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The Rebel Wife by Taylor Polites – Best Southern Read



Since graduating in June 2010 with his MFA in Creative Writing from Wilkes University, Taylor Polites has been busy! His debut novel, *The Rebel Wife*, was published in February 2012 by Simon & Schuster. The debut has been named one of the Best Southern Reads for 2012 by *The Atlanta Journal – Constitution*. Taylor has also received glowing reviews from BookPage, *O Magazine*, and The Southern Independent Booksellers

Association.

“I am really amazed at the amount of great coverage and response the book has received,” Taylor said. “It is truly a dream come true. I really appreciate the support and guidance that the Wilkes MFA community,

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students, alumni and faculty, has given me. You don't make these things happen on your own. I feel so lucky to be a part of a community that extends way beyond graduation.”

Taylor was on the road for almost four weeks in February. “I toured 14 cities in five states. It was amazing to be able to go out, book in hand, and talk to people about writing and history and the South. It is an absolute dream come true.” He is now embarking on a series of promotional events ranging from the Virginia Festival of the Book to the Alabama Book Festival. Dates and locations for the tour are available on Taylor’s website: <http://taylormpolites.com>

In 2009, Taylor was awarded the Norris Church Mailer Scholarship. He lives in Providence, Rhode Island, where he is currently working on the research for a second book, another one set in Albion, Alabama.

New Low-Residency Representation on AWP Board

At the recent AWP Conference in Chicago IL, two low-residency program directors were elected to serve as officers on the AWP Board. Wilkes’ own Bonnie Culver is now serving as Treasurer and Steve Heller, director of the Antioch University Los Angeles program, is serving as President. Steve was elected in 2010 and Bonnie Culver in 2011; each will serve a four year term.

“This is the first time two low-res program directors are on the Board,” Culver said, “and it’s the first time two are acting as Officers. It’s very exciting.” This is great news for low-residency programs. Congratulations to Steve and Bonnie.

Announcements

The June Residency is scheduled to take place June 15-23, 2012. Applications for June admission are due May 15 for regular admission or May 1 to be considered for Graduate Assistantships.

Jack Scovil, long-time Advisory Board Member, passed away February 23, 2012. Jack was a literary agent for more than 40 years and a principal agent at Scovil Galen Ghosh in New York City. He worked with Norman Mailer, Margaret Truman, Larry Smith, and many others. Jack was a founding Advisory Board Member of the low-residency MFA program at Wilkes. “‘Uncle Jack’ was a wonderful supporter, friend, and advisor to the entire program,” said Bonnie Culver. “He will be dearly missed.”

A Memorial Celebration for Norris Church Mailer will take place in April. This is a closed event by invitation only. Wilkes faculty, alum, and

students wishing to share a few words about Norris should contact the Program Director, Bonnie Culver or Dr. Michael Lennon for more information. They will attend the event and represent Wilkes.

Faculty members who include students on AWP 2013 panel discussions are eligible to apply for student funding support from the Wilkes University Mentoring Committee. Involvement of current students is encouraged. Please contact Program Director Bonnie Culver for more details.

Alums George Kraynak and Julia Steier have good news: Many nonsensical things occur with your cohort during the grueling eight days of the January and June residencies that brings your group closer. But during the work semesters and the hours spent on the program formally known as WebCT, an unlikely friendship can ignite then twist into companionship. George Kraynak (MFA 2010) and Julia Steier (MA 2010) met in 501 during the January residency in 2008. In 2009, their Wilkes friendship moved into real time and the writing relationship quickly derailed into something more. They co-founded a scrumptious online food blog titled George and Julia Eat Manhattan (<http://www.georgeandjuliaeatmanhattan.com>). They began documenting their culinary adventures, and for two and a half years these two delectable delights couldn't deny their uncanny connection and attraction.

On an unseasonably warm February afternoon in Central Park, George and Julia were laying side-by-side holding hands when suddenly George began pouring his heart out about their future together.



Several times before they've hypothetically discussed the greatness of getting married and moving in together, but nothing more. But like a colt learning to stand, George nervously got on one knee and gazed into her eyes. Julia sat up so bewildered by his actions and couldn't fathom what was unraveling right in front of her. So instead of shutting up and listening, she hollered at his practical joke. But George tuned her out—a tactic he's acquired over their time spent together—and pulled a small velvet brown box from his breast coat pocket. When he creaked the box open, the daylight glinted off the diamond like meteor showers at midnight. Without hesitation, Julia lunged for the ring. George smiled and said, "So you'll marry me?" and Julia emphatically nodded yes.

Faculty/Staff Notes

Nancy McKinley's essay "Title IX and Me" appears in the anthology *Becoming: What Makes a Woman*, published by the University of Nebraska, February, 2012. Her short story "Signed Sealed Delivered" has been accepted by the Main Street Rag Short Fiction Anthology for the TATTOOS theme to be published in Fall of 2012. Nancy was a reader at the February Prose in Pubs event. On May 4, 2012 she will be reading at MulberryArt Studio, First Friday in Lancaster City, 6-8 p.m. for the Elizabethtown Writers Group, with Wilkes Alumni Gale Martin and Rick Fellingner, as well as Mary Beth Matteo and Jesse Waters.

