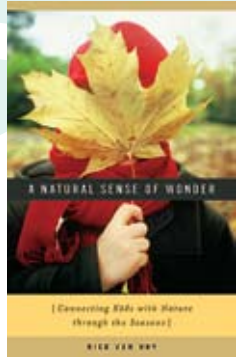


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BEHIND THE BOOK

A Natural Sense of Wonder among this year's ten best books for teachers, describing it as the "best call for nature."

Outdoors and Unplugged

Before the phrase "nature-deficit disorder" entered the lexicon, Rick Van Noy was already at work on a book of essays about parenting with nature in the age of digital screens, electronic gadgets, and computer games. In *A Natural Sense of Wonder: Connecting Kids with Nature through the Seasons*, Van Noy chronicles his own journey as a father to engage his two children and their friends wholeheartedly—body, mind, and spirit—in outdoor activities. *Booklist* says Van Noy forges "new ground by combining environmentalism and parenting in a fresh and engaging manner," providing "a blueprint for future works on bringing nature back into the lives of children." *Scholastic* magazine named

RICK VAN NOY'S "AHA" MOMENT FOR A BOOK ON CONNECTING KIDS with nature stemmed from a chance encounter in a used bookstore six years ago, where he unearthed a title that was new to him. Penned by an icon of American environmental writing, the slender volume was *A Sense of Wonder*, by the late Rachel Carson, the scientist whose 1962 book *Silent Spring* is credited with starting the modern-day environmental movement.

Based on Carson's 1956 essay "Help Your Child to Wonder" and published in 1965, a year after Carson's death, the book touted the importance of keeping alive a child's sense of wonder for the natural world. Seasoning her simple philosophy and straightforward call to action were tales of her own outdoor adventures with her young nephew, Roger. During long summer days, she and Roger explored tidal pools together along Maine's rocky coast. At night, when the stars' reflections winked in the tide pools, she awakened the child from his dreams, and they ventured outdoors to gaze into the incomprehensibly vast night sky, lit by constellations.

Carson's philosophy resonated deeply with Van Noy, a Radford University associate English professor, outdoor adventurer, backpacker, and amateur naturalist. He was captivated

by her simple message to use everyday events to keep alive a child's sense of wonder. His two preschoolers were similar in age to Roger when Carson began nurturing the toddler's curiosity for all things natural. Van Noy had found a clear focus for his next book.

"Rachel Carson said you have to let kids stay outdoors late and get their shoes dirty. These experiences mean more than the loss of sleep or the extra time spent cleaning dirt tracked into the house," Van Noy said. "I wanted to explore her idea, so I thought I'd write about some of our family's experiences."

Most American nature writers, like Thoreau and Muir, view nature only from an adult's perspective—often from a quiet, tranquil, solitary place in the woods. Van Noy, however, wanted to write about how kids, who are loud and active, could be delighted with nature.

One of his first essays for the book was prompted by a newspaper article on TVs—not electronic appliances that broadcast Saturday-morning cartoons or serve as Xbox game systems, but living, breathing, feathered turkey vultures. "I read a newspaper story that said people were worried about vultures carrying away kids," he said. "So I decided to learn about vultures."

cont'd on page 3

Rick Van Noy and his children, Elliot, left, and Sam, right.



Rick Dickinson

FROM THE DIRECTOR



This year marks the seventieth year of the Press's operation. In reviewing our history, it has been interesting to note how many of the Press's earliest books are on subjects that continue to be represented in our catalogs today: history, literature, nature, and popular culture. Our cover story features Rick Van Noy's highly acclaimed *A Natural Sense of Wonder* on the pressing problem of "nature-deficit disorder," a book that has been recommended by teachers to parents as a practical complement to Stephen Louv's influential *Last Child in the Woods*. We also focus on the work of recently retired UGA Professor of Ecology Whit Gibbons, whose research and myriad publications have influenced generations of herpetologists around the world. On page 11 we are pleased to announce the recent release of Professor James C. Cobb's popular short history of the state, *Georgia Odyssey*. Also hot off the presses is Alex Vernon's *On Tarzan*, the first book to explore one of America's best-known and enduring fictional characters. The Press has a long history of publishing biographical and critical works in American literature. Don't miss the charmingly illustrated letters of the celebrated Alcott sisters as they traveled around Europe in the early 1870s (back page).

As the press expands into new publishing areas and embraces the world of digital publishing, I would like to thank UGA's administration, our project and funding partners, and the many individual contributors who provide vital support, support that will enable us to continue to serve scholars, students, and readers nationwide.

Nicole Mitchell
Director

FROM THE PROVOST



On June 26, 1938, in the Sunday edition of the *Athens Banner-Herald*, University President Harmon W. Caldwell announced the formation of the University of Georgia Press with the stated purpose of publishing "worthwhile books by members of the faculty and other Georgians, and the reprinting of rare southern items." Seventy years later, the Press's

mission and publishing program have expanded significantly and the Press now plays a vital role in supporting and enhancing the University's position as a major research institution. As UGA Press marks its seventieth anniversary, I would like to thank and congratulate the Press's staff, the faculty Editorial Board, members of the Press's Advisory Council, and the many contributors recognized in this newsletter for their good work in supporting an award-winning publishing program. Thank you for your continued interest and generous support!

