



# The Inkwel Quarterly

Volume 7

Issue 1

Fall 2012

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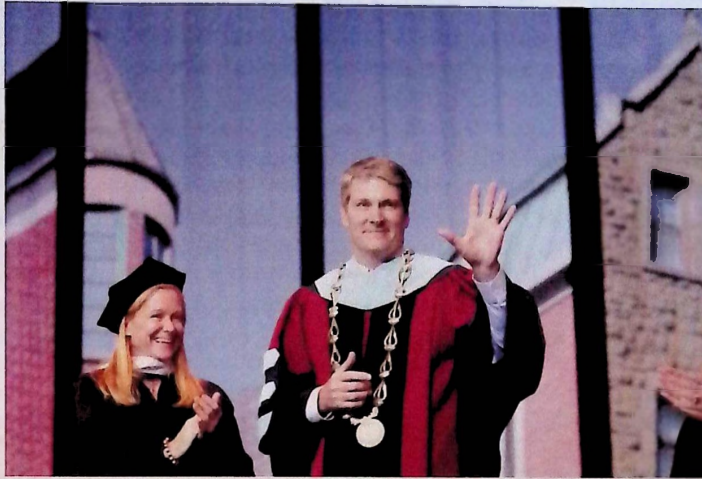


Photo Courtesy of Vicky Mayk

## The Inkwel Welcomes President Leahy

By Annie Yoskoski

**Dr. Patrick Leahy** was installed as the sixth president of Wilkes University this past September. As a graduate of Georgetown University with a bachelor's degree in English, two master's degrees from Cornell, and an EED from the University of Pennsylvania, Leahy is a president who understands what Wilkes University is about, and is eager to put more emphasis on the humanities in a time where the sciences are predominantly taking over.

Originally from Baltimore, Leahy has lived up and down the east coast from Boston to Washington, D.C. He has lived in Northeastern Pennsylvania for eight years. Originally applying for the job, Leahy saw it as a, "unique privilege to pursue an opportunity like this and do it in a part of the country that I already knew and loved." He submitted his material and upon learning more about the school he was "hooked." "I just believe fundamentally that there was incredible work being done here at Wilkes that would be very exciting to be a part of. So, I think it was part the more I learned, and continue to learn, about the place the more I appreciate what happens here, and the more potential I believe the university has."

Leahy went into college as a business major, and then switched to English in his freshman year. Elaborating, Leahy explained, "A combination of two things happened my freshman year. I took accounting and did not do very well and I took a freshman poetry class with the then president of Georgetown, Father Tim Healy. That class alone convinced me to transfer into the College of Arts and Sciences and major in English". Leahy's favorite thing about studying the humanities was the overall experience of unpacking literature. "I thought 'When else in my life am I going to have the time and opportunity to read these great works and have someone help me through it?'"

Leahy has just started, but already has an overall goal for his time at the university. Leahy said, "My main goal is to try and create an environment where the people involved in this community can excel. I don't for a minute think that I alone can do anything with the university, I truly don't believe that. I do believe that a president's role is to try and create the best possible environment for the work of the faculty, students, and staff. I think my principle role is to create that culture on campus and promote the place like crazy. I think if we do that, create that environment, we can become one of the best small universities in the country".

Leahy believes that studying the humanities gives people the tools that they need to succeed. "The humanities have many benefits. One of the top benefits is critical thinking skills. Try and unpack a Shakespeare

Continued on Page 5...

## Humanities Club and Faculty Updates

By Victoria Hevener

- **Dr. Michelle Anthony** attended the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) State Conference on Saturday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, in Harrisburg. Anthony discussed how to preserve and improve higher education in Pennsylvania. Anthony used Wilkes University as an example of faculty struggles against administration at both the university and state levels and talked about possible solutions for these issues. Dr. Anthony will also attend the national AAUP conference on Shared Governance in Washington D.C. on October 26-28.
- **Dr. Marcia Farrell's** book review of *Edwardian Fiction and the Emergence of Modernism* by **Ruth Hoberman** will be published in Volume 49, Issue 3 of the *James Joyce Quarterly*.
- **Dr. Sean Kelly's** article entitled "I blush, I burn, I shudder, while I pen the damnable atrocity": Writing Perversion and the Kantian Inhuman in Poe's "The Black Cat" will appear in the winter (2013) special issue of *Edgar Allan Poe Review*, "Post-Kantian Poe."
- **Dr. Janet Starner's** Eng 342, Studies in Shakespeare, class was privileged to have guest lecturer **Professor Naomi Baker**. Baker provided the students with the Theatrical prospective of the actor and director, allowing students to engage with the Shakespeare's texts in new ways.
- **The Manuscript Society** will be holding a Halloween reading on Thursday October 25<sup>th</sup> at 5pm.
- **The Poetry In Transit 2012** launch event is coming in October to the Wilkes-Barre Intermodal Center on Public Square.

## A Historical Moment in Luzerne County

By Leanna Rolon

Have you ever wondered how Luzerne got its name? The story dates back to the 1700's. It was named after Chevalier De Luzerne, a Frenchman who supported the colonials in the Revolutionary war and later became a French minister to the United States. The name Luzerne, when translated, literally means "lighthouse." Contrary to the noble manner in which Luzerne was named, the naming of Wyoming was not as sophisticated.

Before William Penn founded Pennsylvania, the Iroquois had control of what is now Wyoming Valley. At the time they didn't feel that they had enough man power to properly settle, so they permitted some other Native American tribes to join them on the land and help settle it. The Delaware tribe ended up settling along the Susquehanna River, and named the areas on both sides of the river, "Maugh-wau-wa-me". When the English settlers ventured onto the land they were introduced to it by the name that the Delaware had given to it. Somehow, they took "Maugh-wau-wa-me" and translated it into Wyoming.

Luzerne County was given its name from a respected Frenchmen and Wyoming was given its name from an awkward translation. It makes one wonder how many other names of things were found in similar ways.

## A Romantic Moment in Literary History

By Dr. Helen Davis and Jamie Alderiso

'Rise like Lions after slumber  
In unvanquishable number!  
Shake your chains to earth like dew  
Which in sleep had fallen on you -  
Ye are many - they are few!'

Percy Bysshe Shelley's poem *The Masque of Anarchy* is one of the most influential English political poems. Gandhi mentions it in his doctrine of Satyagraha and Thoreau in his essay Civil Disobedience. It is hailed by many as one of the greatest articulations of nonviolent civil disobedience ever written. Its message still resonates today. To learn more about the legacy of British Romanticism, take English 335 in the Spring!



If you are interested in joining *The Inkwell Quarterly* staff and/or enrolling in English 190:Projects in Writing: Inkwell, please contact Dr. Marcia Farrell (marcia.farrell@wilkes.edu) or Annie Yoskoski (anne.yoskoski@wilkes.edu) for more information.

## Back of the Book

By Gabby Zawacki

Beware the man  
of the lessons I learned  
novel takes the reader on  
cast of characters.