Gregory Fletcher's play *Cow-Tipping and Other Signs of Stress* is a national finalist for the Reva Shiner Comedy Award from the Bloomington Playwrights Project.

Neil Shepard has given poetry readings in a half-dozen states to celebrate his new poetry book, *(T)ravel/Un(t)ravel*. Upcoming readings include the KGB Bar in New York City in April, Vermont Poetry Society in May, Saratoga Arts Festival in June, and Chautauqua Writers Institute in July. Shepard will teach a Poetry Workshop at Poets House in Manhattan (April-May) and an Advanced Poetry Workshop at the Chautauqua Writers Institute in July. New poems are forthcoming in *Per Contra* (online) and the *Chautauqua Literary Review*. Three book reviews of *Travel/Untravel* appear in *PANK* (online), *Fogged Clarity* (online), and *Provincetown Arts*.

Student/Alumni Notes

M.F.A. alum Amye Archer has a piece, "Found," accepted by *H_ngm_n* for the April issue. She has also been selected as a guest editor for a special Parenting issue of *PANK Magazine*. The issue is scheduled for June.

M.F.A. alum Christopher Bullard's full-length book of poetry, *Back*, has been selected by WordTech Communications for publication by their CW Books imprint in November of 2013.

M.A. student Kait Burrier's poem, "To the Little Boy in the White Gown," will be published in the Carlow University Press anthology, *Voices in the Attic*, Vol. XVIII.

M.F.A. alum Brian Fanelli has a poem entitled "After Work" in the current issue of *Harpur Palate*. He also has poems forthcoming in the fall issue of *Inkwell Journal* and the spring/summer issue of *Solstice Literary Magazine*.

M.F.A. alum Richard Fellingner's short story collection, *They Hover Over Us*, has been published by Snake Nation Press. This collection of 13 stories about people from PA's Rust Belt won the 2011 Serena McDonald Kennedy Fiction Award and is available now at readings and signings hosted by the author. The publisher will make the book available soon at its Web site, snakenationpress.org, and on Amazon.

M.F.A. alum Patricia Florio is working with Literary Adventure, a reading series. This month The Jersey Shore Writers will be sharing the stage at the Belmar Arts Council with three Wilkes Alums.

M.A. alum Jerry Gurka wrote and directed a play, *The Prodigal Sons: Passion Play 2012*, performed in Larksville PA, in March.

M.F.A. alum Bill Lowenburg's novel, *The Zorki Chronicles*, is a quarter finalist in the Amazon Breakthrough Novel Contest. Finals take place in June. He also recently published a photography article on the Australian Website, Lucida.

M.A. alum Gale Martin will be reading at MulberryArt Studio, May 4, for the Elizabethtown Writers Group.

M.A. student Lori A. May has an article, "Bypass obstacles to traditional publication," in the March 2012 edition online at WriterMag.com. She is scheduled to speak at the Canadian Creative Writers and Writing Programs Conference hosted at Humber College in Toronto, May 2012.

M.A. alum Lori Myers will be teaching a workshop entitled "Acting the Book: Putting Pizazz into Your Literary Readings" at the Pennwriters Conference, Lancaster, PA. She will also be doing a fiction reading and teaching a writing workshop at the Chautauqua Institute in New York this summer.

M.F.A. alum William D. Prystauk's academic paper, "The Kids Aren't All Right: Horror Movies Remind Us that Protecting Children at Home is an Illusion" was just published in the Mid-Atlantic Popular American Culture Association "Gazette" (2012 Winter Edition). His short crime story, "Mara" will appear in the upcoming issue of "Criminal Class Review." The academic paper he prepared for his MFA critical paper at Wilkes has been accepted for publication by the peer reviewed "Studies in Gothic Fiction." Bill has also begun pre-production of his short dramatic horror, *Too Many Predators*, to be filmed in late August.

M.A. alum Dania Ramos' bilingual co-creation *MI CASA TU CASA* was produced at Luna Stage as part of its 2011-2012 mainstage season. In December, her play *ROOM 30* received a staged reading as part of Playwrights Theatre of New Jersey's FORUM Series at Fairleigh

Dickinson University. She was also selected for Playwrights Theatre of New Jersey's 2011-12 New Jersey Emerging Women Playwrights Project, a ten-month play development program.

M.A. student Michael Soloway will have a memoir excerpt published in the May issue of Brevity magazine. The piece is called "Introducing Mother Nature."

M.F.A. student Sandee Umbach's full-length poetry collection, *The Pattern Maker's Daughter*, was released in February of 2012 by Bottom Dog Press. Jim Daniels, author and editor, calls the collection "a remarkable debut ... full of honesty, wisdom, and heart."

Program Note

The Write Life blog welcomes guest posts from faculty, students, and alumni. Email lori.may1@wilkes.edu for details. Weekly interviews and literary news are shared online at <http://wilkeswritelife.wordpress.com>.

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