Dr. Arnett C. Mace, Jr.
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

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BEHIND THE BOOK

“Outdoors and Unplugged”
cont’d from page 1

Winged garbage trucks, TVs ride the updrafts, looking—and smelling—for a meal of ripe carrion. And when they locate a nicely rotting meal, they bury their heads up to their shoulders in decaying flesh. Turkey vultures may seem an odd topic to entice kids to leave behind their electronic entertainment for an encounter with nature. But since Radford’s local vulture population had achieved some notoriety, TVs turned out to be a great way to employ Carson’s advice that it’s more important for kids to *feel* than to *know*.

Van Noy soon discovered that these hang-gliding members of the stork family have fascinating adaptations. All that poking and prodding inside a dead carcass exposes their heads to a lot of vermin, such as parasites and bacteria. After a filling repast, turkey vultures often roost high in trees, letting the sun’s ultraviolet rays kill unwanted crumbs on their crowns. And, as Van Noy wrote in his essay “Beautiful Scavengers,” they can also “urinate on their legs to cool themselves down, a feature especially interesting to the younger set.”

From his own childhood adventures of camping under the stars, exploring neighborhood ponds, and walking in creeks, Van Noy knew how powerfully a sense of wonder could banish boredom and serve as an antidote for disenchantment.

“My wife and I don’t like to hear the B word—*bored*—at our house,” he said. “We like to see our kids do good things with their time. They’re getting exercise and learning empathy. Our kids move spiders outdoors instead of squashing them.”

Van Noy is also quick to tout the cognitive benefits: children notice what’s around them. “My kids are more connected to their ecosystem. Sam and Elliot have become birders and butterflyers.” Friends who tag along on Van Noy family adventures absorb similar benefits when, for instance, family members capture water snakes, toads, or crayfish.

“Some kids haven’t seen these animals before, much less seen someone handle them,” he said. “Kids overcome their initial fear



Sam and Elliot at play outside.

Photo courtesy of Rick Van Noy

and feel a tingle when holding a crayfish. It may be part of E. O. Wilson’s biophilia theory: holding the crayfish completes the circuit. Helping kids have these kinds of experiences was my motivation for writing the book.”

Kids who spend lots of time playing in nature have a greater sense of independence and are more self-directed and imaginative in their play. They also learn to assess risks and learn about limits. “Kids will slip on rocks when they’re in the creeks, but they’ll also learn which kind to avoid,” he said. “And they can sometimes climb mountains they didn’t think they could.”

After the sense of wonder is established, it builds and grows automatically. Van Noy explains, “Once you start spending time with them outdoors, it takes off on its own. It helps kids develop nice, lifelong pur-



Van Noy and his children experiencing their senses of wonder.

Photo courtesy of Rick Van Noy

They’re getting exercise and learning empathy. Our kids move spiders outdoors instead of squashing them.

suits, like fishing and birding. Too, spending time in nature is spiritual; there’s a calming element. My son, who’s ten, loves to fish, and I know when he becomes an adult, he’ll have fishing as a way to balance stress and restore perspective. My daughter is eight and likes to catch minnows. She actually prefers the Delaware River to the beach because there are more activities.”

Another great benefit from connecting kids with nature is making lasting memories together. For adults who want to encourage kids to get outside, Van Noy offers the following tips. Take a relaxed attitude and have fun. Give kids realistic expectations. Start small by taking a walk in a park or on a nature trail. Bring along your enthusiasm and childhood memories of luna moths and lightning bugs. Nature is unpredictable and full of surprises. Kids care more about the vivid, intense experiences than about reaching some goal, such as a mountain summit.

And perhaps, best of all, you may rediscover your own sense of wonder. 📖

RICK VAN NOY is Professor of English at Radford University in Virginia. His latest adventure is moving his family to a yellow farmhouse surrounded by a stream, a marsh, and woods.

IN THE NEWS

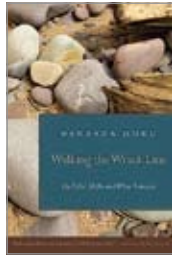


Popular Jewish women's magazine *Lilith* recently said of Margot Singer's **THE PALE OF SETTLEMENT**, "Singer deftly portrays characters and situations that involve grappling with

borders. . . . The yearning for independence and the effort to sustain an identity pulsate throughout these masterful stories. A talented artist of the Jewish scene in Israel and the Diaspora, Singer is a new writer to savor."

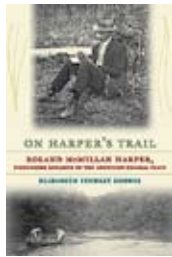


Booklist took notice of **A NATURAL SENSE OF WONDER**: "Van Noy presents an intimate collection of essays detailing his struggles and triumphs introducing his children to the natural world. . . . Van Noy is forging new ground by combining environmentalism and parenting in a fresh and engaging manner. His collection can serve as a blueprint for future works on bringing nature back into the lives of children." In addition, the June issue of *Parent & Child* magazine featured an excerpt from the book, and *Orion* magazine has planned a review in an upcoming issue.