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smell of death and decay  
sacrificed animals in vari  
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odd pair of Roy and The  
releases spiders into the  
seem harmless enough u

In addition to  
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ending. There is no satis  
morality, the pages keep  
Flannery O'Connor. He  
Perhaps Katherine Dun  
some other writer to cor  
— but Pollock is no sha

## Local Events

By Anthony Bartoli

There are several upcoming

Campus Events:

- The Sordoni Art Gallery 408-4325
- You can go see "Go 11 & 18 at 2 p.m.

Community Events:

- October 13, 2012 at are \$12.00.
- The *Ringling Bros. and*
- The *Trans Siberian O*

## Back of the Bookshelf

By Gabby Zawacki

Beware the man who salvages road kill. Never hitch-hike again. Watch out for twisted religion. These are just some of the lessons I learned from Donald Ray Pollock's first novel, *The Devil All the Time*. Beginning in Knockemstiff, Ohio, this novel takes the reader on a horrifying, revolting, and utterly eerie road trip through the personal hell of an incredibly corrupt cast of characters.

If you happen to be wandering in the calm fields of Knockemstiff, your nose might be greeted with the sickening smell of death and decay. In this serene setting, Willard Russell and his son Arvin have made a shrine of road kill and sacrificed animals in various states of decay in an attempt to save his cancer-stricken wife. She dies anyway, and Willard makes the ultimate sacrifice and kills himself.

Arvin is sent to live with his father's parents who live in Tennessee. It is here that the reader is introduced to the odd pair of Roy and Theodore, who travel from parish to parish, bringing their strange brand of worship with them. Roy releases spiders into the congregation while Theodore, wheelchair stricken after a self-poisoning, plays the guitar. These two seem harmless enough until they kill Roy's wife in an attempt to resurrect her.

In addition to these characters are Sandy and Carl, a married couple with an addiction to sex and murder, and Arvin, who spins his own story throughout the pages and is the closest thing this novel has to a hero. There is no happy ending. There is no satisfaction. But you will not want to put the book down. Despite the terror and horrifying lack of morality, the pages keep on turning. The grotesque settings and crooked characters are similar to the southern gothic style of Flannery O'Connor. Her genius seems spilled on every page. However, Pollock's own unique voice haunts the pages too. Perhaps Katherine Dunn, author of *Geek Love*, says it best in her review of the novel when she says, "I keep reaching for some other writer to compare him with — maybe a Raymond Carver with hope and vitality, or a godless Flannery O'Connor — but Pollock is no shadow of anybody else. This is a powerful talent at work."

## Local Events

By Anthony Bartoli

There are several upcoming events here on campus and throughout the community:

Campus Events:

- The Sordoni Art Gallery is hosting "*Rosahyn Richards – Recent Works*" until October 21. For more information, call (570) 408-4325
- You can go see "*Godspell*" at the Dorothy Dickson Dart Center on November 9, 10, 16 & 17 at 8 p.m., and November 11 & 18 at 2 p.m.

Community Events:

- October 13, 2012 at 7 p.m.: Penn State Men's Ice Hockey will be playing at the Mohegan Sun Arena at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$12.00.
- The *Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey* present "Barnum Bash" at the Mohegan Sun arena from November 1 – 4.
- The *Trans Siberian Orchestra* will be performing on November 25 at the Mohegan Sun Arena at 3 and 7 p.m.

### The Inkwell Quarterly Staff

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## Banned Books Week

By Anthony Bartoli

Banned Books Week was started in 1982 because of a surge in the number of challenges toward books in schools. The American Library Association, the American Booksellers Association, The Library of Congress, as well as a few other organizations sponsor the week, which is held during the last week of September.

The official website of Banned Books Week says that the week is "the national book community's annual celebration of the freedom to read".

The American Library Association says that "the books featured during Banned Books Week have all been targeted with removal or restrictions in libraries and schools. While books have been and continue to be banned, part of the Banned Books Week celebration is the fact that, in a majority of cases, the books have remained available. This happens only thanks to the efforts of librarians, teachers, students, and community members who stand up and speak out for the freedom to read".

This year, to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Banned Books Week, the ALA will be holding its second annual "Virtual Read Out". The criteria for entering a video in the Read Out are as follows:

"Videos (no more than two minutes long) can be submitted by anyone as long as it includes a reading of a banned or challenged book. The video must include information on where and why the book was banned or challenged. You may also wish to add your thoughts on the importance of keeping that particular book on library or bookstore shelves.

Videos of up to three minutes long can be submitted giving eyewitness accounts of local challenges.

For those who are camera-shy, you can still participate in the Banned Books Virtual Read-out by creating a video montage that centers on banned/challenged books. Thomas University created a video last year that can be used as an example" (ala.org).

In case you were wondering, books still continue to be banned and challenged. A few titles from this year's list may surprise you!

*"tly; tfn; l8r, g8r* (series), by Lauren Myracle

Reasons: offensive language, religious viewpoint, sexually explicit, unsuited to age group

*The Color of Earth* (series), by Kim Dong Hwa

Reasons: nudity, sex education, sexually explicit, unsuited to age group

*The Hunger Games* trilogy, by Suzanne Collins

Reasons: anti-ethnic, anti-family, insensitivity, offensive language, occult/satanic, violence

*My Mom's Having A Baby! A Kid's Month-by-Month Guide to Pregnancy*, by Dori Hillestad Butler

Reasons: nudity, sex education, sexually explicit, unsuited to age group

*The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, by Sherman Alexie

Reasons: offensive language, racism, religious viewpoint, sexually explicit, unsuited to age group

*Alice* (series), by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Reasons: nudity, offensive language, religious viewpoint

*Brave New World*, by Aldous Huxley

Reasons: insensitivity, nudity, racism, religious viewpoint, sexually explicit

*What My Mother Doesn't Know*, by Sonya Sones

Reasons: nudity, offensive language, sexually explicit

*Gossip Girl* (series), by Cecily Von Ziegesar

Reasons: drugs, offensive language, sexually explicit

*To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee

Reasons: offensive language, racism

In order to celebrate Banned Books Week, the Wilkes Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta held readings in the SUB on October 2 – 4 in order to recognize the important week. Sigma Tau Delta Vice President Anne Yoskoski said, "Banned Books week is important because people need to know that (a) this is still happening and (b) some people out there are banning amazing works because of perceived issues and possible results of people reading that literature. People need to decide for themselves what they want to read and what they are offended by".



Photo Courtesy of Anne Yoskoski

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## Humanities

By John Carroll

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*The Inkwell* Welcomes President Leahy continued from cover

sonnet and you have little choice but to think critically. And obviously, communication skills, both verbal and written. Third, I think there is a sort of imagination that comes with the humanities that leads to real creativity, and I would argue some forward thinking. I think that is a real skill that is furnished in the humanities, it fosters it in a way that other majors do not." Last, Leahy believes that the humanities focus on the "big issues in life," which helps to build a moral character in a student. "For example think about Shakespeare. All life's lessons play out in Shakespeare. If you read his works you can experience every aspect of life."

