

From the Editor

This is the inaugural issue of a new publication of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the College of Charleston. At the suggestion of Dean Samuel M. Hines, Jr., we have created an annual forum to honor the best research by undergraduates working in the humanities and social sciences.

To identify that research, we created an editorial board consisting of one faculty member from each discipline within the School. Editorial board members were then responsible for soliciting from students and faculty the best papers written in their disciplines during the 2001-02 academic year. Assuming that the papers were of sufficient quality, each department was permitted to select one paper for publication, and to nominate any other worthy papers for consideration by the editor. Nominations were also solicited from interdisciplinary programs and other humanistic disciplines (such as art history) not represented in the School. We received eleven departmental and seven additional submissions; of these additional papers, three were selected for publication. All fourteen papers were then subject to another round of editing by the editor and the editorial board member for the particular discipline.

The papers that appear here, then, have been scrutinized and polished with special care. Already identified as outstanding by the faculty members for whom they were first written, they then had to survive a further level of screening by the department, and also by the editor. The authors all took on the responsibility of revising their papers, often several times, well into the summer months and thus well after their grades were already secure. These are truly outstanding papers. By honoring them in print, however, we mean to do more than just to salute the authors for their distinguished work. We mean also to inspire all our students and faculty to impose higher standards on themselves and on each other, to aspire to a level of intellectual excellence consistent with the College's goal of becoming an outstanding public liberal arts and sciences institution. The authors of these papers

are already working to help us meet that goal. They are in no way typical, but they do show what is possible.

The journal takes its name from a once longstanding literary society at the College. The Chrestomathic Literary Society was founded in 1847, and it existed for well over a century, by some accounts into the 1970's. The word "chrestomathy" (pronounced kres-TAHM-uh-thee) comes from the Greek, meaning "useful learning." The word has two meanings in English: (1) a selection of passages used as an aid to learning a language; and (2) an anthology of works, often but not always by a single author. All of these meanings seem appropriate for a collection of papers intended to introduce students to the demands and rewards of scholarly publication.

As editor, I am indebted to a good many people for their efforts in support of the journal in its crucial first year: Sam Hines, for his initial vision and continuing support of the project; Marilyn Tharp, for her administrative support; Janette Finch, for advice on computer technology; Jerry Chamness and the Citadel print shop staff, for their services; the editorial board members for individual disciplines, for volunteering to select and in many cases helping to edit the papers; and finally to the authors, for their continuing efforts to improve their already fine work. I very much hope that I have not betrayed their many efforts, since I bear responsibility for anything that is amiss or lacking in the finished product.

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Editor, *Chrestomathy*