NPR commentator Alan Cheuse recommended **WALKING THE WRACK LINE** in his list of books for summer reading: "In the spare and lovely pages of *Walking the*

Wrack Line, Hurd writes about shingle beaches, jelly fishes, dead sailors, reading *Moby Dick*, why Franz Schubert never finished his *Symphony in B Minor*, and she muses about the life of the soul." *Publishers Weekly* says of the book: "In these rich essays, . . . [Hurd's] careful depictions of found objects are delightful. . . . This lyrical book with its scrupulous attention to language and the world will please poets and naturalists alike."



ON HARPER'S TRAIL received some advanced praise from *Garden and Gun Magazine*: "a rollicking biography of the seminal botanist . . . Shores's biography of the outspoken,

peripatetic Harper is an excellent companion volume for touring the gardens of Alabama and Florida, where he did his greatest work. He may have been a Yankee, but his love and understanding of the South knew no bounds."



Bloomsbury Review ran a great review of **WINNERS HAVE YET TO BE ANNOUNCED**: "This is an amazing tribute to Donny Hathaway. . . . Ed Pavlic's prose

sequences are as rich as a novel, his take of music, fame, and the price paid for success expressed in fragments of fictional interviews and prose poems that tell a tragic story. Ed Pavlic proves that the subject of a prose poem can go beyond the writer's private motivations and expand to the larger world."



Kent German's **NEW ORLEANS AFTER THE PROMISES** received high marks from the well-respected journal *American Historical Review*: "This is a major contribution to the

historiography of civil rights and postwar urban history. . . . Well researched and provocative . . . This fresh and invigorating study's scope, range, and ambition are too wide for a short review, but the book will reward the patient reader and deserves the widest possible audience."

IN THE COMMUNITY

President Carter Reads Georgia

Former President Jimmy Carter receives a copy of *Elemental South: An Anthology of Southern Nature Writing* (UGA Press, 2004) from the book's editor, Dorinda G. Dallmeyer. Dallmeyer is director of the UGA Environmental Ethics Certificate Program and a member of the UGA Press Editorial Board. Carter and Dallmeyer were in Oglethorpe, Georgia, at the end of June to celebrate the conclusion of Paddle Georgia 2008, an event that brings paddlers from all over the state and the Southeast to spend a week paddling the length of a Georgia river, this year the Flint. Said Dallmeyer, "I presented him the book in recognition of his deep commitment to protecting Georgia's environment."

Former President Jimmy Carter and Dorinda Dallmeyer

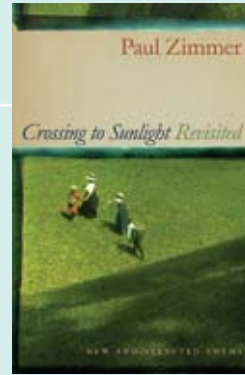


AWARDS AND HONORS



Tim DeGenero

Margot Singer has won two high-profile awards for **THE PALE OF SETTLEMENT**, the *Shenandoah*/Glasgow Prize for Emerging Writers and the Reform Judaism Prize for Jewish Fiction. Singer and her work will be featured in both *Reform Judaism* and *Shenandoah* as part of these prizes. She was also given an Honorable Mention by the 2008 Hemingway Foundation / PEN Award and was a finalist for the 2008 John Gardner Fiction Book Award, two of the most prestigious awards for debut fiction writers.



Paul Zimmer's **CROSSING TO SUNLIGHT REVISITED** was a finalist for the 2008 Ohioana Book Awards in the category of poetry.



HARDSCRABBLE, by Kevin McFadden, has been awarded the 2008 Fellowship of Southern Writers' New Writing Award for Poetry. The award, which recognizes work by emerging poets living in and writing on the South, will be presented in April 2009 at the Arts and Education Council Conference on Southern Literature in Chattanooga, Tennessee.



NEW ORLEANS AFTER THE PROMISES was selected as a finalist for the 2008 OAH Liberty Legacy Foundation Award. This award is given for the best book on any historical aspect of the struggle for civil rights in the United States from the nation's founding to the present.



Illa Vareny

David R. Kaufman, author of **PEACHTREE CREEK**, has won the Southern Environmental Law Center's annual Phillip D. Reed Memorial Award for Outstanding Writing on the Southern Environment.

UGA Press Wins 2008 Governor's Award for the Humanities

"For enriching the life of the humanities through a distinguished record of publications, for serving as an important programming resource to libraries and other community discussion groups, and for building partnerships that contribute to enlightened communities of readers in Georgia and the nation."

—Georgia Humanities Council

Nicole Mitchell, UGA Press Director (left), and Nancy Grayson, UGA Press Associate Director and Editor-in-Chief (right), accept the award from Mark Burkhalter, Speaker Pro Tempore of the Georgia House of Representatives at the May 8, 2008, ceremony in Atlanta.