As for the current state of the humanities, Leahy feels that the humanities are "underappreciated in general. Of course there are the individuals who want to major in English and in history and in political science; there will always be a certain segment of those. But, I think that students today are so preoccupied with their careers and I think as a result students under appreciate what the humanities can do to help you prepare for your career." The qualities that are instilled in a student studying the humanities are often overlooked, but Leahy does appreciate the emphasis Wilkes puts on its general education requirements, including English. "We still feel strongly that there is a certain general education core that students should have," Leahy said, "and I am delighted that we still emphasize that here at Wilkes. I intend to continue to support that."

As for his plans for the Humanities Department, it is too early to say. He has been kicking some ideas around with the faculty, such as better promotion for the Humanities Department and possibly an honors program. Leahy feels that an honors program would attract more students to the humanities and "if more students understood how the humanities can prepare them for successful careers, as well as I would argue, successful lives, more students might be attracted to the humanities."

Delving into his more personal attachment to English, the question of his favorite book had to be asked. Leahy responded with a smile and said, "*Great Gatsby* would be one of them. There's a James Joyce short story called "The Dead" which speaks to me a great deal. If you think about literature that you go back and reread, that would be one of them. I think a part of it is I stumbled on it in a certain period in my life, and it just moved me at that time. Also, "A River Runs Through It." I just reread that this summer. I can relate to the characters in a way due to the experiences in my own life." Then with a pause he mused, "I guess I'm a short story guy." Leahy also has a penchant for Thoreau, quoting *Walden* to his neighbors in Bear Creek. "I said, 'I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived'. No one got the reference, it was awkward," he said with a laugh.

Overall, Leahy is "warmed and humbled" by his reception from the Wilkes community, and hopes to make Wilkes University the best it can be. We welcome President Leahy into the Humanities Department and Wilkes University with open arms.

## Humanities Picnic

By John Carroll

October the third marked this year's humanities department picnic, open to faculty and students in the humanities. The picnic was held on the Kirby lawn from 2:30 to 4:00PM, and was a fun and interesting experience.

Those who have attended the picnic in the past can attest to the fascinating opportunity this event represented in terms of inter-disciplinary discourse, and the free food. I mean, come on. Free food is great. There are surprisingly few other places where one can find oneself sitting at a table with historians, writers, literary theorists, philosophers, and multi-cultural individuals. (So few places, in fact, that such an event can seem to be like a set-up to a joke: "A philosopher, a historian, and a writer walk into a picnic. . .") The value of such an experience, though, is not as easy to make light of.

The humanities represent a set of disciplines so interdependent, so vitally linked to one another that to study one to the exclusions of all others is ill-advised, if not impossible. While each discipline is unique in its approach and techniques, the overlap in subject matter is extremely pervasive. English majors are often expected to research and understand the historical context of a text – the response of readers upon a text's release, the socio-economic trends of the day, et cetera. Even understanding the development of modern forms of literature such as the novel requires an understanding of the past. And, though one can take what one is told for granted, understanding the methods by which such information is preserved and interpreted cannot but improve the overall quality of one's own work. This is also true, of course, of those moments where a novel, or poem, or short story begins to flirt with questions of epistemology, metaphysics, or ethics. If one understands how to approach philosophical questions, examining the approaches employed by an author becomes infinitely more satisfying.

So, what reason could there have been to pass up an opportunity to develop connections with other humanities majors, minors, and professors, connections that, if utilized, can enrich the quality of work produced from within any of the disciplines within the humanities. Or, you know, to pass up free food, pleasant conversation, a nice day outside with great people.

## Senior Seminar: Horror and Science Fiction in Modern Literature with Dr. Chad Stanley

By Brittney Grizzanti

As I'm sure most people who were browsing for classes a few months ago noticed, the title of this course couldn't help but catch my attention. When one thinks of a senior seminar class, the general assumption is that it's going to be one last big, in-depth hoorah for senior English majors, probably focusing on some genre or author like 19th Century British Literature, Shakespeare, or Bronte. The title Horror and Science Fiction brings such associations like Star Trek and Alien vs. Predator...not very English-major-y. However, now being in the class for about five weeks, I can attest that the genre is not all monsters and aliens (although, yes, there are many monsters and aliens). However, more than anything the pieces we have covered tend to be engaging the emotion of fear; what is fear, how does fear act as a function in society, how fear can shape or entirely change our perceptions of the world around us, and most importantly, what should we fear?

Some of our readings like HP Lovecraft's "The Outsider" and "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" play with the reader's own perceptions of what a monster is by flipping around the archetype of the monster story. In both short stories, readers discover at the end that the protagonist that they have been identifying with, and feeling sympathetic toward the whole time is in fact a monster. "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" specifically deals with elements of 20th century racism, and how fear and racism can come together, through the story's treatment of the strange, fish-like inhabitants of Innsmouth. Similarly H.G. Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau* is influenced by notions of 17th century Atavism, the idea that inferior races have more primitive, or animalistic traits. However this notion too is flipped upside down when the protagonist discovers that the beast-men are not human beings who were turned to beasts by Moreau's experiments, but rather they are animals that have been brutalized and given human qualities, leaving readers to question who is superior/inferior, and who is the novel's true monster?

Ultimately Dr. Stanley's Senior Seminar manages to be both unconventional and challenging. While I never thought a serious in-class discussion could end with talking about fish-people or vampires, it has been interesting to see what conventional literary elements reside in even the most modern horror and science fiction pieces, like Dracula, slasher movies, and even True Blood (not Twilight though).

## To the Cosmos and Back with Life and Art: A Personal Reflection for Aurora

By Jamie Alderiso

"It's all a movie. It's all one great big movie...Only you can pick the genre," asserts Billy Loomis to his legendary "Scream Queen" girlfriend Sidney Prescott of the Scream franchise. Scream revitalized the horror genre upon its release in December 1996. The flick features a group of hardened, lost, and yet highly self-aware teenagers in the middle of a murderous killing spree in their hometown. However, the true novelty of the film exists in the killers who quiz their victims on horror movie trivia before the bloody finish. The quintessential Meta horror film of the 1990s brought up a multitude of questions for its audience. Can we blame art (literature, music, theatre, and films) for real life events and atrocities? How significantly does the fiction of our time impact the nonfiction of the present? Is there a clear dichotomy between these two genres of art and communication?

Scream and its questions always come to mind when impossible questions like these arise, and especially during this previous July. On July 20th, 2012, I was vacationing with my family in South Carolina. In the latter end of our trip, we drove two hours south to visit Charleston. On that morning we slowly started to rise, and my mother turned on The Today Show. "Big news. There's been a massive shooting at a midnight opening of The Dark Knight." I was dumbstruck. The images and phone interviews of the mayhem chilled me. Throughout the day, it was hard to be interested in the history and culture Charleston had to offer my family. I found myself thinking of nothing besides Aurora and what it must have been like trapped in that theatre...dying in that theatre. At lunch, I was incessantly surfing my phone for any answers I could. Then, I was finally alerted to an update, a picture and name of the prime suspect, James Holmes.

