President’s Column

Shelley Fisher Fishkin
U of Texas, Austin

They say that being President of the Mark Twain Circle is a thankless job. It is not! To prove it, I hereby say "thank you" to Michael Kiskis, my predecessor, whose generosity, enterprise, and unfailing good sense allowed him to lead the Mark Twain Circle with grace and skill. Thank you, Michael, for all you’ve done to make the Mark Twain Circle such a thriving organization!

Many thanks, as well, to the scholars who presented their Twain research at the San Francisco MLA: David Bradley (La Jolla, CA), Gregg Camfield (U of the Pacific); Rosmarie L. Coste of the (U of Texas, San Antonio); Joseph L. Coulombe (U of Tennessee, Martin); Philip Fanning (San Francisco); Susan Harris (Penn State); Hamlin Hill (Texas A&M); Fred Kaplan (CUNY and Queens College); Debbie Lopez (U of Texas, San Antonio); Joe Towson (Spartanburg, SC), Siva Vaidhyanathan (Wesleyan U); Henry Wonham (U of Oregon); Jim Zwick (Syracuse U). We are grateful for your lively ideas and your willingness to share them. It was a shame that Bob Hirst (the Mark Twain Project) was unable to attend due to illness; we hope he is fine for the rest of 1999. And we extend our sincere condolences to Susan Weil (Whittier College), who could not present her paper due to a death in the family.

The high point of the MLA—for those of us lucky enough to survive the heavy fog and the killer-flu that delayed and detained so many who would have liked to be there—was the evening Hal Holbrook spent in our Mark Twain suite at the Marriott. With charm, grace, candor and wit, Holbrook let us peek behind-the-scenes and behind his act for well over an hour. He let us in on the secrets of his timing (he shoots for a full laugh—not a chuckle—every 15 seconds in the first act), and described some of his efforts to embody Twain physically (he always has the chair and platform used in his performance constructed slightly oversized so that he’ll appear smaller, closer to Twain’s actual height).

He acknowledged that his art doesn’t strive to replicate Twain’s performances to the letter; Twain’s slow drawl, for example, would try the patience of a modern audience, so Holbrook speeds up his delivery. Doing justice to Twain’s ideas and voice and impact on an audience often requires editing rather than simply reciting any given text. His recent "Mark Twain Tonight!" show in Eugene, Oregon was so relevant to current political scandals, that a Twain Circle member who had caught the show wondered how he had put it together. The heady pleasure in the room was palpable as Holbrook ran through some of the new routine in character, letting the group in on the ways in which he cuts and pastes Twain’s words to produce a routine as topical as the.

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On December 28, 1998, at the annual convention of the Modern Language Association, The Mark Twain Circle of America honored Hal Holbrook with a special lifetime achievement award in recognition of his unique accomplishments both as a performer and as a scholar. The following remarks were made by Professor Shelley Fisher Fishkin, President of the Mark Twain Circle, when she presented the award:

Forty years ago, in 1959, Hal Holbrook's off-Broadway three-act one-man Mark Twain show was an unexpected smash hit. The six years of preparation that preceded it included research into Twain's lectures and little-known Twain texts, performing experimental sets in a small Greenwich Village night club, and appearing as Twain on the Ed Sullivan Show. The spectacularly innovative off-Broadway show ran twenty-two weeks in New York and then toured the country, receiving rave reviews from coast to coast. A television special, two recorded albums, State Department-sponsored tours abroad, and countless performances throughout the U.S. soon followed. Holbrook's daunting command of hours upon hours of Twain material has allowed him to draw on new combinations of texts in each performance, making Twain topical as well as timeless in often uncanny ways. His painstaking research, his enormous respect for Twain's words, and his carefully-crafted delivery have earned him the gratitude of Twain scholars everywhere. His Mark Twain is fresh and accurate and amusing and cautious and imitable. Hal Holbrook's meticulous, thoughtful, imaginative, deeply engaged and engaging interpretations of Twain's words over a forty-year period before hundreds of thousands of people have given Twain the one thing he could not give himself: a vitality beyond the grave that no author has the right to expect. It is with great pleasure that I present Hal Holbrook with this special Lifetime Achievement Award from the Mark Twain Circle of America in recognition of all he has done to bring Mark Twain's voice to life.