Courtesy Georgia Humanities Council

"I cannot live without books."—Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826)

DEVELOPMENT NEWS



Courtesy of Sea Island Company

UGA Press wishes to thank Bill Jones III and the Sea Island Company for their generous gift of funding the publication of Spring and Fall 2008 issues of *Inside UGA Press*.

Sea Island
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Reading can take place in many forms these days, and UGA Press is actively working to provide students and scholars and the general public with digital versions of its fine publications. However, even as we pursue digital marketing and publishing opportunities, we will continue to publish the groundbreaking, beautifully designed books for which we have been recognized for several decades. There is still a place for print publications—books you can hold in your hands, books with real pages you can turn.

The Press published eighty books this past year, a feat made possible, in part, by the generous support of donors listed on page 9. Private gifts are critical to our success, and all gifts, no matter the size, can support books on a wide range of subjects. Our books last a long time, and so does the impact of each and every gift we receive. For more information about giving to UGA Press, please contact me at (706) 369-6049 or lstewart@uga.edu.

Thank you for your interest and support!



Lane Stewart
Director of Development

A MESSAGE FROM ADVISORY COUNCIL CHAIRMAN CRAIG BARROW



As the inaugural chairman of the UGA Press Advisory Council, I have enjoyed supporting the oldest and largest publishing house in Georgia and one of the most dynamic university presses in the South. Our council is now twenty members strong, and we have learned through our work with the Press staff what it takes to select and publish high-quality books.

Over the past four years, the economic climate has changed tremendously for all State of Georgia organizations. As a result, the Press faces the challenge of maintaining its high standard of publishing excellence by relying more heavily on private gifts. We are, therefore, launching a new initiative to establish a general endowment fund to secure the future of the Press and support its invaluable publishing program.

The UGA Press is celebrating its seventieth anniversary this year. I encourage you to participate in this meaningful endeavor—making the world a better place, book by book. My family and I can attest directly to the fact that giving to the Press is a rewarding experience. We know that we are helping great books find their way into print—books that educate and change the way people think. By giving to the Press, you can make an important difference in the lives of generations of readers for many years to come.

I would like to ask each of you to consider a donation to help support this great organization and its wonderful staff. A self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience. Please be assured that your contribution will be greatly appreciated by all of those involved with the Press.



Craig Barrow III



Background: prescribed burn at Dubignon Demonstration Area; above: Kay Kirkman, associate scientist of plant ecology, gives a talk on wetlands research at Rhexia Pond at Ichauway; below: Jones Center director Lindsay R. Boring addresses the gathering.

UGA Press Advisory Council Visits Jones Research Center at Ichauway

In March the UGA Press Advisory Council visited the 29,000-acre outdoor laboratory of the Joseph W. Jones Ecological Research Center at Ichauway, near Newton, Georgia, at the invitation of Jones Center director Lindsay R. Boring.

Jones Center staff presented excellent overviews of the history of the center, the education and outreach programs, Flint River Basin research, longleaf pine ecology and management, prescribed fire management and research, wetlands research, and the history of quail management on Ichauway. Two members of the Jones Center staff have written chapters to books forthcoming from UGA Press.

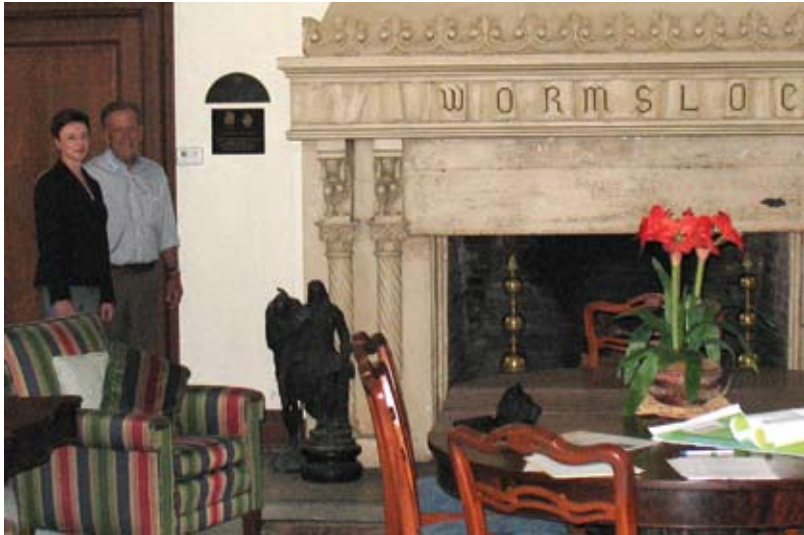
Barrow Family Installs Plaque Honoring UGA Press and Director Nicole Mitchell at Historic Wormsloe Library

Wormsloe Plantation is the oldest tidewater estate in Georgia. It was claimed and developed by Noble Jones, a physician and carpenter who accompanied General James E. Oglethorpe to Savannah in 1733 to settle the colony. Wormsloe has remained in the same family for almost three hundred years.

