

Revise This!

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WILKES UNIVERSITY CREATIVE WRITING NEWSLETTER

December 2016

- [E. S. Farley Library Collection Of Published Works Grows](#)
- [Five And A Half Questions For Susan Cartsonis](#)
- [Warm Your Winter With Wilkes Community Writing Workshops](#)
- [Norman Mailer Conference](#)
- [Student Reminders](#)
- [News From Faculty, Students And Alums](#)

Clearing a section of the stacks: the E.S. Farley Library Collection of Published Works

by Danie Watson

During the 10th anniversary
celebration of the Wilkes
University Graduate Creative
Writing Program in 2015,
Director **Dr. Bonnie Culver**

Archives

[Archives](#)

[2017](#)

[2018](#)

[Revise This! -
November 2019](#)

discovered a way in which Wilkes could set itself apart from all other creative writing programs.

"As I was looking through our program materials including bios, *Revise This!* and alum notes, I began a bibliography that included nearly a thousand items—books, films, collections, published plays, chapbooks, memoirs—physical pieces of published, produced work," Dr. Culver said. "We then tried to find any program, anywhere—residency or low-residency—that had amassed a collection of its creative works. We could find none, certainly nothing like what our program offered."



Our goal was to create the largest single collection of a creative writing program in the world. By end of last year, the E. S. Farley Library Collection of Published Works was launched with donations received from faculty, alums, current students, and Advisory Board members.

When I began my graduate assistantship in February 2016, the Library Collection was my first assignment. At the time, there were about 150 titles in the collection, and very few copies in the archive. My first goal was to review the list of titles in the collection, determine what was in the library, and what we were missing. From there, I determined how many copies we had of each title. Our goal was to obtain two copies of each title: one for circulation, and one for the archives.

Along with the Program's library liaison, Carl "Eddie" Clem, I pored through the books donated to the Creative Writing Program. We also spent time searching the Farley Library shelves. We discovered that 248 titles were already in the collection. Many of these titles have copies in both the archives and on the shelves; but our work is not over, as there are many works not included in the collection.

"The Library will include these works within its local catalog, as well as in WorldCat (www.worldcat.org), making the items discoverable worldwide. This collection will also become usable to those patrons outside of the Wilkes-Barre area via interlibrary loan, increasing discoverability and

exposure to the worldwide library community," says Clem. "We encourage the donation of a second copy for [the library's] Archives and Special Collections, to preserve the impact of the University and its graduates."

The Library Collection has grown significantly with donations of published works by authors affiliated with the program, including Blue Moon Plays, Etruscan Press, Kaylie Jones Books, Northampton House Press, and SenArt Films, but we are far from reaching our goal.

More than 1,000 titles are needed. Everyone can leave his or her mark! We're asking that current students, faculty, and alumni donate copies of their favorite work by a program-affiliated author.

Each piece of the collection is notated with a golden medallion on the cover. Donated books contain a nameplate before the title page, stating who donated the book to the collection and recognizing the importance of good literary citizenship.

The E.S. Farley Library Collection of Published Works cannot grow to be the largest collection without your help. The current list of published works in the collection may be found at <http://wilkes.libguides.com/creativewritingcollection>.

Danie Watson is a graduate assistant for Etruscan Press and M.A. student in creative nonfiction in the Wilkes Graduate Creative Writing Program. She lives in Nanticoke, Pa.

Five and a half questions for Susan Cartsonis

by Lisa Greim

Producer **Susan Cartsonis** has had a busy 2016. *Middle School: The Worst Years of My Life* opened Oct. 16; *Carrie Pilby* premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in September; and *Deidra and Laney Rob a Train* finished principal photography in Utah last summer, and will be released as a Netflix Original in 2017.

A member of the Creative Writing Program faculty and advisory board, Cartsonis founded Storefront Pictures to make "smart, high-quality films that appeal to female audiences." Along the way, she has championed the need for women in all aspects of the film industry – female directors, producers, screenwriters and investors.

I'll lead with a self-serving question. I write fiction and memoir. What will make my manuscript something you want to option?

If there's a good and original, and in some way, universal idea at the center of your story, then it might be a good prospect for adaptation to screen. That's not to say it can't be unique, but there has to be some core notion that is relatable. For example, everyone has felt "less than" or like an outsider, and so *The Duff* found a wide audience beyond its core of teenage girls.

Deidra and Laney Rob a Train is a Netflix Original. Are projects for online distribution handled differently than those for theatrical release?