Now, as a huge fan of Nolan's films, and Batman in general, I was exhilarated about seeing the film as soon as the summer blockbuster was released. A few weeks after my family arrived home, I went with my sister and two cousins. For me personally, concentrating on the film itself was quite difficult. My mind raced with horrible, yet ironic situations of what happened during another showing of the film I was watching in public. Scenes of gunfire, mayhem, and terrorism were happening onscreen, but there was no Batman to rescue the patrons of Century 16. I could not help but think how horrific the experience could have been to have that playing both visually and audibly in the middle of violent, lethal chaos.

Further questions galloped through my brain. How could so many people die in the middle of watching a film about similar terrorism and violence? How seductive can art be? How many people imitate fictions on a daily basis? Why do we want our fictions to live? To what degree do these pieces of art control our lives, inform our decisions, and refute opposing sides? However, maybe art lives upon life... maybe art needs life for nourishment? Perhaps human experience also lives upon art? On a different strand, life and art can also be inevitably cyclic, never-ending, unchangeable; one in the same.

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## "Four

By Gabby  
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## Welcome

By Annie Y

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With these intimate and highly existential questions in mind, I'm still not quite sure on what I've come around to thinking. However, maybe the lines between fiction and nonfiction are slowly starting to evaporate. No, perhaps the lines have been long gone; perhaps they never existed. Nevertheless, as I walked out that theater on that late summer night, I felt strangely connected to everyone and everything, and yet terribly isolated due to the direction of my thoughts. Then I knew. In fact, it's all too obvious. "You can pick..."

## "Four Noble Truths": The Anthem for a New Era at Wilkes

By Gabby Zawacki and Kendra Kuhar

When **Dr. Michelle Anthony** was asked to take part in the installation of President Patrick Leahy in September, she was overcome with gratitude. Choir director Stephen Thomas approached Dr. Anthony to write the lyrics for the induction song which was performed at the event. However, Dr. Anthony wasn't sure which direction to take regarding the lyrics. So rather than embark on the journey alone, she asked her colleague, **Dr. Lawrence Kuhar**, to help compose the song. Together they decided to write lyrics that would serve as a reflection of Wilkes University's mission as a Liberal Arts school. Dr. Kuhar noted, "Above all, I see the text as an articulation of the core values in a Liberal Arts education and leadership. These values -- integrity, truth, and knowledge -- construct the traditional value of humanities. Our programs aim to develop and to promote these values in our students. It seems right to me that we emphasize these values in a text positioned to define who we are as institution. This is especially important given the transitional moment in our institutional culture. As I like to say, it's who we are."

With this theme in place, the pair worked together to develop the verses and the chorus of the song. Dr. Anthony explained that she and Dr. Kuhar wrote poetry and sent the stanzas back and forth in order to choose the ones best fit to represent their vision for the song. After much deliberation and creative thinking, they had it. With the words ready to be dressed with music, they sent the lyrics to Stephen Thomas. At the time of the induction ceremony, both Dr. Anthony and Dr. Kuhar had not yet heard the final product. As they sat in their seats waiting for the ceremony to begin, the haunting beauty of the song they had written filled the room, resulting in an overwhelming feeling. Dr. Anthony stated, "There's nothing like a 50-voice choir singing your words back to you to imprint a moment for our campus."

Here are the lyrics to the song they collaborated on:

### Noble Truths

Together we move time  
The bluebell's morning bloom  
Courage - Humility - Gratitude

Sunlight streams through valley trees  
Wise feelings  
Promise dreams again  
Courage - Integrity

### CHORUS:

Noble truths we honor thee  
Knowledge, awareness, integrity  
Noble truths we honor thee  
Knowledge, awareness, integrity

### BRIDGE:

Find form in all our fires,  
Purpose in our knowledge.

## Welcome to New Majors and Minors

By Annie Yoskoski

Welcome to all new majors and minors in the English department! Wilkes University has so much to offer you as an English student, whether you are on the Writing, Literature, Teaching, or Creative Writing track!

The English Department welcomes, Sara A. Pisak, Cierra C. Humphrey, Cristal D. Seabrook-Delgado, Nicholas A. Cholewa, Susan G. Zobitne, Emily A. Leonick, Kaitlyn E. Carton, and David Macekura.

## New York Times Best Seller List

By Leanna Rolon

How would you classify a bad book? Could it be that the story is boring, or perhaps the characters too bland? Now how would you classify a good book? Could a good book be one with an action packed story line, or perhaps a book in which all of the characters are relatable? Perhaps the best book is the one that sells the most copies. The New York Times best seller column may list the books that sold the most copies, but that does not necessarily mean that all of the books mentioned are worth reading. I got reactions from two professors, **Dr. Kuhar** and **Dr. Davis**, on the books that were listed and whether or not they truly belonged there.

I decided on using only the Combined Print and E-book section of the Best Seller list, because E-books have become one of the main places where people do their reading. In 2010 only six percent of Americans owned E-readers. Today, just two years later, twenty one percent of Americans own and utilize E-readers making it a fast growing trend. That being said I felt that it was important to focus on E-Books in the best seller list.

The best-selling books were, in order, "A Wanted Man" By Lee Child, "Fifty Shades of Grey" by E.L. James, "Delusion in Death" by J.D. Robb, "Fifty Shades Freed" by E.L. James, "Fifty Shades Darker" by E.L. James, "Gone Girl" by Gillian Flynn, "Frozen Heat" by Richard Castle, "The Time Keeper" by Mitch Albom, "Zoo" by James Patterson and Michael Ledwidge, "Bared to You" by Sylvia Day, "Telegraph Avenue" by Michael Chabon, "Simply Irresistible" by Jill Shalvis, "Love Unrehearsed" by Tina Reber, "Winter's Tale" by Mark Helprin, and "This is How You Lose Her" Junot Diaz.

I presented this list to Dr. Davis. She had not read all of the books but she gave some insight on the ones that she had and the authors that she was familiar with. For instance she had read "Fifty Shades of Grey" purely out of curiosity. In her opinion that book did not belong on the best seller list at all. Dr. Davis felt personally that it was dangerous due to the submissiveness of the main female character. This character seems to give a very bad name to all women. Dr. Davis had read some of J.D. Robb's previous books in that series. She felt that the story line was predictable and it repeated itself, but the books did have a cult following so that is what may have earned them their place on the Best Seller list. Dr. Davis made me think about what made up a bad book. All of these books had to have something that drew readers to them or they would not be so popular. When I showed Dr. Kuhar the New York Times best seller list, he had not read any of them. However, upon examining the list he had the same opinion as Dr. Davis. He felt that each of these books had some sort of audience to them which means that they all deserve a place on the Best Seller List.

The books that are on the list as of this week are all their for some purpose. They all have an allure that not all other books have whether it be the concept of erotic and taboo fantasy or simply a die hard cult following. All of the books have the right to be on the best sellers list even if many people do not agree with the decision.