Wormsloe State Historic Site is open to the public. For information, call (912) 353-3023 or visit www.georgiastateparks.org, click on the drop-down menu, and scroll down to Wormsloe Historic Site.

Inscription on the plaque:

*The University of Georgia Press
Commemorating a partnership of more than half a century between the Wormsloe Foundation and the University of Georgia Press in publishing books of historical interest, and in honor of Nicole Mitchell, Director of the Press, for her vision and leadership in establishing the Wormsloe Foundation Nature Book Series.*



Craig Barrow III (right), chairman of the UGA Press Advisory Council, and Nicole Mitchell, director of UGA Press, in the library at Wormsloe.



John T. Edge, left, director of the Southern Foodways Alliance, general editor of *Cornbread Nation 4: The Best of Southern Food Writing* (UGA Press, 2008), and featured speaker at the May Advisory Council meeting, with award-winning chef Hugh Acheson, proprietor of the

Five and Ten and the National, two of Athens's premier restaurants. Edge and Acheson did an impromptu Q & A on southern food after a delectable meal prepared by the talented staff at the National.



Edge signs copies of *Cornbread Nation 4* for Paul Pressly and Judy Hales.

MAY 2008 ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING



Arnett C. Mace Jr., Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, welcomes everyone to the May meeting.



Joan Maloof, assistant professor of biology at Salisbury University in Maryland, discusses her book *Teaching the Trees: Lessons from the Forest* (UGA Press, 2005) with Lindsay Thomas.



Sarah Gordon, Professor Emerita of English at Georgia College and State University, talks about her latest work, *A Literary Guide to Flannery O'Connor's Georgia* (UGA Press, 2008).



Stephen Berry, assistant professor of history at UGA, discusses *Princes of Cotton: Four Diaries of Young Men in the South, 1848-1860* (UGA Press, 2007), for which he served as editor.



UGA Press Advisory Council members and spouses at the May 2008 meeting. Front row: J. Wiley Ellis, Frederick L. Allen III, Sarah Ross, Diana Barrow, Craig Barrow III, Clare Ellis (at right). Back row: Peter Candler, Shannon Candler, Nancy Thomas, R. Lindsay Thomas, H. Bruce McEver, Karon Meyer, Linda Bachman, Richard Meyer III, Peggy Galis, Jane Pressly, Paul M. Pressly, Louise McBee, Judy Hales, H. Edward Hales Jr.

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FIELD NOTES

On Tarzan examines how and why we have accorded mythical, archetypal status to Tarzan, arguably the twentieth century's best-known fictional character. From books and films to comics and toys, Alex Vernon takes stock of the contradictions and ambiguities in Tarzan's many incarnations. This entertaining study offers a provocative model for understanding the life cycle of pop culture phenomena.

Q&A WITH ALEX VERNON, AUTHOR OF *ON TARZAN*

NANCY GRAYSON, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Grayson: You write that “the American century was Tarzan’s century, at home and abroad.” Could you explain what you mean?

Vernon: It’s been claimed that during the twentieth century Tarzan was the most well-known U.S. fictional creation in the world. I’m inclined to agree. The films in particular made his name. As the U.S. film industry strove to dominate the international marketplace and to export American culture, Tarzan was one of its chief means. From 1918 to 1970, a new Tarzan film appeared once every fourteen-and-a-half months, and that’s a *very* conservative average, treating serials as single releases and ignoring foreign rip-offs, faux Tarzans, and television appearances. Foreign and domestic takeoffs in books and comics also abounded. The great irony, of course, is that the premise of Burroughs’s *Tarzan of the Apes* involved European colonialism, as Tarzan’s father was sent to Africa to investigate reports of another European power enslaving England’s colonized natives.

Grayson: Why do you think the ape-man saw such instant popularity and then had such a long life span in the popular imagination?

Vernon: When Tarzan appeared in 1912 after several decades of post-Darwin human-or-beast anxiety, he allowed us—white men certainly—to romanticize the beast within. But the Tarzan story was able to speak to a range of issues that were surfacing at the same time: industrialization, commercialization, urbanization, immigration, the New Woman, the New Negro, the invention of the teenager, fascination with all things primitive, and new anxieties about sexual identity. Tarzan always had it both ways. If you want a Horatio Alger rags-to-riches tale of American meritocracy, of *natural* aristocracy, he’s your man. If you want to prove the moral, mental, and physical superiority of Anglo stock, of *natural aristocracy*, he’s your man too. And he evolved. In the 1930s, MGM’s isolationist Tarzan matched the country’s mood (while the company aggressively distributed the films outside the United States). The familiar plush tree house that Tarzan, Jane, and Boy shared in the movies celebrated Depression-era Yankee ingenuity while also asserting a bourgeois lifestyle and contributing to the normalization of the nuclear family ideal. The jungle lord’s resurgence in the 1960s—including two films that actually took him to Asia—coincided with the U.S. neocolonial war in Vietnam.



On Tarzan
Alex Vernon

Grayson: How has the figure of Tarzan evolved from the way Edgar Rice Burroughs imagined him to the way most people envision him today?