Holbrook's special gifts; each took away an even sharper sense of just how special he is. As Jim Zwick observed, the occasion was "a rare opportunity to meet and discuss Mark Twain with the person most responsible for forging the public's image of the author during the past forty years. The conference included nearly one thousand other panels and presentations, but that meeting will undoubtedly prove to be the most memorable for those who were able to attend.

[The photos of Hal Holbrook in the Mark Twain Suite were provided by Prof. Ryuichi Asayama, Soka University, Tokyo.]

There will be three stimulating Twain sessions at the American Literature Association conference in Baltimore May 27-30, 1999. A session on "Mark Twain and Racism" will feature a paper by Louis J. Budd (Duke U) entitled "Mark Twain and the Sense of Race," which will be followed by comments from Ralph Wiley (Washington, D.C.), David Lionel Smith (Williams C), and Jocelyn Chadwick-Joshua (the Dallas Institute). A session focused on "Mark Twain's Daughters" will

As bad as he thought." He was surprised that it contained as much material relevant to the Civil Rights Movement as it did. Everyone in the room was delighted to hear that the 1967 performance of "Mark Twain Tonight!" will be available on video soon.

Holbrook's modesty prevents him from calling himself a Twain scholar. But whether he was quoting at length from obscure speeches and essays, or holding forth on the relationship between Huckleberry Finn and the breakdown of Reconstruction, or meditating on the role of timing in Twain's humor, the depth and breadth of his knowledge of Twain was clear to all the Twain scholars in the room. They came from New York and Nevada, from Tokyo and Texas, from North Carolina, California, Pennsylvania, Oregon, and Connecticut. Each brought to the evening an appreciation for

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feature papers by Linda A. Morris (U of California, Davis), Laura Skandera-Trombley (Coe C), Barbara Taylor (Cornell U), and Victor A. Doyno (SUNY Buffalo). And a session on "Mark Twain and Others" will feature papers by Brandon Arthur (George Mason U), Larry Marshburne (North Carolina State U), James Leonard (The Citadel), and Robert C. Comeau (Union County C).

The organizers of the ALA conference this year are two widely-respected scholars who are well-known to the Mark Twain Circle: Michael Kiskis (Elmira C) and Laura Skandera-Trombley (Coe C), past president and current vice-president, respectively, of the MTCA. The ALA is in good hands; it promises to be an exciting and enjoyable conference.

The following is a message responding to the presentation of a Mark Twain Circle Lifetime Achievement Award to Prof. Dolmetsch at the 1998 American Literature Association Conference in San Diego.

Since I can no longer attend ALA and MLA meetings, I have to take this rather impersonal means to thank the Mark Twain Circle for honoring me with a Lifetime Achievement Award. I was especially gratified to be included, according to the report in the Mark Twain Circular, in the same ceremonial toast in San Diego with John Gerber, not only because—like all Twainians—I have been deeply indebted to his work for many years—but also because we're both "sons" (albeit some 15 years apart) of the same "Doktorvater" at the University of Chicago, the late beloved Walter Blair, the first scholar to be so honored by the Circle. Although I wish the Mark Twain Circle well in all respects, I can only hope that—since (as Honorary Members) we won't have to pay dues for the rest of our lives—the Circle will have to miss that income in John's case as in mine for many years to come!

Herzlichen Dank!
Carl Dolmetsch

I chose for my topic the rather fanciful title "Mark Twain's 'Gesichten aus der Wienerwald' (Mark Twain's "Tales from the Vienna Woods")—a word-play on the title of the famous waltz by Johann Strauss, Jr., with whom Twain had struck up a friendship while in Vienna. My subject actually was a discussion of the several pieces Twain wrote—that is, worked on, actually completed, or started and left unfinished in Kaltenleutgeben. I concentrated mainly on the polemical essay "Concerning the Jews" (which he wrote there in July 1898), the sketch "The Austrian Edison Keeping School Again" (June), "What Is Man?" (July-August), "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg" (September-October), "Christian Science" (August-September), and some of the work on the Mysterious Stranger fragments (through the summer). As was his wont, Twain did most of his writing during summers (in the States at Quarry Farm in Elmira, NY), and the summer of 1898 in Kaltenleutgeben was no exception. It was made more productive by inclement weather—cold and rainy in June and July—which prevented him from doing the walking and cycling he intended.

