplomacy in HSSB 4020 on Thursday, March 4, at 3:30pm.

On Thursday, March 11, Chen Jian of the University of Virginia, will speak on China and the Cold War in 6020 HSSB, also at 3:30.

Historia

Vol. 17, No. 4 March • 2004

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Published by the UCSB History Associates

From The Chair

Guy Noir, Private Eye

History is popular on television these days. Consider the History Channel continually refighting wars, or HBO docudramas like the recent show on militant feminists of the 1910s. A refreshingly different entry to televised history appeared last fall: "The History Detectives" on PBS, featuring the process of discovery in doing history. Four hosts, two academics and two art appraisers, anchor the show and present three 17-minute segments each sleuthing out the meaning of an artifact or family legend a viewer has submitted.

I've always fancied myself a detective, so I was elated when the "History Detectives" called me in on a case! Their mystery

document was a manuscript copybook kept by a 23-year-old woman in rural Kentucky, dated 1800. Their interest was in two brief passages represented to be quotations from the "Alcoran." How would a young Kentucky woman know anything about the Koran? Their initial hypothesis: slaves fresh from Africa imported to Kentucky, sharing Islamic sayings with a 23-year old woman. They had consulted Mary Beth Norton of Cornell, an expert on women's education in that period, and she said: call Pat Cohen!

What the TV people had not really noticed, in their focus on the Koranic epigrams, was that 80% of the book was mathematics. And this was not simple arithmetic, the training most boys and girls received, if they learned math at all. The problems were all of square, cube, and biquadratic roots—a remarkable thing for a young man in the rural Kentucky of 1800 to produce, never mind a young woman.

The long and short of it is that I was flown to New York on about three days' notice to be videotaped with the host, Gwen Wright, an architectural historian at Columbia. The producer withheld my first look at the item until we were on camera, to get my spontaneous reaction. But then it became something less than spontaneous as we taped bit after bit, with the director saying "Great, now do it again but shorter."

They had blocked out a script that called for me to identify the manuscript as a copybook and explain how students used them. I also got to talk about the cube root problems, but I could tell that would not be their focus—they were still in pursuit of the Islamic story. (I told them I doubted their Islamic slave hypothesis.) I wouldn't be surprised if the math part gets left on the cutting room floor in the end.

By four that afternoon, I was on a plane at JFK, marveling at the whole experience.

Historians spend years in research and produce complex arguments in articles and books; "History Detectives" is more akin to *Antiques Roadshow*. "History lite" one admiring historian has called it (see the excellent essay by Eric Strange, at http://www.common-place.org/vox-pop/200310.shtml). But the show

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All-DayConference Set to Explore Impact of 'the Wal-Mart Phenomenon'

CONTINUED FROM P 1

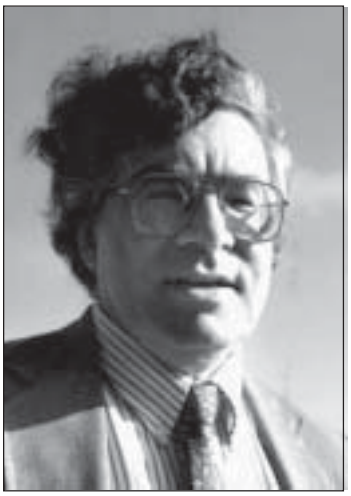
"Wal-Mart is like General Motors and Microsoft in their heyday: hugely successful companies that set the benchmark for everyone else," says History professor and conference organizer Nelson Lichtenstein, a specialist in U. S. labor history.

"The corporation's low-wage, low-price, globally-sourced business model is transforming the way millions of Americans live, work, and think about the future."

Founded in 1962 by Sam Walton and his brother Bud, this Bentonville, Arkansas company is the largest profit-making enterprise in the world, with 1.4 million employees in more than a score of countries.

It has 4,688 stores worldwide, about 80 per cent in the United States. Twenty million shoppers visit Wal-Mart stores each day and more than four out of five U.S. households purchase at least some products from the retailer each year.

It does more business than Target, Sears, Kmart, J. C. Penney, Safeway, and Kroger combined. Wal-Mart is the single largest U.S. importer from China and the largest private employer in Mexico.



Prof. Nelson Lichtenstein

Wal-Mart has become the largest corporation in the world, with 4,688 stores.

"Business history is too important to be left to the economists and management experts," says Lichtenstein, which is why he has assembled a wide-ranging group of historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and urbanists to probe the social context, internal structure, and cultural/economic impact of the corporation.

Among the historians are Susan Strasser of the University of Delaware, who has written on the way the big box store has transformed the shopping experience during the last half century, and Bethany Morton of Yale, whose research traces the distinctively Southern roots of Wal-Mart's managerial culture.