I will let you know when I get through this process, but YES, I can tell it's different already. Netflix considers the online launch every bit as important as a premiere in movie theaters. There are different priorities surrounding publicity materials. And online distributors seem particularly knowledgeable about demographics that they can reach that might be ignored by theatrical distributors.

The credits list for *Carrie Pilby* is full of women — director Susan Johnson, screenwriter Kara Holden (from the novel by Caren Lissner), and producing partners Suzanne McNeil Farwell and you. Is the needle for women in Hollywood moving at all, or are people just talking about this issue more?

Talking about the issue creates awareness, which makes the needle move—but the needle or the proportions of women in film are the same paltry proportions as in the government and in big business. Interestingly, that proportion is healthier in independent film, where the financial barrier to entry is not as high. There's a Sundance/Women in Film study that looks at those stats—and endeavors to improve them. The main focus being: get women access to funding.

I noticed all three of your current projects have YA roots. What about YA titles and topics appeals to you?

I'm just a YA magnet because I'm immature. Seriously, I think that the vulnerability, questions about identity, and worldview of YA material appeals to me as something that we carry with us our entire lives. I like to think that the themes we explore will speak to audiences of all ages.

Please tell a story that will make Wilkes screenwriters feel good about what they do.

Wilkes screenwriters come from diverse perspectives and bring all sorts

of fresh experiences to the world of film. I personally now have two projects set in the Scranton area. Not being from Hollywood (and very few people are actually from Southern California) is an advantage in my opinion. We get tired of movies that reference the 405 freeway...and we long for stories that we connect with, that allow us to "take a vacation" to other places!

What is it about movies? Why are they your life's work?

I'm a storyteller and have been one since I was a small child. I started by telling stories to my four younger brothers and sisters to entertain them, wrote and performed plays in school and after school, and made my first film at 12. I love movies because they allow a storyteller to connect with a large audience, and create a shared perspective that has power to transcend differences of culture and specific experience. I've always known that storytelling and connecting with an audience is powerful and important. And I believe that in ways small and large, we can affect culture and influence the world.

Lisa Greim is working on her M.A. in creative nonfiction from Wilkes University, when she isn't writing something else in Arvada, Colo.

Community Workshops will warm the winter

Community Creative Writing Workshops will be offered on the Wilkes-Barre campus in February, March, and April. The six- and seven-week sessions, which cost \$65, include:

- **Intro to Poetry with Dawn Leas**, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Mondays, Feb. 20 - March 27
- **Advanced Techniques in Memoir Writing with Vicki Mayk**, 6-8 p.m., Mondays, Feb. 27 - April 3
- **Playwriting Workshop: The One Act Play with Bonnie Culver**, 6-8 p.m., Tuesdays, Feb. 21 – March 28
- **Creative Nonfiction: Taking the "I" and "Me" Out of Memoir with Rachael Hughes**, 6-8 p.m., Tuesday, March 14 – April 25 (7 sessions)
- **Intro to Screenwriting (Tools and Techniques) with Kelly Clisham**, 6-8 p.m., Thursdays, Feb. 23 – March 30
- **Word Watering: Storytelling, Healing, and (Re)Constructing Identity with Virginia Grove**, 9-11 a.m., Saturdays, March 4 – April 8

In addition, **Dawn Zera** will teach two Saturday sessions for children and teens on Feb. 4, **Getting Serious About Creative Writing** and **Putting the Fun Back in Writing**. Each are \$10.

Full info and registration can be found on the [Wilkes Creative Writing website](#).

Wilkes Creative Writing Program at Mailer Conference

Wilkes faculty, alums, and students participated in panels and presentations at the 14th Norman Mailer Society Conference, "Return to Long Branch," held Sept. 29 - Oct. 1 on the Monmouth University campus in West Long Branch, N.J. A panel, "Remembering Muhammad Ali" included Michael Mailer and John Buffalo Mailer. K.C. Leiber performed Bonnie Culver's one-woman play *A Ticket to the Circus*, based on Norris Church Mailer's memoir. The annual Wilkes reading featured Mailer's unpublished first novel, *No Percentage*.

Student reminders

Alums and faculty may nominate one incoming student in each cohort for the Pay It Forward scholarship, which applies \$2,500 against his or her first semester's tuition.

Students: The annual Etruscan Prize for the best single page in any genre will be judged this year by Etruscan author Myrna Stone. Deadline

is April 15, 2017. Winner receives a \$100 honorarium, a complimentary subscription of Etruscan titles, and a limited edition broadside of the winning piece. "Send us one page: your best page, in any genre. It can be beginning, middle or end. It can be prose, script, or poetry. Send us a page that sings." Email your page as an attachment to books@etruscanpress.org.