## The Dreaded "R" Word

By Ashley Flaherty

Let's be honest, many of us have foul mouths. Provocative language, especially in a college setting, is nothing new. Something many of you may not be aware of is that one of the most commonly used terms around campus is not only used often and incorrectly, but it is offensive. Additionally, you may find yourself in a whirlwind of trouble in the future by using this dreaded term in a professional atmosphere. Consider this: you go to Wilkes, major in English and Secondary Ed. After passing your Praxis exams, you land a job. One day while at school, you drop the dreaded "R" word, "retard," while in a bad situation. You may not have meant anything by the term, but you are an educator; misusing the English language may not be valid excuse once you leave Wilkes. The actual definition of the verb "retard" is a delay or set back in progress or development. Used in everyday speech, like the hypothetical educator, "retard" is an offensive noun short for someone with mental retardation. This is a common problem today. We are saying things and not thinking about the effects they have on other people.

The word "retard" makes my blood boil. We often take for granted that we are here, in college, even capable of learning while there are people with mental retardation and other disabilities that struggle on a daily basis to do simple every day tasks. I have a brother with autism. It is not mental retardation; he is capable of learning, but it is a learning disability. Helping him learn to do simple things and understanding that there are things he never will understand forces me to look at and appreciate life from a different perspective than most people my age. Although I may swear like a sailor sometimes, I have never and will never say the "R" word. I believe the world would be a much better place if everyone had someone in their lives with a learning disability. Think before you speak. Next time you call someone on campus a "retard" I might just call you out on it. In a few years, when we are all out of Wilkes, how will you feel if you have a child with a learning disability and ignorant people are misusing and overusing the term "retard"? Learn the meaning of the term "retard." Get the word out and stop using it. It is offensive. "If you don't have anything nice to say, then don't say anything at all."

## Cult Class

By Annie Yosko

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Photo Courtesy of



## Cult Classics, The Book Version

By Annie Yoskoski

There will always be movies, television shows, and products that have a "cult" following. Die-hard fans will race to theaters, stores, or their living rooms to absorb the latest from their favorite form of entertainment. Some people have actually taken to calling these followings "fandoms" and have given them clever names such as "Whovians" (for *Dr. Who*), "Gleeks" (for the television show *Glee*), and "Twiards" (for the *Twilight Saga*). One thing I have been noticing lately, however, is that books and certain authors seem to have large followings now, more than I had ever noticed before.

What piqued my interest in this subject was the large following Suzanne Collins gained after writing the second book in her *Hunger Games* trilogy. Before any movies were announced, people had already latched on to the characters. The internet exploded with support for different relationships, and people actually started fighting on the internet about whether Katniss should end up with Peeta or Gale. The fans have taken to calling themselves "Tributes". What confused me at first was the fact that this had already been decided, since the entire trilogy was already printed and lining shelves of local bookstores.

Unlike television shows that are able to cave to fan demands, books that have already been published cannot cave to fan pressure. If people want certain characters on a show to be together, they can rant and rave on the internet until producers and writers for the show throw in an unexpected plot twist to appeal to the viewers. Movies can always be remade years later or sequels or spinoffs can be released. In order to change the events of a book, the author would have to write another novel literally backtracking all of their previous work and create an entirely new piece of fiction.

One of the biggest "tributes" to these authors and their works is fan fiction. People will go online and write stories using the author's original characters and story lines, escaping copyright infringement by claiming no ownership over the work or characters. There is literally a "fanfic" for every single book, television series, and movie in existence. Readers can filter by age rating, sets of characters, and genres. Some of the writing is average, while some are actually rather well written, just not original. Sometimes no one will ever see a fan fiction post, but sometimes they become wildly popular, an example being every English major's favorite thing to hate: *Fifty Shades of Grey* (based on *Twilight*, the stories were originally fan fiction).

This obsession is not just true for newer books; classics are getting some attention, too. One of the most popular is Jane Austen. Her books have created movies, board games, "pick your own adventure" books, and in general the Cult of Jane Austen. There are Jane Austen action figures, knitting patterns, and even advice books such as *Jane Austen's Guide to Marriage*.

Many other famous authors have received the same treatment. These include authors such as Edgar Allen Poe, Earnest Hemingway, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, J.K. Rowling, Stephen King, H.P. Lovecraft, Nathaniel Hawthorne, James Patterson, Janet Evanovich, J.R. Tolkien, and even the Bard himself, William Shakespeare.

The Republic of Pemberley is a website that hosts Jane Austen fan fiction. Originally the owners of the site were just commenters on a thread on a Jane Austen website. As their works became highly popular and their internet traffic increased, they built their own website. So many people go to this website now that the owners have teamed up with several other Jane Austen fanatics to build a whole repertoire of fan fiction. Another one of these websites exists for *Sherlock Holmes* fans, Sherlockian.net. The site consist not only of fan fiction, but fan profiles, an entire store dedicated to Sherlock merchandise, and theories on every piece ever written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. These fans have done so much research and are so wrapped up in the universe of *Sherlock Holmes* that they even have their own subset of fans who believe Dr. Watson was the real hero and Holmes was his literary agent. Fans who do truly believe in the protagonist, Holmes, call him "The Master."

What these various groups of fans do not seem to realize or comprehend is that these characters

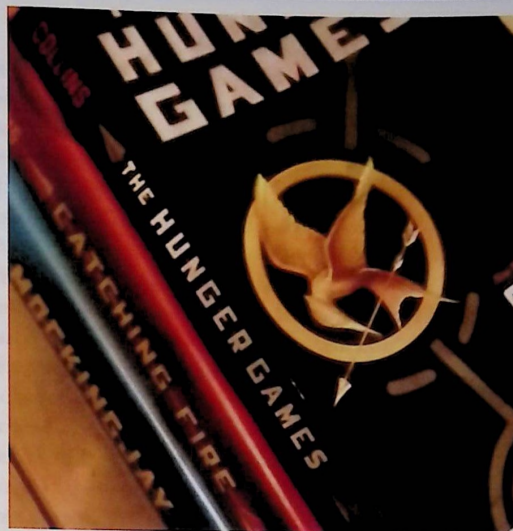


Photo Courtesy of Annie Yoskoski



Photo Courtesy of Annie Yoskoski

Continued on page 15...

## Suzi M's Blog Novel

By Stephanie Wilkie

Suzi M, an accomplished and thriving author, has taken an interesting and tech-savvy route for her latest project, Secondhand Sarah. Her first novels *Nemesis*, *Lamia* and *The Tower*, which comprise the Immortal War Series, feature vampires, horror, and passion, which are all classic elements of a gothic text. Suzi began writing The Immortal War series in her senior year of high school with the influence of her English teacher and since then has produced many short stories and a few novels. Suzi's texts often attract avid gothic readers, and her latest project, Secondhand Sarah, does not let this reputation down.

Secondhand Sarah is full of nightmares, horror, secret tunnels and of course, romance. The blog is a "serial story" as described by Suzi herself, and is published in installments on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at about 400 words for each installment. Suzi makes the story realistic through her ability to a quaint bed and breakfast with supernatural elements such as catching a ghost on camera in the Devil's Tower in her novel, *The Tower*. The story contains photographs, drawings, links, and YouTube videos which all contribute to the production of the story. The collection of photographs includes antique and old photographs and pictures of Suzi's own home, which is similar to Victorian style on the inside.

