

## Executive Director's Corner: Dr. James Nathan

As has been my custom for the last 15 years, I have reported on the work my AUM chair has allowed me to do and my take on who is coming in our season. Most recently, I returned from San Jose, Costa Rica.

As some of you know, original AWAC member Henrietta MacGuire is the widow of José Figueres, the founder of modern day Costa Rica. The country is justly famous for his establishment of serious national health delivery on a par with most of Europe, and universal education of a high order.

Most of Figueres' fame came from his dismantling of the armed forces. Whereas in other countries of the Americas, the army has been more of a curse than a source of protection, only the police forces in Costa Rica carry arms. And unlike elsewhere in Latin America, these few border guards and coastal patrol forces pose no threat to civilian institutions.

In Costa Rica, Henrietta is a legend on the order of Martha Washington. She too had a hand in making the Figueres-led revolt against the old order, including ferrying in arms in the nick of time from across the border, on a motorcycle!

The purpose of my trip was three fold: first, to give a talk to the students of the International Affairs School of the National University.

The talk was widely advertised the weekend before we arrived (I traveled, again, with my son Michael, now 15) and the audience was quite large. It was in Spanish, a language that I hadn't used in any meaningful

sense since I worked in Mexico on my first Foreign Service assignment! My tongue unknotted itself but, alas, a few days later.

The second was to explore some kind of institutional relationship between AUM and the National University.

Finally, I hadn't been to Central America, ever,

and Costa Rica is rightly famous as something of the Switzerland of the Americas.

The place is lovely, outside of San Jose. But the capital has been damaged, to speak to the truth by its own success in that workers from across the Americas have come to Costa Rica to find a new life. Much more so than with our new arrivals, legal and illegal, there is a problem of absorption. Immigrants have changed the face of San Jose. It is dilapidated and crime ridden. Nearly a third of the population of the country, over a million people, were born elsewhere.

To be sure, some fault lies with the Costa Rican government, too. There has been pitiful investment in roads, harbors, and airports. But the

social security system, educational system, and democratic institutions are first rate. Costa Rica is still a model for developing countries everywhere. The legacy of José Figueres and Henrietta is secure. In fact, her granddaughter, Mavi (once my son's babysitter) was educated at AUM and now works with the courts as a translator and advocate for non-English speaking workers from Latin America.

As for the coming year, among several other fine speakers, John Pomfret is coming. You may recall, he couldn't come last winter because he was stricken by flu, but he is making good his promise to come this year. When we lived in China, I thought he was the best reporter in Asia and, later, in 2003, my observation was confirmed by the Asia Society who awarded Pomfret the Osborne Elliot Award for the best coverage of the region.



Henrietta MacGuire

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# The Briefing

*A Newsletter of The Alabama World Affairs Council / Fall 2007*

## **This Fall: General William L. Nash of Council on Foreign Relations, Arthur Herman on Iran, John Pomfret on China**

**Major General USA (Ret) William L. Nash**, one of the most experienced and respected figures in a generation of American warfare and peacekeeping, is currently the senior fellow for conflict prevention and director of the military fellows program at the Council on Foreign Relations. His areas of expertise include conflict prevention, national security, civil-relations and coordination, and post-conflict reconstruction.



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General Nash participates in the Council's efforts to work with governments, international organizations, the business community, and nongovernmental organizations to anticipate international crises and to provide analysis and specific recommendations for preventive action. In addition, General Nash is a professional lecturer at Georgetown University, a visiting lecturer at Princeton University, and a military consultant to ABC News. He has been an outspoken critic of the U.S. policy in Iraq, taking the administration to task for "failing to prepare for the consequences of victory."

Now retired, Nash served in combat as a platoon leader in the Vietnam war, and as an armored brigade commander in Operation Desert Storm (the first Gulf War) before becoming commander of the 1st Armored Division, a post he held from 1995 to 1997.

In late 1995, he became the commander of Task Force Eagle, a multinational division of 25,000 soldiers from twelve nations charged to enforce the military provision of the Dayton Peace Accords in northeastern

Bosnia-Herzegovina. After his retirement from the Army in 1998, he was a fellow and a visiting lecturer at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

In 2000, General Nash became one of the few Americans to lead a civilian and military peacekeeping operation. At the request of the U.S. government, he became the regional administrator for the United Nations in northern Kosovo with headquarters in Mitrovica. Prior to his work in Kosovo, he was the director of civil-military programs at the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs in Washington, D.C.

General Nash is a 1968 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point.

**Arthur Herman** is a conservative American historian with wide-ranging interests who will speak to us on October 16. Dr. Herman grew up in Wisconsin and received his bachelor's degree in history from the University of Minnesota in 1978. He went on to earn his Masters and Ph.D. with the Johns Hopkins University History Department. He was the recipient of Fulbright and Andrew W. Mellon grants, and his doctoral thesis won the Brittingham Prize in 1984.



**Oct 16**

He taught at Georgetown and George Mason University before becoming coordinator of the Western Heritage Program for the Smithsonian's Campus on the Mall from 2000 to 2005.

Arthur Herman's first book, *The Idea of Decline in*

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*Western History*, appeared in 1997. *Joseph McCarthy: Reexamining the Life and Legacy of America's Most Hated Senator* was published in 1999 and was the subject of a front-page article in the *New York Times Magazine*.