[ABOVE] David Poyer and Lenore Hart Poyer.

Faculty News

Gregory Fletcher's play *Family of Flechner* appears in the newly published anthology *The Best Ten-Minute Plays 2016* by Smith & Kraus, Inc.

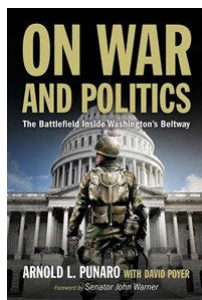
Christine Gelineau's book *Crave* was a finalist in the poetry category for the 2016 CNY Book Awards, a program of the Syracuse YMCA's Downtown Writers Center. Winners were announced Dec. 8.

Lenore Hart Poyer has a lot going on. Connecticut-based Graystone Press will include her poem "Crazy Quilt 1918" in *Forgotten Women*, an anthology due in early 2017. Her novel in progress, *The Alchemy of Light*, about a photographer of the dead who clashes with Thomas Edison, as the Great Genius is inventing the electric chair, was a semi-

finalist in the 2016 Faulkner-Wisdom "Words & Music" Novel Competition in August. Lenore gave a talk Oct. 6 at the Irish Writers Centre in Dublin, where she and David Poyer addressed a group there on – among other topics – the current American publishing landscape, and the necessity of book promotion for authors. She was invited to join the Irish Writers Union, and did so on Nov. 1. Finally, Lenore's latest Elisabeth Graves novel, published earlier in Norway by Egmont Boker (Oslo), was released in a first North American edition Oct. 11.

For the first time ever, **Kaylie Jones** and two [Kaylie Jones Books](#) authors were invited to participate at the Miami Book Fair in November. Kaylie moderated a panel with Barb Taylor (M.F.A. '15) and J. Patrick Redmond, on the important role indie presses like Akashic Press play in the increasingly commercialized world of fiction.

J. Michael Lennon's review of *Avid Reader: A Life* by Robert Gottlieb, former editor of *The New Yorker*, and editor-in-chief at Simon and Schuster and Alfred Knopf, will appear in an upcoming issue of the *Times Literary Supplement* (London).



On Nov. 3, **David Poyer and Lenore Hart** attended a book launch at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, for *On War and Politics* (Naval Institute Press, November 2016), which Dave co-authored with General Arnold Punaro. Lenore also provided editorial assistance, received credit in the book, and got to meet her longtime hero, John Warner! Dave's new novel *Onslaught* (St. Martin's, 2016) received a starred review from *Publishers Weekly*, which described the 16th novel in the Dan Lenson series as "superb." *Quarterdeck* magazine said, "David Poyer's page-turning Lenson series, featuring all-too-real scenarios relating to current world affairs, sets the standard for present-day naval fiction."

Student and Alumni News

Maxwell Bauman (M.F.A. '14) reports that [Baphomitzvah](#) won Best Screenplay in the November IndustryBOOST Audience Awards competition on GetIndieWise.com.

Tom Borthwick's (M.F.A. '08) film *Solacium*, based on a previously published short story by Borthwick, debuted at the Belin Film Festival in October.

Kait Burrier (M.F.A. '14) recently relocated to Madison, WI, where she

joined Ideas That Evoke, an award-winning boutique social media agency, as their first full-time copywriter.

Tara Caimi

(M.F.A. '10)

presented

"Fiction

Techniques

in Memoir:

Using Craft

Elements

and

Privileged

Perspective

to Engage

Readers

and Gain



[ABOVE] *Poem Fusion, Sangue della Radici Festival.*

Trust" at HippoCamp 2016. She developed and taught the five-week workshop "Crafting Creative Personal Essays and Memoir" for Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Penn State. On Nov. 3, Tara visited the English 212 Introduction to Fiction Writing class at Penn State to speak about guidelines for submitting short stories and essays. As an independent contractor, Tara took on the temporary role of managing editor for the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, leading the charge to turn the association's member newsletter into a professional, broader-reaching journal.

Craig Czury (M.F.A. '08) conducted a public Poem Fusion—multi-lingual poetry performance—at the Sangue della Radici Festival, Sept. 23, in Soncino, Italy. On Nov. 19, Czury presented his *Coal Mines / Gas Lines* at the British Council in Milano.

Screenwriter **Gabrielle D'Amico** (M.A. '15) attended CineStory in October. Look for a future blog post about the experience on the redesigned [Wilkes Write Life blog](#).

Heather M.

Davis (MFA

'12) says:

"You can

now



watch *Completely Normal* on [Amazon](#) and [Vimeo](#)! I helped with an early draft of the script and have a 'Story By' credit."