The YouTube videos are used to let the reader listen to music that Sarah, the main character, is listening to in the story. The artists included thus far are: Crystal Fighters, March Violets, The Thought, etc. Suzi also includes trailers for the previously mentioned novel *The Tower* which readers can watch and then continue reading the post. Readers can also comment on the YouTube videos or the blog posts, but Suzi finds that most readers comment on the blog via her Facebook page rather than directly on the blog. She enjoys this interaction with her readers and admires that the "readers feel comfortable enough to post directly to me, rather than to feel they need to post in the anonymous ether of the blogosphere".

Facebook allows Suzi to communicate directly with her readers and also ask for advice as the story continues. She mentioned that she sometimes posts photographs on her Facebook page for readers to give feedback before she adds it to the story. In the beginning of the project she asked readers if they would like more information on the secret tunnels or the house renovations and received a "unanimous secret tunnel response, which directly influenced where the blog went." She explained that "Instead of being solely the initial idea of a woman who's trying to get herself back together after a bad breakup while renovating an old Victorian house, it became a funhouse of explorations, with Facebook friends adding their comments and ideas to the mix to form the story," which allows her readers to encourage the direction of the story.

The character, Sarah, is presented in a first person point of view which allows Suzi to add details or information that readers ask for while already being three posts ahead of what is already live on the blog. This way, the story can still progress in the manner that she would like, but she can also supplement Sarah's perspective at any time, which has had a positive effect that on readers as they contribute their own pictures and public or private comments throughout the day. This type of audience seems to be fairly new and is an interesting concept. Most authors do not have live publications that the audience can influence the progression or direction of the story. She believes that this story will continue to grow as long as readers keep reading and help her keep the story going.

Suzi is also working on two novels that will supplement the blog: *Conversations with a Demon: the Journals of Rose and Samuel Jenkins* and *The Lost book of Norad*. She is also considering using this blog concept to present a "therapy" journal that her character in *Nemesis* kept while he was in a mental ward, but this idea might just evolve into another book in the Immortal War Series.

Suzi shared with me a list of her current and recent reads which includes: *The Spirit Cleaning* by Mark Tufo, *Shifters* by Jaime Johnesse, *They* by Vincent Hobbes, *Liber Null & Psychonaut* by Peter J. Carroll, *Those Who Went Remain There Still* by Cherie Priest and many more.

She began this project as a reaction to not being able to post her work freely. As she explains: "I'm an altruist at heart, and didn't feel it was right or fair that people should have to pay \$9.99 and up for an electronic book. So I made mine not only free, but free-form." Secondhand Sarah has already begun to flourish and appears to be a fascinating project that will continue to flourish.

Second-Hand Sarah can be found at the following link: [http://suzi.typepad.com/secondhand\\_sarah/](http://suzi.typepad.com/secondhand_sarah/)

Most of Suzi M's titles can be found at: <http://www.amazon.com/Suzi-M/e/B003TTLGP2/>

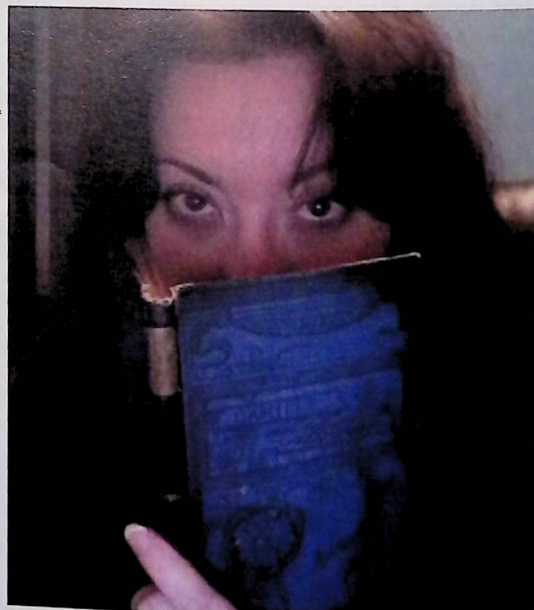


Photo Courtesy of Suzi M

## Serialized Story

*When we last saw our heroes, they had just been thrown out of a portal to another dimension in Dr. Kuhar's office. After their epic battle, they find that they are in the future...*

"We're in the future!" Gabby yelled.

"Okay, it's okay. We are still in Kuhar's office, so we can't be that far in the future...can we?" Annie asked attempting to calm herself.

"We're doomed. This is one calamity after another!" Kendra said.

Looking around them, Dr. Farrell, Gabby, Kendra, Steph, and Annie realized they had lost Tony and Dave somewhere. "I think they ran ahead." Steph said, vocalizing everyone's thoughts.

"Figures," Dr. Farrell sighed.

Suddenly, a familiar voice floated toward the closed office door.

"Like I said, it's a process. If the kids just read the books this wouldn't be an issue. Where has the respect for postmodern literature gone?"

"It's Kuhar!" Dr. Farrell cried. "I knew we couldn't be that far ahead of our own time."

Slowly the door opened to reveal two men who looked exactly like Dr. Kuhar and Dr. Hamill, except they had glowing, yellow bracelets on their wrists.

"Nice jewelry guys," Gabby said, "but you will *never* believe what happened to us. We got--"

As Kuhar and Hamill looked at the group of women strangely, Gabby cut off her sentence. Peering behind the two men into the open foyer, the women could see that this was in no way the same Kirby Hall that they had left behind. Everything that was once wood was now chrome, with floating metal tubes replacing the banisters of the staircase. The carpets had been replaced with frosted glass tiles that lit up when they were stepped on, and the ceiling was filled with little multi-colored tubes. Pushing past them, Gabby ran out into the small foyer.

"What happened?!" she yelled, "Guys, come see this!"

Annie, Steph, and Dr. Farrell blew straight past the two men they had considered their colleagues and professors just moments ago, while Kendra gave the pair one last puzzled look and walked out.

"The Kirby family is probably rolling in their graves right now" Annie said, "The chrome alone makes my head spin."

At that moment the door to Deb's office swung open. Inside, a giant touchscreen computer loomed, with little boxes on the screen for each professor. Deb stood in front of the screen, extending her arm to hold out one of her own glowing yellow bracelets. In the blink of an eye Deb was waving her arm around, dragging and dropping little tiles onto different parts of the screen. Next to her, the multi-colored tubes descended from the ceiling into a large circle surrounding the computer screen. As papers rolled off of the printer, Deb grabbed them with her free hand and stuffed them into different tubes, sending them to various offices.

"What in the world is she doing?" Steph asked.

"I think she is doing what she has always done, but in this new futuristic way. Even in the future this building doesn't function without Deb," Dr. Farrell said.

The women backed away from the door and made their way to the third floor, passing various faculty members on their way, noticing the bright yellow bracelets on everyone.