In November of 2001 his third book, *How the Scots Invented the Modern World*, was published and became a *New York Times* bestseller. It was nominated for several book prizes, including England's Samuel Johnson Prize. To date, more than a quarter of a million copies have been sold around the world, and the paperback edition has entered its twelfth printing. He was made an honorary member of the board of the Scottish Arts Council, the only non-Scot to be so honored.

His fourth book, *To Rule the Waves: How the British Navy Shaped the Modern World*, was published in 2005. It received critical acclaim both from the *Guardian* and *The Spectator*, as well as the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, and was nominated for the UK's Mountbatten Prize for the best book in naval history for 2005.

His most recent book, a full-length study of the forty-year rivalry between Mohandas Gandhi and Winston Churchill, is scheduled for publication in 2008.

In 1987, Arthur Herman married his wife Beth, an oil painter specializing in the portraiture of teddy bears. Dr. Herman's columns appear often in the *New York Post*, *Wall Street Journal Asia*, and the *National Review*.



Board member Dr. Tom Vocino and Dahdee Bullen at a pre-lecture reception.

**John Pomfret** is currently the Los Angeles bureau chief and former Beijing bureau chief of the *Washington Post*. He was scheduled to talk to our council last February, but had to cancel at the last minute due to a sudden illness.

Pomfret was raised in New York City and educated at Stanford University and Nanjing University in China. He has been a foreign correspondent with the *Post* for over 15 years., covering big wars and small in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Congo, Sri Lanka, Iraq, southwestern Turkey and northeastern Iran. Pomfret has spent seven years covering China – one in the late 1980s as a reporter during the Tiananmen Square protests, and then from 1998 until the end of 2003 as



**Nov 20**

the bureau chief in Beijing.

Pomfret speaks, reads and writes Mandarin, which he learned at Nanjing University in the early 1980s as part of one of the first groups of American students to study in China. He also speaks French, Japanese, and Serbo-Croatian. He has been a bartender in Paris and practiced Judo in Japan.

In 2003, Pomfret was awarded the Osborne Elliot Award for the best coverage of Asia by the Asia Society, and was also awarded an Alicia Patterson Journalism Fellowship in 2004.

He is married to a Chinese entrepreneur and has two children. Henry Holt published his first book – *Chinese Lessons: Five Classmates and the Story of the New China* – in August 2006. It has received rave reviews from, among others, the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*.

**Our web site is maintained by Prof. Jeremy Lewis at Huntingdon College.**

**awac.us check us out!**

## Board Member Profile

Jon Beans has been an invaluable member of the Board of Directors of our council since 1996. As news director for Alabama Public Television, he has ensured AWAC access to public television exposure on the statewide program "For the Record" for virtually every one of our speakers. This has helped spread the word about AWAC to a large audience and has also proved to be a draw to better enable us to secure high caliber speakers.

Jon was born in Marion, Alabama, to Hillyard Jefferson (deceased) and Bobbie Beans, both school teachers.

Jon is a graduate of the University of Alabama. During his time at the Capstone, he was elected secretary of the African-American Association, was sports director for WUAL-FM, and was selected for the Anderson Society Leadership, Honorary. He graduated in May of 1984 with a degree in broadcast news. He is of course a Tide football fan, but also cheers for Michigan. (*Ed. question: who would he cheer for in an Alabama/Michigan game?*)

After graduation from Alabama, he worked for stations in Selma; Montgomery; Meridian, Mississippi; and Alexandria, Louisiana as a reporter, anchor, and producer. He would join APT in October of 1990. Before becoming news director, Jon was a producer and executive producer.

During his career, Jon has been recognized for his work from the Associated Press, Troy University, the Society of Professional Journalists, and the National Association of Black

Journalists.

He is married to Sagusta Wright Beans, a magna cum laude graduate of Alabama State University. She is studio production manager for APT.

They are the proud parents of two children, Kaitlyn Hillary and Jonathan Kristopher. Kaitlyn is a seventh grader at Floyd Middle Magnet School; in gymnastics, she is the State Uneven Parallel Bars Champion for Level 6 and 7 for her age group. Jonathan is a third grader at MacMillan International Academy. He is active in scouting and is a member of Boy Scout Pack 307. The Beans family makes their home in McGehee Place.

Jon is a gamer and a golfer; with his responsibilities at work and at home, he indulges both passions at the same time, regularly challenging

Tiger Woods in Tiger's PGA 2007 video game.

In an incredible example of "the small world," Jon's brother, a lieutenant colonel at the time, was injured when terrorists crashed Flight 77 into the Army side of the Pentagon on 9/11. He survived and is currently a teacher in Germany.

In addition to serving on the board of the Alabama World Affairs Council, he is also vice chair of the Greater Montgomery Sickle Cell Foundation. He sits on the board of the MacMillan PTA, is a member of Leadership Montgomery, and works on the National Association of Black Journalists Student Development Projects.

Jon Beans is one of the finest citizens of Montgomery, and AWAC is fortunate to have him on the board.

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## Membership and Finances Remain Stable

The membership level for the Alabama World Affairs Council seems to be holding steady at about the 450 mark, which, when comparing the area that our council is able to draw from to other areas of equal size, is very good, probably the best in the Southeast. However, with the quality of the programs, venue, and buffet available to our members, combined with the low level of our dues structure, we should be able to do better. Your "staff" will exert extra effort in

that direction, and they ask each member to do the same.

Last year's income from members' dues, a grant from the Alabama Humanities Foundation, and support from the corporate community enabled the council to put our finances on a stable foundation. For the first time in recent memory, our income actually exceeded expenses! As a result, we will be able to conduct the upcoming season's programs without raising the dues.