Vernon: I’ve been teaching Burroughs’s original novel for several years, and I have yet to find a student who has actually read a Tarzan novel. Only a few students have seen one of the movies all the way through, other than Disney’s 1999 animated version. I’m not sure how people envision him today. By the 1970s, Tarzan was reduced chiefly to parody and children’s fare. There have been exceptions, but the relative paucity of serious action-adventure productions since 1970 is telling.

As the 2012 centennial of his creation approaches, Tarzan retains a lesser hold over the collective imagination. The human-machine question has perhaps supplanted the human-animal one. America’s “natural” global supremacy has also waned. Burroughs’s Tarzan is hard to pin down. Initially he possessed a ferocity, a darkness, that no screen Tarzan ever captured. At the same time, Burroughs’s and Hollywood’s Tarzan have always enjoyed a campiness that must be acknowledged.

Grayson: In what way has Tarzan shaped popular notions of gender and sexuality?

Vernon: This is a complicated question that involves domestic racism, the imagined erotic life of the so-called lower races, the problem of fetishizing the male body in a homo-anxious culture, and even Freudian ideas about incest and culture. Indexing these intersections was a nightmare!

Grayson: Any favorite lines?

Vernon: Jane to Boy—“Forget about civilization. Our world here is far more lovely and far more exciting than the outside world, I promise you. Now you run and get the caviar from the refrigerator.” 🍷

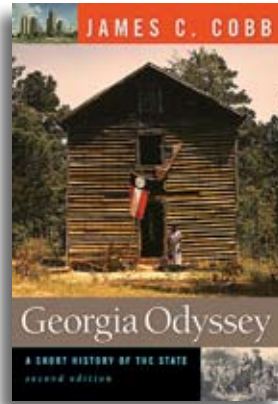
ALEX VERNON is an associate professor of English at Hendrix College. He is the author of *Soldiers Once and Still: Ernest Hemingway, James Salter, and Tim O’Brien*, and has also edited a volume of essays on autobiographical writing and the military. He is himself the author of a memoir of being a soldier, *most succinctly bred*, and coauthor of *The Eyes of Orion: Five Tank Lieutenants in the Persian Gulf War*.

FIELD NOTES

Georgia Odyssey is a lively survey of the state's history, from its beginnings as a European colony to its current standing as an international business mecca, from the self-imposed isolation of its Jim Crow era to its role as the host of the centennial Olympics games and beyond.



Q&A WITH JAMES C. COBB,
AUTHOR OF *GEORGIA ODYSSEY*
DEREK KRISSOFF, SENIOR ACQUISITIONS EDITOR



Georgia Odyssey
A Short History of the State
Second edition
James C. Cobb

Krissoff: You're from Hartwell, a border town. What's the difference between Georgia and South Carolina?

Cobb: It may seem foolish to think that state lines are that significant in shaping the way people see themselves or the world, but I'm convinced they do make at least some difference. In the colonial era, South Carolinians dismissed Georgia as a mere "buffer" meant to protect them from Indians and Spaniards. South Carolina was already well established when Georgia came along, and Georgians clearly envied the more prosperous Carolinians, who were not hampered by prohibition of slavery or restrictions on landholding. Today, the relative standing of the two states has changed dramatically. Georgia is stronger economically, thanks in no small part to Atlanta, which clearly whips Columbia in any category related to size or sophistication. The upshot of this reversal of relative fortunes is that South Carolinians now break out in rather unseemly celebrations every time one of their schools scores an athletic triumph over one of ours or one of their communities outbids one of ours for a new plant. On the other hand, I imagine most Georgians probably seldom think of South Carolina these days unless something punctures our inflated sense of how enlightened and progressive we are and we need to thank God for a place where things are likely to be worse than they are here.

Krissoff: The original edition of *Georgia Odyssey* grew out of a piece you wrote for the *New Georgia Guide* around the time of the Atlanta Olympics. For the second edition, a copublication with the Georgia Humanities Council, you've revised the book to bring the story up to the present

day. What do you think is the most important change in Georgia since the first edition of *Georgia Odyssey*?

Cobb: This is a toughie, and I'm tempted to point to the explosive growth of the state's Hispanic population over the last decade or so, but I guess I have to go with the Republican political breakthrough in state politics. Things had been trending this way for a good while, of course, but the election in 2002 of the first Republican governor since Reconstruction was particularly critical, because it gave the GOP the opportunity to establish a patronage base in each of our 159 counties. Georgia's Democrats had been pretty conservative all along, but anybody who thinks the transfer of power has not been all that significant obviously doesn't pay much attention to what's happened to support for education or social programs and services.

Krissoff: Last year you were quoted in a *New York Times* article about a new cluster of history books dedicated to reinterpreting the American South during and after the civil rights movement. Has this group of scholars—including people like Kevin Kruse and Matthew Lassiter, both of whom write about greater Atlanta—changed the way you think about Georgia history?