Another historian, Julio Moreno of the University of San Francisco, has used his expertise in Latin American business to explain why Wal-Mart has been so successful there.

Also making presentations are sociologists Gary Hamilton of the University of Washington, one of the world's leading experts on the "global value-chains" that have now bound Far Eastern manufacturing so closely to the American big-box retail market, and Ellen Rosen of the Brandeis Center for Women's Studies, who is now writing a book on sex discrimination in retail trade, with Wal-Mart as her prime case study.

Anthropologist David Karjanen has written one of the most extensive accounts of Wal-Mart's impact—fiscal, employment, environmental, and governmental—on those communities in which it locates large retail outlets.

Fulbright scholar Chris Tilly is studying the impact of Wal-Mart and other large retailers on the informal sector in Mexico.

In addition to these academics, attorney Brad Seligman will discuss the extent to which the class action gender discrimination suit advanced by the San Francisco Impact Fund has enabled his organization to open a revealing window on the contemporary world of low-wage female employment, both at Wal-Mart and in other service sector firms.

Prof. Ellen Rosen

And Howard Foreman of the United Food and Commercial Workers will explain why Wal-Mart has been able to pioneer a low-wage labor relations strategy without hindrance from unions, the government, or local communities.

The conference is sponsored by the UC Santa Barbara Center for Work, Labor, and Democracy in cooperation with the University's Interdisciplinary Humanities Center. For registration and additional information go to http://www.ihc.ucsb.edu/walmart/.

HistoryDegree Leads to Life With Jefferson

A HISTORY PHD usually leads to a career of teaching and research. But in the case of Barbara Oberg (PhD Marsak, 1973) it led instead to a steady date with Thomas Jefferson.

After spending a dozen years editing Jefferson's papers at Yale University, Barbara was recruited as general editor of The Papers of Thomas Jefferson by Princeton. Volume 31 of a projected 80 volumes will appear this June.

As part-celebration of that milestone and part-homecoming, Barbara gave a workshop on documentary editing on campus last month. Entitled "Doing History One Letter at

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EDITOR'S BOX

Damazo and the Holy Template

Lately I've been thinking a lot about Damazo Majak.

Only old-timers like me will remember Damazo. He was one of the many talented Sudanese grad students who came to UCSB to study with Bob Collins, an expert on their homeland.

In the late '80s, when Damazo was here, Sudan was in the most virulent phase of its civil war. Being from a prominent family in the south, Damazo knew that return meant certain death.

The problem was that Damazo was at the stage where his dissertation needed to be filed, and he had no funds for buying the special rag paper on which such documents have to be submitted, or for paying a typist who knew all the style peculiarities demanded by what grad students are fond of calling Graduate Division's "holy template."

That was 1989, and Damazo was in luck. The UCSB History Associates had been formed the year prior and had raised a whopping $1500 for graduate support.

Damazo was one of the three graduate students selected to receive a scholarship of $500—just the amount he needed to finish his degree.

I am looking now at a photo of that first group, in the November 1989 issue of *Historía*. Damazo stands with the other two recipients—Viviana Marsano and Tomás Salinas. They are flanked by Pat Sheppard of Grad Division and somebody who looks like my son but must be me.

In the background stands a beaming Dick Cook, the founder of the History Associates, who had bullied, badgered and cajoled a reluctant department and even more reluctant Administration into supporting this organization, and was just now realizing the first fruits of his efforts. You can literally see the buttons flying off his coat.

Now, thanks in no small part to the unstinting efforts of our department angels, JoBeth and Don Van Gelderen, the Associates hand out upwards of $50,000 a year in scholarships as well as a host of other special awards—for Colonial and Native American history (Jacobs), Latin American (Powell), premodern Europe (Frost), U. S. public policy (Kelley). New ones are being proposed all the time.

It only takes a glance at the budget headlines to see that however much our funding has grown, the need grows even greater.

Damazo's story has a bittersweet ending. He became a highly popular professor of History at Loyola-Marymount University in Los Angeles, where he died prematurely of leukemia in 1996. Friends tell me the whole school mourned.

Not every History Associates Fellow has a story as dramatic, or painful, as Damazo's. But they all have need. Thanks to you, that need is being met.

Hal Drake, Editor

With Thoughts Tumbling, We Salute the Analogy

BY POPULAR DEMAND, here are more samples of analogies written by students in a college writing program (with thanks to Harold Marcuse):

"His thoughts tumbled in his head, making and breaking alliances like underpants in a dryer without Cling Free."

