

*Mexican Americans caught in 50s 'witch hunt'**Zaragosa Vargas*

In the Red Scare that followed World War II, Mexican American activists working for civil rights were harassed, intimidated, vilified and indicted as subversives.

This “maelstrom of Cold War anti-communism” undermined a labor-based civil rights coalition that might have transformed American society, said Zaragosa Vargas, a Visiting Research Fellow and professor of history at the University of California-Santa Barbara. “The paranoia over illegal Mexicans mirrored the witch hunts that were being conducted at the same time for suspected Communists. In such a repressive climate, fear of harassment and deportation had a significant deterrent

effect on Mexican American activism.”

Mexican Americans whose local families went back generations were lumped with illegals by mainstream white society, and were forced into competition with contract laborers and “wetbacks.” As a consequence, the Mexican American civil rights movement that emerged during the 1950s and early 1960s was deeply altered from its earlier character and makeup, with a different base and leaders who had different visions and methods.

*Continued on page 9...*

**Research proposals invited for 2007-08**

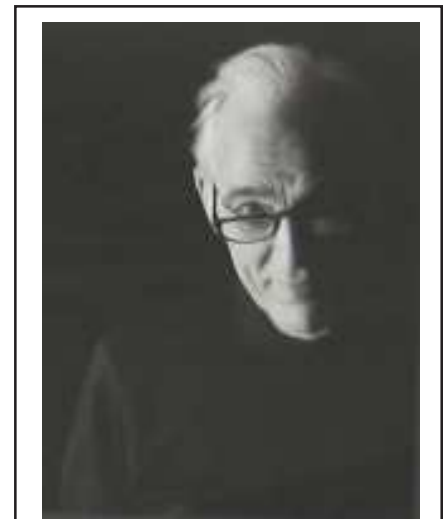
The Center is now accepting applications from scholars interested in 2007-08 fellowships for the resident research program. Each year the Center brings together a new group of faculty Fellows from OSU and other universities, as well as independent scholars, to pursue research and writing in an environment designed to be stimulating as well as protected from the usual daily demands of academic life. Up to ten Fellows will be selected, including seven or eight from Oregon State University, and two or three visiting scholars.

Applications from both Oregon State faculty and visiting scholars may be for any humanities related research, which should be understood to

include not only traditional humanities disciplines but also those projects within the social and natural sciences that are historical or philosophical in approach, and that attempt to cast light on questions of interpretation or criticism traditionally found in the humanities. This also includes interpretations of science and technology.

Applications for visiting fellowships must be postmarked by Monday, December 11, 2006, those for OSU fellowships by Friday, January 20, 2007. Awards to both Visiting Fellows and OSU Fellows for 2007-08 will be for one or two terms, though all Fellows may keep their

*Continued on page 9...*

*Willard Potts, by Jim Folts*

Willard (Bill) Potts, OSU English faculty member emeritus and Joyce scholar, was remembered by friends during a gathering at the Center in October. Bill died on July 20. His memory—and the fine furniture he made—will long remain part of the Center.

# Archetypal 'barbarian queens' shape texts and art

The first-century Celtic queen, Boudica, led a fierce and nearly successful rebellion against the Roman colonizers. Her legacy as an archetypal "barbarian queen" has played a role in the definition of British nationhood, "personifying both resistance and submission to a range of social and cultural institutions."

Boudica is one of three "barbarian queens" under study by Alison Futrell, a Visiting Research Fellow and associate professor of history at the University of Arizona. Her other two subjects are Sophonisba, credited with a key role in marshalling opposition to Rome during the Second Punic War, and Zenobia, under whose auspices a major portion of the eastern empire seceded from Roman control.

Futrell's focus on the 'barbarian queen' as an archetype formed in the historical tradition of early Mediterranean culture is aimed at elucidating the relationship between the hierarchy of power and the construction of gender in the Roman world, as well as the ways in which this iconic tradition shaped later Western images of gender, power and identity in text and the visual arts.

