



PERMANENT THINGS

Number 3

This number of Permanent Things features a note on Kirk Center Senior Fellow Gleaves Whitney, the first scholar to be so designated. Also, a new seminar series for future teachers is launched, an accomplished Center resident fellow from Italy is profiled, and a central conservative institution marks an important anniversary.

NEW SEMINARS FOR FUTURE TEACHERS

This spring, the Kirk Center inaugurated a new seminar series designed specifically for graduate students who are entering the teaching profession. “Men of Letters as Renewers of Society” was the topic for the colloquium held this past March at Piety Hill. Featured speakers included renowned historian Jonathan Clark, who spoke on Edmund Burke and Samuel Johnson, and Vigen Guroian of Loyola College of Maryland, who spoke on Russell Kirk, G. K. Chesterton, and T. S. Eliot.



Graduate students from over a dozen universities gathered at the Kirk library in March to discuss the topic “Men of Letters as Renewers of Society.”

Among the twenty-five participants were students from the Universities of Brown, Chicago, Notre Dame, Princeton, Virginia, and Washington State. One of the student participants noted that “The quality of minds there was very high: good men and women to know in one’s discipline. Moreover, I think the topic of the conference...a rather inspiring and challenging one.” One seminar participant observed that “The conversations were most valuable, expanding my horizons of awareness and

starting up correspondences.... I struck up several friendships that, I hope, will last a lifetime"; while another noted that "The idea, setting, and the collection of students and staff were excellent.... The companionship, collegiality, and conversation far exceeded my expectations." A particularly apt summation of the aim of the new seminar series was offered by a participant and promising future professor: "Weekends like the one I spent at the Kirk Center renew my faith in the virtues associated with liberal learning." The Center was greatly assisted by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute's able staff with this event, and intends to conduct graduate student seminars for future teachers on a regular basis.

A CHAMPION OF ORDERED FREEDOM

The Kirk Center is proud to feature a note on Gleaves Whitney, its first Senior Fellow. Mr. Whitney has been the chief speechwriter for Michigan Governor John Engler since 1992. In addition to his work with the governor, he is gaining a reputation as a leading authority on Catholic humanists in the twentieth century. A tireless champion of Dr. Kirk's classic work *The Roots of American Order*, he is currently writing a companion volume to that book. He is also leading "Roots of American Order" seminars for high school teachers at the Center for the American Idea in Houston, Texas, where he is a senior scholar.



*Gleaves Whitney, first Senior Fellow of the Kirk Center, has lectured widely on Kirk's *The Roots of American Order*.*

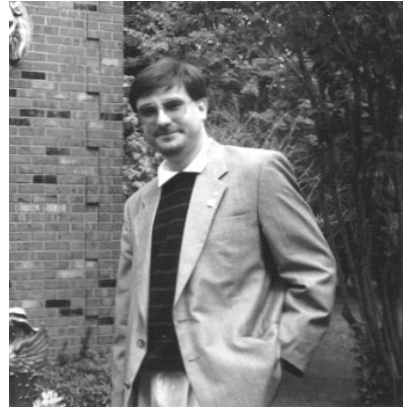
Mr. Whitney has written one book and contributed to four others. A frequent reviewer for the *University Bookman*, he has had several articles published about Russell Kirk elsewhere. He has lectured at many Center seminars and conservative forums nationwide, including an address on the relevance of the historian Christopher Dawson at the recent Philadelphia Society meeting on April 24, 1999.

It was during his Fulbright year in West Germany in 1984-5, that Mr. Whitney first read Russell Kirk. While browsing in a bookstore in East Berlin, ironically, he came across a German tract about political thought in the U.S. that quoted critically from Russell Kirk. "Dr. Kirk," he said, "totally vexed the Marxists." Knowing that he would encounter many

such ideologues in American graduate schools, he wrote to Dr. Kirk asking where he should continue his study of history. Due in part to Dr. Kirk's response, he moved from Colorado to Michigan to pursue graduate work at the University of Michigan. He currently lives in Lansing, Michigan, with his wife, Louise, and their three sons.

BUILDING BRIDGES: ITALIAN WRITER RESIDES AT CENTER

Marco Respinti, co-editor of the Italian magazine *Percorsi di politica, cultura, economia*, has quickly established himself as one of Italy's more formidable public intellectuals. He is that country's chief authority and most productive exponent of the relevance of the Anglo-American conservative tradition for contemporary Italy. Mr. Respinti is currently a Senior Fellow at the Kirk Center. His acclaimed new edition and translation



Editor and Translator Marco Respinti

into Italian of Kirk's *The Roots of American Order* was published in 1996 by Mondadori Editore, Italy's largest publishing house. He has also translated and edited works by Christopher Dawson, Edmund Burke, Charles Dickens, Gustave Thibon, and T. S. Eliot. Next year he will begin translating Kirk's *The Conservative Mind*.

Mr. Respinti, who is from Milan, also visited the Center in 1992 and in 1996. While in residence at the Center, he is researching the consequences of and reactions to the French Revolution and its relation to American conservatism and history. His most recent work completed at the Center is a translation of the French historian R•gine Pernoud's memoirs. This prominent medieval historian is best known for her book entitled *Light of the Middle Ages*—a book which shares its title with a chapter heading in Kirk's *The Roots of American Order*.

In addition, he is meeting with scholars, lecturing, and participating in seminars throughout the country. "The Kirk Center is a vital source of learning and offers a unique opportunity to form important professional relationships," Mr. Respinti said. "It has been indispensable in my efforts to introduce the American conservative tradition to Italy."

HERITAGE FOUNDATION MARKS ANNIVERSARY

On April, 29, 1999, The Heritage Foundation marked the fifth anniversary of Russell Kirk's passing with a feature lecture by noted author, ethicist, and friend of the Kirk Center, Vigen Guroian, in its Russell Kirk Memorial Lecture Series. Professor Guroian spoke on the role imaginative literature can play in cultural renewal. "It is the great challenge, the high calling, of religiously minded men and women of letters," he charged the audience, "to recover and renew true and substantial morality through imaginative writing, whether in the form of the essay or narrative and poetry. And just as important, those in positions

to encourage and support this cultural activity must awaken to the need of it. In these times, politics alone will not do, for politics has lost its moral compass. It is like old blind King Lear lost and deranged in the desolate places." Dr. Guroian's commemorative address can be accessed on the Center's website: www.kirkcenter.org.



Dr. Vigen Guroian (right) and former resident fellow Dr. Thomas Bertonneau (left) at an ISI seminar held at the Kirk Center.

KIRK CENTER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May/June

"The Thought of James Novak" at Piety Hill
Dr. Thomas Bertonneau, former Resident Fellow

"Edmund Burke and the Ends of Conservatism" at Georgetown University
Ian Crowe, Resident Fellow

Summer Lecture at Piety Hill
Dr. David M. Whalen, professor of English at Hillsdale College

"On the Translation and New Edition of R•gine Pernoud's Memoirs"
Marco Respinti, Resident Fellow

July/August

Center President Annette Kirk meets with Mrs. T.S. Eliot in London

"Prospects for the Conservative Intellectual Tradition"
Kirk Center hosts ISI Honors Seminar

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