"Alright, it's time to be practical and ask someone what year it is. I don't care if we sound strange. After what we have just been through I will never call someone crazy again" Kendra said.

They all knew she was right, and one by one filed back down the stairs to Deb's office.

With Kuhar and Hamill in a deep discussion about metaphysical text and its effect on the current day literary scene (whenever *that* was), Annie gingerly stepped into the office and tapped Deb on the shoulder.

"Deb? Uhm, I have a question" she said.

"Sure, shoot!" Deb replied as she continues to flail her arms around, moving what appeared to be emails to correct boxes on the screen.

"What year is it?" Annie asked.

This made Deb pause and turn to face the group of women. Giving them all a visual inspection and doubtful glance, Deb finally answered, "2412, what in the world happened to you all? Where are your bands?"

With a sharp intake of breath, Annie yelled, "Thanks, we're fine, got to go!" and whirled around out of the office.

Leading the little camp of people out into the stairwell, Dr. Farrell plopped down on the now chrome and frosted glass steps. With a sigh she said, "2412. Four hundred years in the future. How is the old faculty still here? What have we gotten ourselves into?" When no one answered, she stood deliberately and said, "My office is probably still here. They better have coffee and tea in 2412 or I'm jumping back into that portal". Nodding in

agreement the girls followed her up the stairs.

Continued on page 14...

## Dr. Paola Bianco's Sabbatical

By Ashley Flaherty

This semester, **Dr. Bianco** returned to teaching Spanish courses and heading the Spanish club at Wilkes. While on sabbatical for the full year last year, she put the finishing touches on her book, *Conversando con literatura*, due out in October or November, and researched and wrote a great portion of *Perspectivas de escritoras en español* (which translates to *Perspectives of Spanish Women Writers*). Dr. Bianco's work is twofold; while working on *Conversando con literatura*, which is intended to be used as a textbook for advanced Spanish college students, she came up with an idea for an additional book: female Spanish writers. She wrote the advanced textbook in order to raise issues that college students were interested in having conversations about, preferably in Spanish. For example, different units raise issues, such as immigration, human rights, love, marriage, and betrayal, all of which are debatable and controversial, especially to students in college. In addition, the textbook includes short stories, songs, and poems for the advanced Spanish student to enjoy and engage in conversation about. The research she had done for the textbook got her thinking and soon, a new topic evolved and she was on her way to a year long sabbatical for an additional book. She is the sole author of this in-depth examination of female Spanish writers.

Dr. Bianco examined female Spanish writers from as far back as the year 1600 to the present time. The book is arranged chronologically and thematically and from a feministic perspective. She included the works of not only the well-known authors, but also some undiscovered Spanish writers. Dr. Bianco started looking at writings of women when they had the "choice" of either having an arranged marriage or becoming a nun. For the book, she studied the writings of nuns as well, in Biblioteca Nacional de Santiago, Chile. What is really unique about this book is that Dr. Bianco included Spanish writers from not only Spain and Latin America, but countries such as the Philippines and Equatorial Guinea, which are not commonly included in works on Spanish writers. She personally interviewed Ani Brenis and included her in the section *Violencia contra la mujer* (*Violence against women*). Additionally, Dr. Bianco interviewed Dorelia Barahona in Costa Rica and included this information in the section entitled *Identidad sexual* (*Sexual Identity*).

Dr. Bianco is eager to finish this piece on female Spanish writers. She went to great lengths researching writings and writers and considering which pieces to include where in the book, which is why her sabbatical was a year long, instead of just a semester. Although it is not a conversation book like the textbook, which is due out very soon, we can expect that this book will certainly strike up conversations in a positive manner. From this book, Dr. Bianco will likely discover an additional idea for two or more books. (Dr. Bianco is pictured below while doing research in Chile for her book *Perspectivas de escritoras en español*, while on sabbatical last year.)



Photo Courtesy of Dr. Paolo Bianco

"What is really unique about this book is that Dr. Bianco included Spanish writers from not only Spain and Latin America, but countries such as the Philippines and Equatorial Guinea..."



Photo Courtesy of

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Photo Courtesy of



Photo Courtesy of Annie Yoskoski

## The Wizarding World of Pottermore

By Kendra Kuhar

J.K. Rowling, famous for her "Harry Potter" book series, opened a Harry Potter focused website to the public in April of 2012 known as Pottermore. The website was created with the intention of bringing the adventurous seven-part book series to life in ways the movies cannot: interactively. The site encourages the purchase of the e-books and audio book versions of the book series amidst it's ability to deeply involve the audience in the perks of the series. After a simple user registration, users of the website are immediately immersed into the world of Pottermore.

In addition to basic information required for user registration to the website, the user must also fill in how many books were read and how many movies were

seen. This information determines if the user is "magical" or not. The website then takes users on a journey beginning at the first chapter of the first book, "The Philosopher's Stone."

As the journey moves forward, users are sorted into a house at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and given a wand. They will also be given the opportunity to collect badges, potions, spells, trunks, and house points which are all familiar to anyone who has read the book series. However, the especially unique aspect of this site is the users can gain friends and communicate with them through feature posts. Users also have the option of uploading "drawings" pertaining to the section of the site they are in.

While J.K. Rowling's enhancement of the book series is a good idea, she makes it even better by involving parts of the novels that were not published anywhere else. She also elaborates on why she chose specific names for places and titles. For example, in the first chapter of



Photo Courtesy of Annie Yoskoski

the book she goes into detail regarding her choice of "Number 4 Privet Drive" as Harry's home until he discovers he is a wizard. On the website, Rowling explains that the number four has always struck her as "hard and unforgiving" which contributed to her deciding that for the street of the house aligning with Harry's unhappiness. The street the Dursleys and Harry live on, "Privet Drive," is a reference to the privet bush which is associated with enclosure and suburbia.

According to the website, more content will be added over time. As of right now, "The Philosopher's Stone" and part of the second book "The Chamber of Secrets" is on the site. After using the site, one will find that it is not just a strategy to further market the "Harry Potter" series, but rather an overall rewarding experience for "Harry Potter" fans.

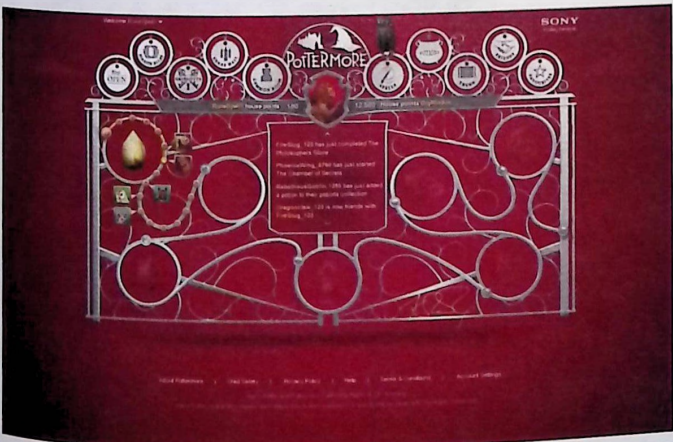


Photo Courtesy of Annie Yoskoski

Serialized Story continued from page 11...