"The first part of the project explores the development of categories of gender, power and ethnicity in the ancient Mediterranean, in order to provide a cognitive framework for the treatment of each 'barbarian queen' in the Roman tradition," said Futrell. "I then focus on the ancient narrative traditions for Sophonisba, Boudica and Zenobia, to study the ways in which each was transformed from political opponent of the Roman order to icon through which the tensions and contradictions of social norms are articulated."

Her first book, *Blood in the Arena: The Spectacle of Roman Power* (University of Texas Press, 1997), examined the amphitheater as political artifact and the arena as an institution



Alison Futrell

designed for the domination and incorporation of the peoples of western Europe. In her shift to an emphasis on power and gender, she said, she is "particularly interested in the overlap between the internal and external Other in the image of the 'barbarian queen,' an image which figures prominently in Roman historiography, in the attempt to justify Roman political ends as demonstrations of Roman morality."

Futrell's current book, also under contract to the University of Texas Press, continues to reflect an interest in the symbols and rituals of power. As she wrote in her research proposal: "Performance and public monuments are the emblems of political dialogue, positioned at the juncture between subject and object, between political agent and the audience for whom he performs. They represent the inherent dualism within the rhetoric of control; although they highlight the agenda of authority, nevertheless they must implicitly recognize the concerns and values of the target audience, in order to be persuasively effective. My work focuses on this dynamic, on the negotiation of power among different groups in the Roman Empire, as represented by visual and textual iconography."

The Romans treated the discussion of political issues as an opportunity for the articulation of Roman social norms. "As the Romans viewed it, the Roman state was built on her ancient ethical code, and depended on adherence to the moral tradition. Roman historiography thus has a strong moral resonance, as history is presented as the struggle between competing value systems, frequently enacted through and on women.

"Making use of the techniques of feminist criticism, recent scholarship has explored the political meaning of representations of women in Roman literature, acknowledging the centrality of gender in the development of contemporary political discourse. Less attention, however, has been given to the associated category of the 'barbarian' and the ways in which gender and national identity combined to express the inherent tensions of the Roman imperial mission. My project seeks to address this lack."



*Sophonisba, daughter of a noble Carthaginian family, sealed a North African alliance in opposition to Rome during the Second Punic War. The threat she posed to Rome was characterized as carnal and cultural by the seminal ancient historian Livy, rather than political. Nullifying this danger was key to Scipio's successful invasion of Carthage and to Rome's successful dominance of the ancient Mediterranean.*

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## Novella in verse mines family tragedies

**K**aren Holmberg's great-grandfather killed himself at age sixty at the family orchard in Connecticut. His granddaughter was lobotomized as a teenager following an affair with a married man. The two family tragedies provide both theme and structure for Holmberg's current book *Black Pansies*, a novella in verse.

"Family history doesn't exactly make plain that Adolph died as the result of a self-inflicted rifle shot to the heart – it's always been presented as a bizarre accident," said Holmberg, a Research Fellow and assistant professor of English at OSU. "While it was pretty clear that June was lobotomized, the fact that it occurred in her teens after an affair with a married man was kept quiet."

The project began with a single poem, a meditation inspired by a photograph of Adolph holding June, then a toddler, in front of young apple trees. When Holmberg completed the poem, it struck her that it might actually be the preface to a longer project. The research that followed included work on the history of emigration from Sweden, on family genealogy, the history of mental illness and psychosurgery in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and on pomology and orchard keeping.

Next came a trip to Sweden to study horticulture and family history, with visits to the manor house where Adolph was born and where his family worked as laborers, and a visit to Linnaeus's home and botanical garden. Insights into the landscape and social and historical conditions that formed her great-grandfather, said Holmberg, persuaded her that a fictionalized account of her family's experience could have meaning for many readers and should be written as a novella in verse.



*Karen Holmberg*

The book explores "themes that have a broad relevance to American culture: the death and recreation of identity that emigration entails, the immigrant's struggle to lay claim to independence and power, the creative ways in which the mind seeks to mend psychological trauma, the eroticization of landscape, and the dense pockets of secrecy embedded within family life, while rendering as well something of the texture of Depression era agricultural life in New England."