My lecture was in German. In May 1995, at the invitation of the vice-mayor Dr. Wurst of Kaltenleutgeben (who also serves as its "Kultur Referent"—cultural affairs officer) I gave a public reading there of the Kaltenleutgeben chapter of "Unser beruhmter Gast" (the German translation of my "Our Famous Guest": Mark Twain in Vienna), so I thought this time it would be better to describe the writings (almost none of which have been translated into German) rather than recapitulate the events of the Clemens's residence there. I meticulously wrote out my lecture, but, alas, the ocular difficulties that have overtaken me in the past three years (macular degeneration) made it impossible for me to read, even with magnification. So I threw away my text and ad libbed the whole thing in my rather Twainish "amerikanisches deutsch" which the audience of 50 or so didn't seem to mind at all. As Mark Twain remarked, the Austrians are nothing if not super-polite and hospitable!

Of course, since this is also the "Sissy Jahre" (Sissy Year), in which Austrians and Hungarians are observing the centennial of the assassination in Geneva on Sept.

Mark Twain in Austria

Carl Dolmetsch
College of William & Mary

On May 16th this year the market town (Marktgemeinde) of Kaltenleutgeben, pop. 2,500, on the edge of the Vienna Woods (Wienerwald) some 12 miles (20 km). SSW of the city limits of Vienna, celebrated the centenary of the "Sommerfrisch" sojourn the Samuel L. Clemens family spent there (May 20–October 14, 1898) with a public lecture and a small informal reception in the house where the family lived and where Mark Twain did most of the writing he accomplished during his nearly two years in Austria (1897-99).

I was the invited lecturer for this commemorative occasion and
10, 1898 of their beloved Kaiserin Elisabeth ("Sissy"), the consort of Franz Joseph I, I dwell at some length on "The Memorable Assassination," the rather maudlin article Mark Twain worked up from his notebook after witnessing her funeral cortège and burial in the Kaiser Gruft (imperial crypt) in Vienna's Capuchin Church. He was unable to sell the piece at the time and, posthumously published, it has never been translated and is, therefore, little-known in Central Europe.

My lecture took place in the "Professor Villa," a community center that was once the home of Dr. Wilhelm Wienertz (1834-1917), whose "Wasserheikur" (hydrotherapy cure) made Kaltenleutenberg a magnet for European aristocracy as well as for Olivia Clemens and her daughters. The fact that Dr. Wienertz's palatial residence is now a center for civic events is a measure of how much Kaltenleutenberg has changed in this century. No longer a health resort (at least since 1917), it is now a rather creased bed dormitory for commuters who work in Vienna and for those employed in the ugly stone quarry and cement works on the edge of the village itself. In 1898 Clemens complained about the slow train service from Vienna's south station (Sudbahnhof), but today one can get there only by bus to and from the commuter train at Liesing at the city's edge.

Still, the fresh country air and mountain scenery has the same charms the Clemenses must have found attractive a century ago and the furnished house they rented there, Villa Paulhof, then less than two years old, is now owned by Captan.Herbert Wurzel and his family, who bought it in rather dilapidated condition in 1985 and have since restored it to something like the condition it was in when the Clemenses lived there. Capt. Wurzel is a veteran pilot and deputy director of operations for Austrian Airlines, and he frequently flies the AAL planes on direct runs from Vienna to New York, Washington, Atlanta, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Frau Wurzel is an antiques collector who has furnished the Villa Paulhof with many of the same kind of furnishings and decor that must have been there when the Clemenses family rented the villa. In 1985 a local antiquarian and Mark Twain enthusiast, Dr. Peter Nics, succeeded in getting the town and the provincial government of Lower Austria to declare the house an historic monument and attach a brass plaque near its gate memorializing Mark Twain's residence there (see MTJ, 24:1, pp. 43-44).

The commemorative celebration ended with an informal reception hosted by Capt. and Frau Wurzel for the official party, myself, and a few of my Austrian and American "ex-pat" friends who had come out for the day. Good Niederoesterreichischer (Lower Austrian) white wines flowed freely, and the accompanying "belegte Brot" (open-faced sandwiches) and pastries Frau Wurzel and her daughter prepared for their guests were superb. Mark Twain himself would have delighted in the occasion. One almost felt his presence there, and it made the day and its events doubly unforgettable.