Cobb: Matt and Kevin's excellent work argues that in the 1980s Ronald Reagan offered suburban whites a more class- and values-based appeal, which allowed them to oppose initiatives and agendas favorable to blacks with arguments emphasizing concerns about preserving "property values" and communities' "quality of life." In metro Atlanta, the expressed objections of white suburbanites to extending MARTA into their localities present a classic case in point. The only concern I have with discussions of this new so-called colorblind conservatism—which, as both Lassiter and Kruse show, is a national, rather than purely southern phenomenon—is that those who do not read them carefully may wind up underestimating the extent to which race remains a factor in the GOP's appeal. ■

JAMES C. COBB is the B. Phinizy Spalding Distinguished Professor in the History of the American South at the University of Georgia. His books include *Redefining Southern Culture* and *The Brown Decision, Jim Crow, and Southern Identity* (both available from Georgia), as well as *Away Down South*, *The Selling of the South*, and *The Most Southern Place on Earth*.

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The second edition of *Georgia Odyssey* is published in association with the Georgia Humanities Council.

FOCUS ON WHIT GIBBONS

BY JUDY BOLYARD PURDY,
ACQUISITIONS EDITOR

When ecologist Whit Gibbons steps to the podium, pillowcase in hand, get ready to back up. That innocent-looking sack with a knot on one end is sure to contain some big excitement. The internationally acclaimed herpetologist often travels with a writhing, squirming menagerie of herpetofauna, ranging from a handsome corn snake to an eighty-five-pound alligator snapping turtle. Even wildlife graduate students are caught off guard when he pulls out a venomous timber rattler, a rare guest reserved for very special groups.

“I’ve been known to turn down speaking engagements because I wasn’t allowed to bring live snakes,” Gibbons said.

His lessons, illustrated with scaly, warty, or smooth-skinned friends, are not soon forgotten. “I gave a talk last year about the natural history of reptiles and amphibians, using rainbow snakes and eels. After the talk the Rotary Club president said, ‘That was great! Almost as great as the one I heard you give when I was in third grade,’” Gibbons said.

Mere words fail to capture the excitement, enthusiasm, and wit that this consummate professor exudes when, eyes twinkling and mouth grinning, he shares his fascination for all things ecological and teaches about wondrous wildlife histories, using cold-blooded companions to stir curiosity.

As a child, Gibbons became enamored with wildlife of all shapes and sizes. His snake collection resided in the family basement, and while the adults didn’t “particularly like the snakes, they encouraged more than discouraged my interests,” he said.

Now, six decades later, that youthful fascination flows through every aspect of



Gator wrangler.

Kurt Buhlmann and Whit Gibbons with an alligator snapping turtle, the largest freshwater turtle in North America.



Retired UGA ecology professor and senior research scientist **WHIT GIBBONS** has written or edited more than a dozen books, from scientific monographs to popular references on southeastern snakes, turtles, and frogs and toads, with forthcoming titles on lizards and crocodylians as well as salamanders. Author of more than two hundred refereed articles, Gibbons has penned over a thousand weekly columns distributed by the New York Times Regional Newspaper Group. The former UGA Press Editorial Board member is a founder of Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, has won numerous honors as an ecologist and writer, and has a turtle named for him.

his eminent research program based at the Savannah River Ecology Lab in South Carolina. A UGA research unit, SREL is among the world’s premier herpetology labs, renowned for its long-running studies and foremost findings. Countless university students have studied under Gibbons’s tutelage. Together, Gibbons and his students have made seminal contributions to ecology, especially the environmental effects on survivorship, reproduction, and population dispersal of amphibians, reptiles, and fish. Mike Dorcas, a Davidson College biology professor and coauthor of *Snakes of the*

Southeast, said that many people consider Gibbons “the most well-known herpetologist in the country, if not the world. He has been a remarkable catalyst, transforming herpetology in the Southeast.”

Gibbons, who credits University of Alabama professors for encouraging him as an undergraduate, said students are his most important legacy. “I am invigorated by their enthusiasm for learning.” Students and colleagues alike credit his generosity in advancing careers and opening doors. “He always makes time for people—scientists, school groups, the

public, or a neighbor who's found an interesting insect," said Tracey Tuberville, one of forty-seven graduate students Gibbons has directly mentored as an adviser.

Most people have no idea, however, where he'll be when he answers his cell phone: catching spotted turtles in a Michigan bog? delivering a talk at a Louisiana conference? hauling a boat home from a collecting trip on the coast?