In addition to its thematic significance, said Holmberg, the project is formally significant. "While most long poems are united by voice or persona, or by a unified narrative thread, I am investigating in this work the possibility of building a longer coherent plot not from narrative 'units' but through episodic lyric poems that present distinct sensibilities and modes of attention. Adolph and June both possess a fetishistic attachment to the world, and the novella in many ways is an exploration of the way images acquire emblematic resonance and power."

The story line of *Black Pansies* interweaves the lives of the two main

characters, Adolph and June. The title poem "Black Pansies," shows Adolph in rare recollection of the haunting indignities of his early life on the manor farm, including the manor owner whipping him in front of his father, and watching his brother die of gangrene after his hand was crushed between stones of the parish church that the laborers were required to disassemble, load on sledges, and rebuild on higher ground.

"The images of blood and decay have been reconstituted with positive power as he has become obsessed with hybridizing pansies, particularly deep purple varieties. The poems in the Adolph line depict him in his greenhouse, and in interaction with June, his eldest and favorite grandchild, teaching her the rudiments of grafting and pruning. They track his increasing depression and hypochondria, as he believes that he, like his brother, has been infected with rot. The final poem in his line portrays his suicide."

Poems in the June sequence follow the progress of the love affair from its awakening, to her lover's abandonment of her after his wife gives birth to their second child. "When her lover ends the affair, her anguish and her instinct for life lead to a break with reality in which she redefines herself as a Daphne figure. She is found hidden in the root cellar, having tried to graft shoots of budding peach trees into wounds in her arms. The final poems in her line depict her psychiatric doctors creating 'belief in the cure' by figuring the lobotomy as a way to 'cut out the bad place' and return her to a more normal state."

The poems follow the calendar year, and include an intermission, "Twelve Seasons: A Linnaean

*Continued on page 8...*

# Translating *The Book of Mourners*

*Translation and creation are twin processes. On one hand, as the works of Baudelaire and Pound have proven, translation is often indistinguishable from creation; on the other, there is constant interaction between the two, a continuous, mutual enrichment.*

Octavio Paz

The novel, *Los Dolientes*, is related in the first person plural even though any one of six brothers may be speaking at the time, and one of these is actually the author/narrator, though he “is never identified in order not to privilege one brother’s account over another.” This is just one of numerous complexities in Kayla Garcia’s latest translation project.

The work is an autobiographical novel written by Jacobo Sefami, a Mexican author whose ancestors were Sephardic Jews and whose grandparents emigrated from Turkey and Syria to establish themselves in Mexico City. Though written in Spanish, the book includes Hebrew and Arabic words and phrases.

“My translation will be primarily into English, while maintaining most of the Hebrew and Arabic words as well as some carefully chosen Spanish words to preserve the Mexican flavor of the story,” said Garcia, a Research Fellow and professor of foreign languages and literatures at OSU. During a previous fellowship, Garcia wrote *Broken Bars: New Perspectives from Mexican Women Writers* (U of New Mexico Press: 1994). She also has translated two novels by Brianda Domecq, one of the writers featured in *Broken Bars*, and most recently a collection of short stories by Domecq, *When I Was a Horse*.

After hearing Sefami read from the novel at a conference in



Kayla Garcia

Cordoba, Garcia translated some sample pages, presented them to the author, and became the official English language translator for the book. Her method is to work “paragraph by paragraph, rather than sentence by

sentence. I often rearrange words or entire sentences, and move information from one sentence to another in order to maintain fluency and rhythm. When a metaphor sounds like a cliché or simply falls flat in English, I create a new one. When wordplay is lost in the target language, I create new wordplay within the same paragraph.”

*Los Dolientes* (The Book of Mourners) begins with the death of the narrators’ father, and as the siblings grapple with their loss and the ensuing cultural and religious demands made upon them, the point of view shifts from one brother to another in a literary technique reminiscent of the omniscient narrator, but with the unusual predominance of the pronoun *we*.