"He spoke with the wisdom that can only come from experience, like a guy who went blind because he looked at a solar eclipse without one of those boxes with a pinhole in it and now goes around the country speaking at colleges about the dangers of looking at a solar eclipse without one of those boxes with a pinhole in it."

"Long separated by cruel fate, the star-crossed lovers raced across the grassy field toward each other like two freight trains, one having left Cleveland at 6:36 p.m. traveling at 55 mph, the other from Topeka at 4:19 p.m. at a speed of 35 mph."

John and Mary had never met. They were like two hummingbirds who had also never met. "

"The revelation that his marriage of 30 years had disintegrated because of his wife's infidelity came as a rude shock, like a surcharge to a formerly surcharge-free ATM"

"'Oh, Jason, take me!' she panted, her breasts heaving like a college freshman on $1-a-beer night."

"The plan was simple, like my brother-in-law Phil. But unlike Phil, this plan just might work."

"He was as lame as a duck. Not the metaphorical lame duck, either, but a real duck that was actually lame. Maybe from stepping on a land mine or something."

"The knife was as sharp as the tone used by Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Tex.) in her first several points of parliamentary procedure made to Rep. Henry Hyde (R-Ill.) in the House Judiciary Committee hearings on the impeachment of President William Jefferson Clinton."

"The ballerina rose gracefully en pointe and extended one slender leg behind her, like a dog at a fire hydrant."

"She was as easy as the TV Guide crossword."

"It hurt the way your tongue hurts after you accidentally staple it to the wall."

"The young fighter had a hungry look, the kind you get from not eating for a while."

"It was an American tradition, like fathers chasing kids around with power tools."

"He was deeply in love. When she spoke, he thought he heard bells, as if she were a garbage truck backing up."

"She walked into my office like a centipede with 98 missing legs."

"Her voice had that tense, grating quality, like a generation thermal paper fax machine that needed a band tightened."

LET US HEAR FROM YOU

If you are a grad trying to get in touch with an old classmate, or a community member or alum with an article or story, why not drop us a line?

Send your letters to:
Editor, *Historía*
Department of History
University of California
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-9410

History Grad Students Make Their Mark

GRADUATE SCHOOL can lead to strange twists, but few strnger than those taken by Sharan Newman.

Sharan was working on a PhD with Jeffrey Russell in 1995 when she published *The Devil's Door*, a mystery set in medieval times. Her sleuth, Catherine Levendeur, caught on, and Sharan has since published seven more books in this series alone.

Now she has just inked a six-figure contract to write a debunking of *The DaVinci Code*, the best-seller based on the premise that Jesus had a son by Mary Magdalene.

Other grad news has been a bit more predictable.

Nancy McLoughlin (Farmer) has accepted a tenure-track position in the History department of Willamette University in Salem, Oregon.

Monica Orozco (PhD Cline, 1999) has been elected to the Board of Trustees for the Santa Barbara Mission Archive-Library.

Louise Pubols (MA Oglesby, 1991) has published "Doing History in Exhibit Halls: the History PhD and a Museum Career" in the current issue of *AHA Perspectives*.

Monique Vallance (Dutra) has received a grant from the Luso-American Development Foundation to conduct preliminary research for her dissertation on the 17th century Portuguese queen Dona Luisa de Gusmdo at the Portuguese National Archives in Lisbon this summer.

David Tipton (Drake) has been named managing editor of ABC-CLIO's new ancient/medieval website.

"Booting a Tramp: Charlie Chaplin, the FBI, and the Construction of the Subversive Image in Red Scare America," by John Sbardellati (Logevall) and Prof. Tony Shaw of the University of Hertfordshire was published in the November, 2003 issue of the *Pacific Historical Review*.

Dan Lewis (PhD Rock, 1990) has published *The History of Argentina* with Palgrave Macmillan.

Gaston Espinosa (PhD Garcia, 1999) has accepted a tenure-track position at Claremont McKenna College.

Eric Fournier (Drake) presented a paper on "Outlawing Bishops: the Relationship between Deposition, Excommunication and Exile" on Feb. 21 at a conference on "Legitimation and Its Discontents in the Ancient Mediterranean" held at USC.

Phi Alpha Theta Mixes Pirates, Pizza & History

BY DAVID SCHUSTER

On Tuesday evening, February 17, Phi Alpha Theta, the history honors society, treated the campus to dinner, a movie, and a lively talk on the historical relevance of the Disney film *Pirates of the Caribbean* (2003).

The event began with five people eating five pizzas, but the number of participants soon doubled.

The arrival of each additional person was a mixed blessing, as it meant more people to share in the experience but less pizza for everyone else.