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**Current Mark Twain Bibliography**

James S. Leonard
The Citadel

"Current Mark Twain Bibliography" is a means of giving notice of what's new in Mark Twain scholarship. Where annotations are used, they are in most cases descriptive blurbs provided by publishers (or in some cases, by authors) with value judgments edited out. If you have recently published something that you would like to have included in this list, send it to me by e-mail (leonardj@citadel.edu), or by other means.

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**Articles**


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**Books**


Is Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn really too hot for classrooms? Is it too insensitive for the politically correct era to stomach? In The Jim Dilemma: Reading Race in Huckleberry Finn Jocelyn Chadwick-Joshua proclaims the strength of Mark Twain's Jim and other black characters, reinforcing the novel's value as a teaching text. Chadwick-Joshua says that Twain accomplishes two major feats in his novel: "First he peers deeply into the dark chasm of racism.
Mark Twain Sites
What's Past, and Passing, and to Come

Mark Twain House (Hartford, CT)


In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Louis Comfort Tiffany was America's most innovative designer of decorative arts. Best known for his stained glass interpretations of natural themes, Tiffany developed his famous "driperry glass" for use in windows and lamps, and "favrile glass" for iridescent vases, bowls and accessories.

In 1881, Samuel Clemens (better known as Mark Twain) and his wife hired Tiffany's firm, Associated Artists, to redecorate the family home in Connecticut's capital. Now a historic house museum, the Mark Twain House has been collecting Tiffany pieces for more than 50 years to provide a context for the designer's work in Hartford. Among the pieces featured in the new exhibit are several of Tiffany's signature lamps, including his celebrated Dragonfly, Nautilus, Lily and California Poppy designs.

The Mark Twain House, where the author lived when he created classic works including Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, is located at 351 Farmington Avenue in Hartford, Connecticut. The Tiffany exhibit, only, is open free to the public in the gallery in the museum's Visitor Center.

Admission to the Mark Twain House itself, the only Tiffany-designed interior open to the public, is $9 for adults (age 13 and up), $8 for seniors (60+) and $5 for children (6 to 12).

Mark Twain was an author both drawn to and suspicious of authority, and his novels reflect this tension. Marked by disruptions, repetitions, and contradictions, they exemplify the ideological standoff between the American ideal of individual freedom and the reality of social control. This book provides a fresh look at Twain's major novels, such as Life on the Mississippi, Huckleberry Finn, and A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court. The book's power lies in which nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers appropriated the ideals of courtly love and chivalry as superior to the materialism of modern civilization at a time of radical change and social disruption. Her chapter on Twain is titled "Mark Twain: An Ambivalent Yankee in King Arthur's Court." [Text adapted from dust jacket.]


New Directions in American Humor provides a range of essays identifying the directions and themes that will make up the field of American humor studies in the 21st century as the study of American humor changes from the limited review of southwestern vernacular writers leading up to Mark Twain into a broad field in which feminist, cultural, popular-cultural, ethnic, and international components offer new insights into what is increasingly recognized as a defining medium of American democracy—humor. Studies of Mark Twain, Richard Pryor, Sarah P.


Moreland... demonstrates that the medievalist impulse permeates American literature and culture, then shows the tradition best represented by four writers: Mark Twain, Henry Adams, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Ernest Hemingway. Their works reveal with particular power the various ways in which nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers appropriated the ideals of courtly love and chivalry as superior to the materialism of modern civilization at a time of radical change and social disruption. Her chapter on Twain is titled "Mark Twain: An Ambivalent Yankee in King Arthur's Court." [Text adapted from dust jacket.]
McLean Green, and Beavis and Butt-head, among other topics, suggest the ethical and social issues that underlie American humor. The essays thus show the breadth of a tradition central to our culture and perhaps crucial to the pragmatic, quirky, highly individualistic way Americans approach problems and seek solutions. Essays on Mark Twain: Karen L. Kilcup, "Quite unclassifiable": Crossing Genres, Crossing Genders in Twain and Green"; Lawrence L. Berkove, "The Comstock Matrix of Twain's Humor"; Louis J. Budd, "Mark Twain's Fingerprints in Pudd'nhead Wilson"; Holger Kersten, "Mark Twain and the Funny Magic"; James R. Papp, "Huck Finn on His Best Behavior." [Text adapted from dust jacket.]