“Each brother faces the possible disintegration of his family and traditions, and shoulders his new responsibilities in a different manner, with reluctance or religious fervor,

*Continued on page 5...*

## From *Los Dolientes*

*Shema Israel Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad! Shema Isreal Adonai Eloheinu Adonia Echad!* It was Mamá, repeating the words in hopes of a miracle. She was shouting and her face was distorted in a grimace of pain. Mamá knew it was the end; this time nothing more could be done. There was Papá, gasping for breath as he often did, but this time his whole body was jerking and bouncing on the bed. Ceci, Musa, Beni and Tia Rosa had been chatting in the next room, and they all came running when they heard the shouts. The nurses and the doctor on duty blocked their path and forbade them to enter. *They already called Doctor Charabati. He’s on his*

*way. They hustled in and out of the room, desperate, with anxious faces, bringing some machines and taking others away. Someone shouted *Damn it, Ortiz, move faster!* Afterwards, in a soft tone, they asked to speak to Jaime. *Please come with us. No, not everybody. We have to speak to him alone.* But Mamá already was in the room. We all looked at Papá, with his eyes wide open in a fixed stare, a bandage on his head, his arms covered with bruises. The machines no longer made any noise, and the red numbers had stopped. Mamá started hitting herself in the face. *He’s left us!**

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# Chaucer invented ‘womanhood’ to fill language gap



Tara Williams

For nearly two centuries in medieval Britain, the word *manhood* existed but *womanhood* did not. Women could be categorized linguistically and socially by their marital or sexual status as maidens, wives, and widows, but there was no collective term in Middle English to denote their experience outside of or beyond these social roles and sexual identities.

In the aftermath of the plague in the late fourteenth century, women’s roles expanded temporarily as they gained greater access to financial opportunities and began to marry later or pursue spiritual authority through increasingly popular forms of lay piety.

“As a result, a gap developed between social reality and extant

vocabulary,” said Tara Williams, a Research Fellow and assistant professor of English at OSU. Her Center project, “Inventing Womanhood: Gender and Language in Late Medieval Literature,” explores how this lexical and conceptual gap was addressed, first by Geoffrey Chaucer’s invention of a constellation of related terms such as *femininity* and *womanhood*, and then by the ways in which his contemporaries and followers, male and female, adapted the terms to fit their own social conceptions and aesthetic aims.

Williams’s approach combines feminist theory with recent new directions in language study. “While philology is a long-standing component of literary studies, new scholarship has focused on the social and political aspects of language development and patterns of usage. Consequently, critics are challenging the traditional view that Chaucer is ‘the father of the English language,’ single-handedly responsible for creating the vocabulary and style that transformed Middle English from being merely serviceable into a suitable language for literary texts.”

Williams does not fully accept the argument that, rather than reflecting his poetic genius, Chaucer’s innovations were due simply to his participation in a necessary practice for writers working with the limited resources of Middle English. The word *womanhood* offers a striking case study, as she explained in her research proposal.

“First, although most ‘new’ Middle English words were borrowed from French or Latin sources, ‘womanhood’ is a true neologism. There is no exact contemporary French or Latin equivalent. Second, Chaucer uses it throughout his canon, not in response to his sources, but as an important interpolation that reshapes them.

“Third, other late medieval writers react to his usage and remake ‘womanhood,’ both the word and the concept it denotes. Together, these usage characteristics suggest that Chaucer created ‘womanhood’ to address particular linguistic needs, both aesthetic and historical, and that later writers found the term to be significantly useful and productively variable.”

The original meanings of *womanhood* were highly disparate. In the decades after its first appearance, it was applied by medieval writers to the Blessed Virgin Mary and other feminine paragons of beauty and virtue. It also was applied to beastly and diseased women, Amazon warriors, and even men.

In studying the evolution of *womanhood*, Williams explores as well the underlying notion of *womanliness*, which she said has received little attention in feminist analyses of female characters and writers. “Because ‘womanhood’ and its related terms become registers of historical variation, studying those terms involves studying representations of women at the most foundational level – language itself.”

## ... *Los Dolientes* continued from page 4

defiance or denial. . . This work is important because of its treatment of religious, philosophical and spiritual themes as well as for its description of a multicultural family whose members are coming to grips with different

aspects of their traditions and individual identities.”

Born in Mexico City in 1957, Sefami is now professor of Latin American literature at the University of California, Irvine. He is the author

of numerous scholarly articles and books as well as *Los Dolientes*, his first novel. It was published in 2004 by the Mexican publishing house, Plaza y Janes, and is to be his first work to appear in English.