The department's own Prof. Ann Plane introduced *Pirates of the Caribbean* with a brief overview of the role Hollywood has played in the popular understanding of history. Plane explained that films such as *Pirates* should not be taken literally and, instead, they should be understood as examples of a mythical past crafted to appeal to the modern-day sensibilities. Nonetheless, she admitted that historians love to trash such movies on historical grounds and she proceeded to call attention to the virtual absence of blacks from the movie – historically they had would played a much larger role – and argued that the governor's daughter (Keira Knightley) would never have fallen for a lowly weaponsmith (Orlando Bloom).

(In all fairness to Disney, it must be noted that Bloom played the esteemed Legalos in *Lord of the Rings*. So, in a sense, the governor's daughter actually fell for an elven prince.)

The film and evening both ended on a joyous notes, with the good guys defeating the bad guys and there still being enough pizza for leftovers.

David Schuster is a graduate student in History.

Oberg

CONTINUED FROM P 3

a Time," the workshop gave examples of the detailed knowledge of 18th century writing practices—everything from calligraphy to inks, pens and papers—that is required to make informed judgments about documents from the period.

She also spoke in Prof. Michael Osborne's undergraduate seminar on scientific networks in the early American Republic.

Last year Barbara was a surprise guest at a star-studded fund-raising dinner for the Los Angeles Public Library, the largest in the country.

Celebrity guests paid $2,500 a plate to sit with Barbara, and historians Joyce Appleby and Garry Wills of UCLA.

"Her dinner here wasn't quite up to that standard," Prof. Osborne reported. "But she was able to meet with some old friends and mentors, including Jeff Russell, Alex DeConde and Larry Badash, as well as Len Marsak."

The Return of the Dreaded Thermometer!

$8,000!

DONATIONS TO this year's Scholarship Drive are closing in on the Van Gelderen's $8,000 matching grant target. Don't miss your chance to soak JoBeth and Don! Send your contribution today to: UCSB History Associates, Office of Community Relations, UCSB 93106-1136.

Ready to Join?

Another great year of UCSB History Associates' events is under way. You'll want to keep posted about events in the History Department as well. To renew your membership or join for the first time, just fill out this form and mail it with your check or money order (payable to UCSB History Associates).

Enclosed are my annual membership dues of $ _____

- ❑ Active $30
- ❑ Corresponding 15

(Available to residents outside of Santa Barbara County only)

✲

In addition to my membership dues, enclosed is:

- ❑ $25 to obtain a UCSB Library card
- ❑ $ gift to the History Associates Graduate Fellowship Fund.
- ❑ $ gift to the History Associates Dick Cook Fund.
- ❑ $____ gift to the History Associates _____ Fund.

(specify other scholarship fund)

Note: Gifts of $1,000 or more qualify for one-year membership in the Chancellor's Council.

✲

Name: _____

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Membership dues are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Gifts to the scholarship fund are considered charitable donations.

Please make your check payable to the UCSB History Associates and return it to:

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University of California, Santa Barbara
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Questions? call (805) 893-4388

Unilateralism Is Rarely Necessary And Very Expensive, Logevall Says

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Even the U. N. Charter recognizes the right of nations to act in their self-defense, he noted.

But previous administrations saw the value of leading by "consent, not coercion," he said.

Even the current President, when a candidate in 2000, stressed the importance of humility in leadership and warned that arrogance would lead to resentment.

But Administration policy had moved in the opposite direction even before 9/11, Prof. Logevall noted.

"What rankled other nations about the Administration's opposition to the Kyoto Treaty [on global warming] was not the opposition but the way they went about it," he said.

"Instead of working to improve it, they simply declared it dead on arrival."

Because of a series of unilateral actions, the international goodwill that followed 9/11 has dissipated, and the rest of the world now perceives American power as "a problem that needs to be contained," he said.

The key question for the next election, according to Prof. Logevall, "is whether the United States is willing to recommit itself to the utility of international arrangements—not just as a participant, but as a leader."

"Multilateralism is a way to get others to share the burden," he pointed out. "When the U. N. sends a military or peacekeeping force, the U. S. pays for only a portion of the costs."

In addition, working in concert with other nations is a way of getting them to buy into the values we are trying to promote."

Prof. Logevall observed that polls show Americans by a two-thirds majority prefer multilateralism even in the case of military actions."

Prof. Logevall's newest book is *Terrorism and 9/11*, a collection of readings published in 2002.

His study of decision-making that led to the Vietnam War, *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam*, won the Warren F. Kuehl Book Prize of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations in 2001.

He is co-director of UCSB's Center for Cold War Studies.

Chair's Column

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

does capture the excitement of sleuthing that we do, and it takes viewers' family legends and turns them into real history. It is a welcome addition to the popular history movement that has mushroomed around us.

Pat Cohen, Chair

Historía

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