"If I'm taking a boat, some people won't go with me," Gibbons said. "Maybe I'm not that good of a judge on how fast to go." Dorcas said that, with Gibbons at the helm, "the throttle is either up or



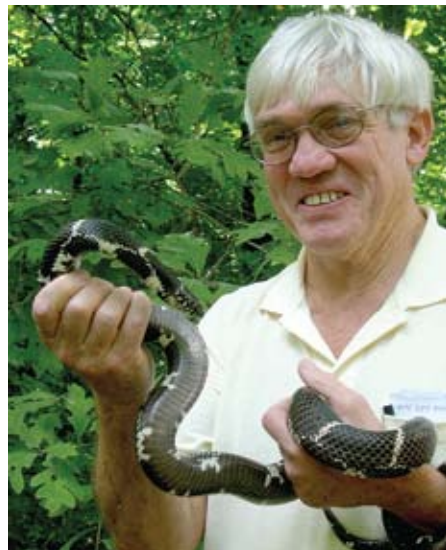
down; there's no in-between." Tuberville, coauthor of *Turtles of the Southeast*, told of a swamp adventure where Gibbons jammed a johnboat between two cypress trees, causing part of one tree to topple onto a visiting journalist. Speeding over a large ocean wave, Gibbons sent Kurt Buhlmann—Tuberville's husband, lead author of *Turtles*, and Gibbons's former graduate student—smashing through a seat, wedging him in a cooler. Another dimension of excitement to collecting trips is that venomous snakes occasionally wriggle out of pillowcases.



Mike Gibbons

Gibbons talks to his grandson about alligators. According to Gibbons, children have no innate fear of animals, even the dangerous ones, and most can be taught when they are very young to touch or hold them.

Gibbons directed SREL's Environmental Outreach Program from 1990 to 2007 and has presented popular talks to more than 100,000 people. He began writing for popular audiences three decades ago, and in 2005, his and Dorcas's *Snakes of the Southeast* won the National Outdoor Book Award for a Nature Guidebook. Whether writing, teaching, or doing research, Gibbons gives a consistent take-home message: "The unpredictability of nature is marvelous. There's a whole world out there to enjoy."

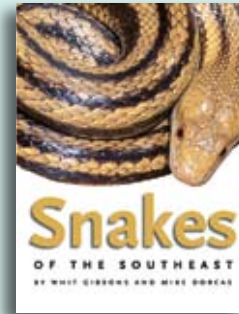


Gibbons with a favorite traveling companion, a kingsnake.

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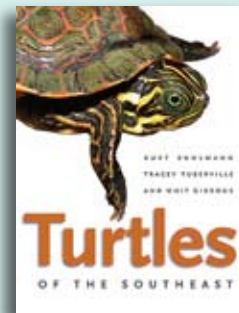


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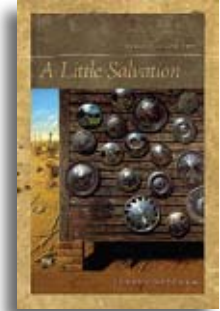
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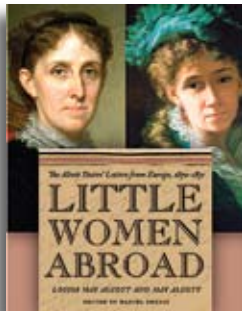
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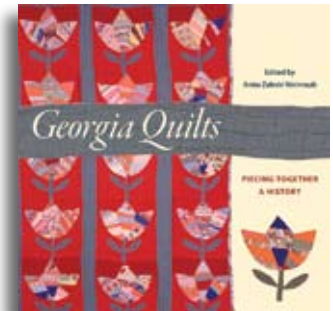
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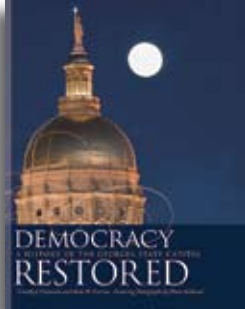
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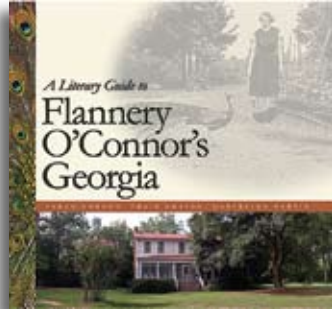
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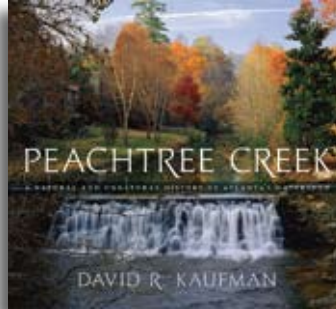
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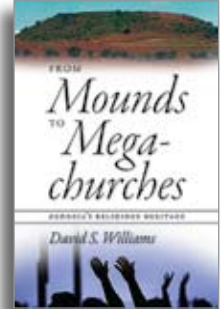
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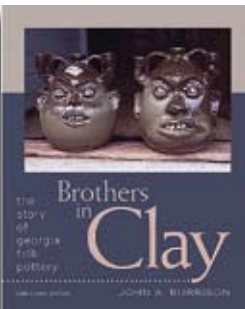
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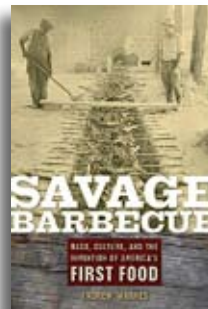
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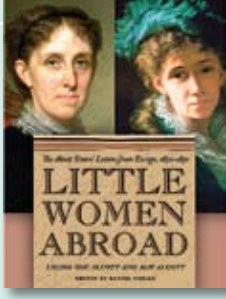
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