## Art celebrates Calyx anniversary



*Bridge*, Angelita Surmon  
Acrylic on canvas.

Work by women artists associated with the feminist publishing house and literary journal, Calyx, is on display at the Center through

November. The exhibit, part of Calyx's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, includes paintings, etchings, photographs, lithographs and prints by 13 local and regional artists.

The work of many of the artists has been featured on the cover of the journal and on the covers of books published by Calyx. Local artists are Greta Ashworth, Katherine Brooksfence, Kristina Kennedy Daniels, Nancy Hagood, Susan Johnson, and Chi Meredith. Artists from the Seattle area include Gail Tremblay, Shelly Corbett, Meredith Jenkins, and Leah Kosh. Also included in the show are works by Ashland artist Betty LaDuke, Portland based artists Angelita Surmon and Willa Schneberg, as well as Pennsylvania based artist Louise LaFond.

Kristina Daniels' art work has been on the covers of *Calyx Journal*, and the novels *Into the Forest* by

Jean Hegland, *Second Sight* by Rickey Gard Diamond, *Ginseng and Other Tales from Manila* by Marianne Villanueva, *Four Figures in Time* by Patricia Grossman, and *Idleness is the Root of All Love* by Ilze Mueller.

Shelly Corbett's art, including "Lost Equilibrium," has been on the covers of *Details of Flesh* by Cortney Davis, and *A Fierce Brightness*. Louise LaFond's art "Saddam the Snake" was on the cover of the first edition of *Black Candle* by Chitra Divakaruni. Leah Kosh's art has been on the cover of *Calyx* and on the cover of *Open Heart* by Judith Sornberger. Gail Tremblay's art is on the cover of *Indian Singing*, a book of her poetry and art. Works by Meredith Jenkins, Betty LaDuke, and Chi Meredith have been featured on the covers of *Calyx*.

The exhibit is open weekdays, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For information, call 541-737-2450.

## Photographers follow the light

Light and its changeable character is the theme of the Center's winter exhibit of images by nine photographers from Corvallis and Eugene. "The Cycle of Light," curated by members of the PhotoArts Guild Exhibit Group, includes more than 30 photographs that explore the variations of light—subtle and dramatic—that occur throughout the 24-hour day.

"The warm colors of early dawn, the saturated colors and stormy skies of midday, the quiet light of dusk and the somber darkness of night," says the exhibit statement, all reflect the movement of nature's clock through the quality of light cast on the land. Artists' different ways of seeing, plus the range of new photographic tools, produce great variety in the interpretation and depiction of the

emotional and graphic qualities of light.

Most of the images are of subjects in the Pacific Northwest, including the Coast, Cascades and Eastern Oregon, though a few were made in such distant locales as Nepal and the Peruvian Andes. The majority of work is by Exhibit Group members Mike Bergen, Owen Bentley, and Joe Crockett, of Corvallis, and Charles Search, of Eugene. Also included are works by Jodi Altendorf, Allan Doerksen and Dave McIntire, of Corvallis, and Walt O'Brien and Herman Kreiger, of Eugene.

The exhibit will be on display December through March, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays in the Center's first-floor public meeting rooms.

*Apples in a Distillery, Nepal*, Joe Crockett





Contratulations to Office  
Coordinator Sara Ash-  
Majeski and Joseph  
Majeski on the birth of their  
daughter, Lily Rose!

## Fall & Winter Calendar

### FALL TERM

#### Art Exhibit—October through November

*Calyx Literary Journal*  
Anniversary Show

Artists whose work has been  
featured in the journal

### OCTOBER

**2** *'If You Can't Protect What  
You Own, You Don't Own  
Anything': Piracy, Privacy  
and Public Relations in 21st  
Century Hollywood.* Jon  
Lewis, Former Research  
Fellow, Professor of English,  
OSU. 4 p.m. Autzen House.

**16** *A Quest for Justice: The  
Making of the Mexican  
American Civil Rights  
Movement.* Zaragosa Vargas,  
Research Fellow, Professor of  
History, UC-Santa Barbara. 4  
p.m. Autzen House.