Brian Fanelli (M.F.A. '10) During the September 20 program of "The Writer's Almanac," Garrison Keillor read Brian's poem, "Raking Leaves." He had a poem, "Halloween," published on [Verse Daily](#). His

new book, *Waiting for the Dead to Speak*, was reviewed on the [Best American Poetry blog](#), and he gave a radio interview for the program "Weekly Reader," hosted by graduate students at the University of Minnesota, Mankato.

The Jersey Shore Writers held their first Holiday Book Convention & Open Mic on Dec. 11 at 3 p.m. at the Jersey Shore Arts Center. More than 20 New Jersey authors offered books for sale.

Monique Antonette Lewis (M.F.A. '12) is now a travel writer for *The Huffington Post*.

April Line (M.F.A. '15) has a new job, writing for the development and marketing department of the YWCA. Her Adipocere handmade vegan soap and Dr. Fictitious line of body care products are for sale at adipoceresoap.net.

Donna Malies' (M.A. '11) one act play, *Secrets She Kept*, was produced for the Pensacola Little Theatre on Oct. 15.

Gale Martin (M.F.A. '10) taught a creative writing workshop Nov. 26 at the Brooks Memorial Library in Brattleboro, Vt.

Lori A. May (M.F.A. '13) has new writing in *Time Out New York*. She will be in New York this January leading a number of workshops and lectures. She is also a featured reader for January's *At The Inkwell* reading series at KGB Lit Bar, founded by alum **Monique Antonette Lewis** and hosted by alum **Andi Talarico**. In February, Lori will be speaking on a panel at AWP and signing books at the Bloomsbury booth in the AWP book fair.

Todd McClimans' (M.A. '12) novel *Time Underground*, the second in a time-travel American History series, was named a Silver Medalist in the [2016 Moonbeam Children's Book Awards](#). The third book in the series, *Time to Heal*, will be released by Overdue Books on January 1, 2017.

Two Wilkes writers were finalists in [New Millennium Writings' 42nd contest](#): **Ginger Marcinkowski** (M.F.A. '11) in Flash Fiction for "Tsunami615" and **Lisa Greim** (M.A. student) in Fiction for "Walter Says Good Morning."

Linda M.C. Nguyen (M.F.A. '14) will have a science-fiction short story published next year with *Ember: A Journal of Luminous Things*. She also worked on the [WatchDogs 2](#) video game as a Legal Coordinator on the Narrative Team at Ubisoft Montreal. The game was released Nov. 15 for PlayStation 4, Xbox One and PC.

Josh Penzone's (M.A. '13) short story "[Falling Away](#)" has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. It appeared in *Five on the Fifth*, an online journal. [Josh's words of encouragement about submitting stories to literary magazines](#) is the December feature on the Wilkes Write Life blog.

The Importance of Sex Education, a short film written and directed by **Laurie Elizabeth Powers** (M.F.A. '13), was a top 21 finalist in the 2016 Louisiana Film Prize and took a Best Actress award at the festival. The film will begin making the festival rounds starting with the Lone Star Film Festival in Ft. Worth, Texas, where the filmmakers will be appearing for a Q&A, and the Idaho Laugh Fest in January, with others TBA. Screening schedule and trailer at www.importancemovie.com. Laurie's feature script *Who I Am Now* was an official selection in the LA Lift Off Film Festival and a top 10 finalist in the Northern Lights Screenplay contest.

Dania Ramos (M.A. '10) was one of seven contributing playwrights for *Women Rising: Stories of Hope*, which was produced by Speranza Theatre Company in October.

Joy Smith (M.F.A. '13) had her article "[Getting Students Excited About Analytical Writing](#)" published in the September edition of *AMLE Magazine* (Association of Middle Level Educators). The article outlined a process for teaching students how to analyze literature in their writing and how individual conferencing and student ownership of the revision process served to improve academic writing and standardized test scores.

Donna Talarico's (M.F.A. '10, M.A. '16) article "[What Does an Author's Website Need to Succeed?](#)" was featured in the November edition of *The Writer Magazine*. She also presented a content writing workshop and conducted a multimedia storytelling workshop at the Higher Education Web Professionals' annual national conference in Memphis in October.

Douglas James Troxell's (M.A. '13) short story, "Epidemic," appeared in *The Book of the Macabre*, a morbid collection of twisted tales published by Dreamfusion Press. Ordering information can be found on Amazon or dreamfusionpress.com. Don't forget to like his author page on Facebook!

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Wilkes University

84 West South Street

Wilkes-Barre, PA 18766

1-800-WILKES-U

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