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### Dates to Circle

**April 16-17, 1999.** Northeast Modern Language Association

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### Mark Twain Sessions at ALA

**Session VII: Friday, May 28, 1999, 4:15-5:30 p.m.**

*New Directions in Mark Twain Studies I: Mark Twain's Daughters* (Homeland)

Chair: Michael J. Kiskis, Elmira College, and the Mark Twain Circle of America

1. "Suzy Clemens and Louise Brownell: A Loving Friendship"—Linda A. Morris, U of California, Davis
2. "A Powerful Influence: Clara Clemens Gabriowitch and Mark Twain"—Laura E. Skandera-Trombley, Coe C
3. "Mark Twain's Words on his Daughters"—Vicor A. Doyno, SUNY, Buffalo
4. "Jean Clemens: The Young Woman Behind the Myth"—Barbara Taylor, Cornell U

**Session VI: Saturday, May 29, 1999, 2:45-4:00 p.m.**

*Mark Twain and Race* (Maryland A)

Chair: Shelley Fisher Fishkin, University of Texas, Austin, and the Mark Twain Circle of America

1. "Mark Twain and the Sense of Race"—Louis J. Budd, Duke U
   
   **Commentators** Ralph Wiley, Washington D.C.
   
   David Lionel Smith, Williams C
   
   Jocelyn Chadwick-Joshua, The Dallas Institute

**Session VII: Saturday, May 29, 1999, 4:15-5:30 p.m.**

*New Directions in Mark Twain Studies II: Mark Twain and Others* (Maryland A)

Chair: Joseph Alvarez, Central Piedmont Community College, and the Mark Twain Circle of America

1. "Mark Twain and the Deaf Community"—Brandon Arthur, George Mason U
2. "Mark Twain and the NAACP"—Larry Marshburne, North Carolina State U
4. "Willa Cather and Mark Twain: Yours Truly, Jim Burden"—Robert C. Comeau, Union County C

**Session II: Sunday, May 30, 1999, 10:30-11:45 a.m.**

*Business Meeting: Mark Twain Circle of America* (Federal Hill)

Conference information is available at the ALA website: [http://english.byu.edu/cronin/ala.htm](http://english.byu.edu/cronin/ala.htm)

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Everything You Need to Know...

ABOUT THE CIRCULAR. The Mark Twain Circular, newsletter of the Mark Twain Circle of America, was launched in January 1987 by Thomas A. Tenney (Editor of the Mark Twain Journal). James S. Leonard (The Citadel) assumed editorial responsibility with the February 1987 Circular and has continued in that capacity until the present. The Circular is published four times per year (Jan.-March, April-June, July-Sept., and Oct.-Dec.), and is mailed to all members of the Mark Twain Circle. The Circular prints news of Mark Twain events and scholarship, directories of members, short biographical articles and critical commentaries, and current bibliography. Subscribers are distributed among 44 states and 14 foreign countries.

ABOUT THE CIRCLE. The Mark Twain Circle of America was formed at an organizational meeting held at the 1986 Modern Language Association convention in New York; the membership has since grown to approximately 350. Current officers are displayed on p. 8. Past Presidents are Louis J. Budd, Alan Gribben, Pascal Covici, Jr., David E.E. Sloane, Victor A. Doyen, and Michael J. Kiskis. Past Executive Coordinators: Everett Emerson, James D. Wilson, Michael J. Kiskis, and Laura Skandera-Trombley. Although many members are academic specialists, the Circle also includes many nonacademic Twain enthusiasts. The Circle is in communication with other Mark Twain organizations, including those associated with sites important in his life, and cooperates with them.

ABOUT THE MARK TWAIN JOURNAL. Founded in 1936 by Cyril Clemens, the Mark Twain Journal is the oldest American magazine devoted to a single author. In 1982, the Journal moved to its present home in Charleston, S.C., under the editorship of Thomas A. Tenney.

There are two issues per year, Spring and Fall, with a new volume each year (rather than every second year, as in the past). The Journal tends to appear late, and begs your patient indulgence. New subscribers may wish to begin with the 1997 issues rather than the 1999. Back issues from 13:1 to the present are available at $5.00 each, postpaid ($2.50 on orders for ten or more; pre-1983 issues are thinner than modern ones, and some are badly reprinted). An index 1936-83 counts as a back issue.

To: Prof. Joseph A. Alvarez
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   The Citadel
   Charleston, SC 29409


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  - The Citadel

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