**23** *Barbarian Queens:  
Paradoxes of Gender, Power  
and Identity.* Alison Futrell,  
Research Fellow, Associate  
Professor of History,  
University of Arizona. 4 p.m.  
Autzen House.

**30** *Civil Society in Putin's  
Russia: Citizen Activism in  
a Managed Democracy.*  
Sarah Henderson, 2005-06  
Research Fellow, Assistant  
Professor of Political  
Science, OSU. 4 p.m. Autzen  
House.

### NOVEMBER

**6** *Welfare Rights to Welfare  
Reform: the Politics of  
AFDC, 1964-1984.* Marisa  
Chappell, Research Fellow,  
Assistant Professor of  
History, OSU. 4 p.m. Autzen  
House.

**13** *Mourning and  
Multiculturalism in a  
Jewish-Mexican Novel.*  
Kayla Garcia, Research  
Fellow, Professor of Foreign  
Languages & Literatures,  
OSU. 4 p.m. Autzen House.

### WINTER TERM

#### Art Exhibit—December through March

*The Cycle of Light*  
Photographs by Oregon artists

### JANUARY

**29** *Black Pansies: A Novella  
in Verse.* Karen Holmberg,  
Research Fellow, Assistant  
Professor of English, OSU.  
4 p.m. Autzen House.

### FEBRUARY

**2** *Boudica's Breastplate.*  
Alison Futrell, Research  
Fellow, Associate Professor  
of History, University of  
Arizona. 4 p.m. Autzen  
House.

**26** *Color-Conscious  
Liberalism: An Argument  
for Racial Justice.* Andrew  
Valls, Research Fellow,  
Assistant Professor of  
Political Science, OSU. 4  
p.m. Autzen House.

### MARCH

**12** *Junipero Serra:  
California's Founding  
Father.* Steven Hackel,  
Research Fellow, Associate  
Professor of History, OSU.  
4 p.m. Autzen House.

## ‘Excellence Award’ goes to Director

The OSU College of Liberal Arts honored Center Director David Robinson at the opening meeting of the college in September by presenting him with the CLA Advisory Council Excellence Award. The award recognizes ongoing excellence in research and scholarship, teaching, and service to the academic community. A leading Emerson scholar, Robinson is Oregon Professor of English and Distinguished Professor of American Literature, and has directed the Center since 2001. Before being named Director, he was a three-time Center Research Fellow.



David Robinson

## ...‘Pansies’ *cont. from page 3*

Almanac,” that portrays Linnaeus’s “erotic and ecstatic response to nature, his idealization of ‘Flora’ as a young girl who is his seductress and instructress, as well as his notorious depression and fatalism. Thus the poem picks up on themes of the eroticization of nature and the narcissistic identification with it that are present in June’s line, while Linnaeus acts as a kind of double for Adolph, the amateur but obsessed horticulturalist.”

Holmberg’s work has appeared in numerous journals and anthologies, and her book *The Perseids: Poems* (University of North Texas Press: 2001) was awarded the Vassar Millar Prize in Poetry.

## Antique map show to live again in film

In October, three days before it was due to come down, “500 Years of Cartography” won new life in the form of a film. The exhibit of original maps up to five centuries old is to be featured in a short documentary movie made by Eric Gleske, of OSU’s Media Services office.

A producer and director for the University of New Hampshire for ten years, Gleske was hired by Oregon State to make films for and about the university, partly in cooperation with a new public television venture called the Oregon Channel. The map show caught his attention as a striking example of the meeting of disciplines.

“It’s history and art and science,” he said as he set up lights in the Center’s main meeting and exhibit room. “It’s the kind of story with interest for people around the state.”

The maps include a 16<sup>th</sup> century French view of California as an island, some of the earliest road maps ever produced (of British country roads), the earliest known map using the name “Oregon,” medieval depictions of cities that include individual buildings still recognizable today, and many others. In addition to close-ups of the dozens of ancient maps, charts and other documents, the film will feature interviews with Duncan Thomas, the collector and curator of the show and a forest ecology research associate with the Smithsonian Institution, Jon Kimerling, OSU



Eric Gleske films Duncan Thomas for a documentary about the Center’s antique map show.

professor of geography, and Adele Johnson Woertz, who recently defended her OSU doctoral thesis, a cartographic, historic and artistic analysis of three famous maps created in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century by Albrecht Dürer in Nürnberg, Germany.

The exhibit is to be photographed in detail by OSU Photographic Services so that close-up portions of the maps can be shown in the film. The film will be posted on the Center’s website when it is completed.

## ..Mexican American civil rights *continued from page 1*

“Largely overlooked by historians, the period of Mexican American history from 1946-1963 marks the development of civil rights among this racial minority group that soon generated its own momentum within the larger struggle being waged by blacks,” said Vargas. His current book project, *A Quest for Justice: The Making of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*, will join earlier works on related subjects, including: *Labor Rights Are Civil Rights: Mexican American Workers in Twentieth Century America*, (Princeton UP, 2005); *Major Problems in Mexican American History* (Houghton Mifflin Co. 1998); and *Proletarians of the North: A History of Mexican Industrial Workers in Detroit and the Midwest, 1917-1933* (UC Press, 1993).

Using an interdisciplinary approach that draws from American labor, social, cultural and ethnic history, the new book “negotiates a half century of history, a broad swath of geography, and a large cast of characters to provide the first in-depth history of the variety of ideological and strategic stances that existed within the postwar Mexican American community and the ways these differences affected the course of local movements for social justice.”

The study begins with a discussion of the suppression of the early Mexican American civil rights movement by Cold War anti-communism, which Vargas describes as key to the full understanding of the Mexican struggle. “Progressives who raised the banner of social justice were trapped and often swept up by the Cold War dilemma – you had to identify with either the Communist or anti-Communist left by declaring support for or opposition to the Soviet Union.”

The Red Scare crackdown on dissenters led to deportation frenzy. “Surveillance of even conservative Mexican Americans became a practice,

while efforts to disrupt the organizing of Mexican Americans continued. U.S. Immigration, Border and Customs agencies conducted quasi-military campaigns of search and seizure, while government associations functioning under the draconian and xenophobic ‘Operation Wetback’ and ‘Operation Terror’ committed appalling violations of human and civil rights.”

In L.A., the battle for control of the Mexican American civil rights effort was between liberal and socialist leaders, and Communists and their allies. The progressive anti-Communists won, essentially destroying the leftist cause. Vargas argues that, “the dissolution of the Mexican American left created a situation in which struggles for racial justice were able to proceed provided that movement demands were couched within the confines of liberal discourse.”

During the 1950s, the “decade of the wetback,” the number of illegals coming from Mexico increased by 6,000 percent. “To many activists, cheap labor displaced native workers, increased labor law violations and discrimination, and encouraged racist public discourse about illegal aliens and the rise in crime, disease, and other social ills. Mexican Americans greatly feared that the influx of workers from Mexico would endanger their marginal foothold in America.”

Some Mexican American organizations worked to stop the Bracero Program and to pass stricter regulations on future immigration from Mexico in order to protect legal residents from competition that enabled employers to cut back on workers’ pay, benefits, and working conditions.

In the Southwest in the 1940s, the struggle for rights occurred mostly through the courts, but this changed with the involvement of grassroots organizations made up of working

class people with experience in previous civil rights efforts. They began with voter registration, then pressed for equality in housing, education and the workplace.

The 1960s brought an emphasis on pluralism in dealing with racial and ethnic diversity, with cooperation between Mexican Americans and certain labor unions and African American groups.

“The modern Mexican American civil rights movement developed without a ‘name’ leader, varied widely in scope, aims and organization, and was felt equally and in the same ways in all corners of American society. Nevertheless, I conclude that it produced a militancy that valorized racial politics and identity in a uniquely American context and created a host of complex consequences, one of which was the revitalization of working class activism in the cause of advancing justice and equality for Mexican Americans, the nation’s second largest racial minority group.”

## ...Proposals *cont. from page 1*

offices for the full academic year. Visiting Fellows will receive a stipend, and OSU Fellows will be released from teaching. All Fellows receive an office in Autzen House equipped with a computer and are provided with general support services. For their part, fellows are asked to contribute to intellectual life at OSU by giving presentations on their research projects in the form of lectures and working papers.

For application forms and more information, check the Center’s website: <http://osu.orst.edu/dept/humanities/>. You may also write to: Fellowship Program, Center for the Humanities, Oregon State University, 811 S.W. Jefferson Avenue, Corvallis, OR, 97333-4506, or call 541-737-2450.

## Peter J. Copek Fund



During Peter J. Copek's sixteen years as the founding director of the Center, he regularly made Center money available to support cultural events on campus. In addition to conferences, music festivals, and film series, the Center supported many special and unusual lectures and programs, including visits to OSU by Gore Vidal, the San Francisco Mime Troupe, and venerable South African township jazz singer and film star Dolly Rathebe. The level of support for such events has always depended on the state of the Center's finances from year to year. After Peter died suddenly in June, 2001, there was much discussion of how best to keep his name alive so that his impact on OSU intellectual life would not be forgotten. What resulted is the Peter J. Copek Fund, intended to provide more regular and stable support for the same kinds of cultural events that he supported through the Center. In spring of 2003, the campaign to raise money for this fund began with a letter to former Research Fellows. The campaign has turned to a general appeal to Center friends and supporters, plus all those who not only value Peter's work on behalf of the university but would like to see strong, ongoing support for campus cultural events.

### PLEASE JOIN US IN SUPPORTING THE PETER J. COPEK FUND

Send this form along with contribution to the Peter J. Copek Fund, Center for the Humanities, 811 S.W. Jefferson Ave., Corvallis, OR, 97333-4506

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## ‘You’ve got to have a corpse’

Soon after I started writing my first mystery, a friend turned up with a grocery sack full paperbacks,” recalled Ashna Graves, the Center’s Associate Director. “She said, ‘If you’re going to write mysteries, you have to read them.’ I read the first and last paragraph in each one, then finished writing my mystery, *Plastic Baby*. It was terrible – there wasn’t even a murder in it!”

In March, the first of three Graves mysteries will be published by Poisoned Pen Press in Arizona, with the others to follow. All feature the same main character, or P.I. (Principal Investigator), newspaper columnist Jeneva Leopold. Leopold works for the Willamette Current, a daily paper published in Willamette, Oregon, a town “eerily like Corvallis, right down to The Beanery,” said Graves.

Though the second two mysteries in the series are set in Willamette, the first, *Death Pans Out*, takes place at an idle gold mine in Eastern Oregon near the Idaho border, where narrator Leopold has gone to spend a summer regaining her health following breast cancer. The setting and many of the characters are based



*The Center’s Associate Director Ashna Graves writes in camp in Oregon’s goldmine country.*

on the land and people that Graves encountered some years ago while staying at a real-life gold mine in the Burnt River area.

The two mysteries set in Willamette, *No Angel* and *Gripper*, draw on actual events and crimes that occurred in Corvallis in the 1980s and 1990s, including the riverfront park controversy, the investigation of the OSU basketball team by the NCAA, and the death of a street person.

“It’s a bit of a nuisance,” said Graves, “but it turns out you really do have to have a murder in a mystery-- at least one.”

As a former reporter, editor and columnist, Graves knows the inner world of newspapers, and describes the general columnist as a perfect P.I. because “they’re not just free to snoop into anything and everything but *invited* to snoop. Readers want to tell you things, often amazing things. You can ask the most personal questions without seeming rude or prying, and you get drawn into just about everything, from backroom deals to family feuds.”

The manuscript of her first mystery, *Plastic Baby*, is stashed in her basement, but should the other mysteries succeed, said Graves. “I may dig it out and add a corpse to the story. Or two corpses, or three, or . . .”

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## The Center for the Humanities



The Center was established in 1984 as an outgrowth of the Humanities Development Program, which had been creating innovative interdisciplinary courses since 1977. The Center continues to offer a certificate program in Twentieth Century Studies, but its focus has broadened to a concern for improving the quality of humanities research as well as teaching at OSU. This is accomplished through the awarding of resident research fellowships to both OSU and visiting scholars, as well as by sponsoring conferences, seminars, lecture series, art exhibits and other events. The Center occupies Autzen House, 811 S.W. Jefferson Avenue.

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