Arriving at her office door, the women discovered no door knob, but a slot in the door.

"Let's hide in the stairwell, and watch someone open their office door so we can figure out how to get inside," Steph suggested.

"Good idea," said Gabby, as she flung open the stairwell door.

After several minutes of crouching uncomfortably, Dr. Kelly finally came up the stairs.

"Dr. Kelly! He has to be going to his office!" said Dr. Farrell.

Dr. Kelly slid one of his yellow bracelets off of his wrist and slid it into the slot on the door. A small green light flashed and the door slid to the right, depositing the bracelet back in Dr. Kelly's hand.

"Figures," Annie said, "we need those bracelets. Until we figure out what to do, we will stick out like a sore thumb. From the look Deb gave me when I asked what year it was, I don't want to even think about telling people I just flew out of a portal in Dr. Kuhar's office and fought aliens."

"Agreed," they all said in unison.

As they were about to exit the stairwell, the sound of footsteps grew louder as someone drew near. Not knowing what to expect at this point, they group just waited for their visitor to arrive.

Slowly, Dr. Stanley came up the stairs. "Hey ladies, what happened?" Dr. Stanley looked at the wrists of everyone in the group, realizing there were no bracelets. After a moment, he said, "I'm not going to ask questions, you all look like you just came from another universe. Let's get you some replacement Goldenbands and something to drink...you look like you need both."

Without questioning him, the group followed him into his office. As he passed out Goldenbands to all the women, they each looked at each other in shock. As soon as the bracelets were placed on their wrists, they had better vision, more energy, and what seemed to them to be sharper memories.

"Now, does anyone want to explain what is going on?" Dr. Stanley asked.

"First, you explain *that!*" Steph yelled. As everyone turned to look in her direction it could be seen out of the window that the building was higher off of the ground than before...almost as if it were floating. Right next to the window was a green box that looked like a telephone booth mixed with a Tardis, with the insignia "Place Hop" stamped on its door in that same glowing yellow color that the bracelets displayed.

At that very moment, Jamie entered Dr. Stanley's office with six glasses of tea. "We've been expecting you! Or, at least I have," he said.

Why are the Goldenbands so important? Why has Kirby been remodeled in chrome? What is a Place Hop? What will the group tell Dr. Stanley? Where did Jamie get all that tea? **Look for the continuation next issue!**

"As everyone turned to look in her direction it could be seen out of the window that the building was higher off of the ground than before...almost as if it were floating."

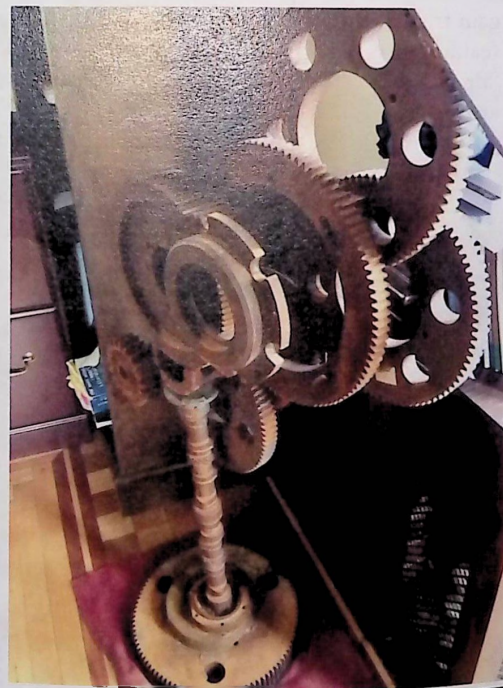


Photo Courtesy of Annie Yoskoski



Photo Courtesy

## Library Li

By Brittney Gri

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Photo Courtesy of Brittney Grizzanti

## Senior Spotlight: Caevaun Dubarry

By Brittney Grizzanti

### Meet Caevaun Dubarry!

Caevaun will be graduating from Wilkes University as an English Major with a minor in Political Science. Throughout his time at Wilkes, Caevaun has managed to be a part of many different activities and organizations. He has held a position in Student Government for the better part of his four years and is taking on the title of treasurer in Wilkes' Pre-Law Society for one year. Caevaun has also been involved in community service activities through Wilkes, such as CEO Thanksgiving Box, worked as a stage hand in a Wilkes theatre production, and above all managed to never miss a night of Winter Weekend. When Caevaun isn't galavanting around campus, you can generally find him at one of his two jobs, either frothing up lattes at Barnes & Noble or handing out way too many free samples at Gertrude Hawk's. Ultimately Caevaun aspires to attend Law School after Wilkes, where both his focuses on English and Political Science will be put to good use. According to Caevaun there are too many things he will miss most when leaving Wilkes, yet Caevaun is excited and ready to take on post-graduate life.

## Library Liaison

By Brittney Grizzanti

According to **Mr. John C. Stachacz**, Farley Library has some new, exciting additions this semester. Most importantly, the library staff recently welcomed a new librarian, **Heather Bowman**. Heather has come to Wilkes from Indiana University, and will be acting as the new library liaison for the Humanities department. Secondly, a new database has been added that should be especially helpful for students doing research in English and History courses; America's Historical Newspapers 1690-1922 provides full text PDF's of newspaper articles from 1690 through 1922. Lastly, John informed me that Farley's front doors and stairs should be usable in the very near future. No more fighting your way through the loading dock entrance!



Photo Courtesy of Stephanie Wilkie

Cult Classics continued from page 9...

are not real. Authors have created them and their stories - not that a good story won't lead the reader into the author's world, which is a hallmark of a great story. The difference is that these fans take the obsession into the real world, not letting go when the book closes. Due to ease of accessibility of modern television and movies, people need a continuation. Books do not always continue, and fans cannot always pressure a change in the storyline. The modern way of dealing with this issue seems to be creating these fandoms and integrating the books into a part of their lives by identifying themselves as a "Sherlockian," "Darcy," "WillShake," "Muggle" or "Hobbit."

## Hamill's Hunches

By Dr. Hamill

Last May, when I apparently didn't write my "Hamill's Hunches," two photos of my "home improvements" / "bathroom renovations" digitized my shame: two thousand pixels meting out a kind of lost incarnation of words become touch-screen-sensitivities-to flesh. The sheen, professional tactility of the *Inkwell Quarterly's* "glossy" finishes framing the images no doubt did much to rectify and foreclose the post-secular inevitability of this new author function, as, I'm sure, did the justified sense of election in the causally imperativized subjunctive of (some of) the accompanying editorial text. (See *Inkwell Quarterly* 6.4 (2012): 16.)

Loyal readers might be surprised, then, to learn of new developments in the story. Within days of publication, rumors about lost so-called "captions" to the images, decoded from the original html into Middle English by volunteers from the thought-to-be-defunct NEPA Nominalists' Society and then translated into Present Day English, began to surface. Initial reports suggested that the complex stratification of the "originary" texts, even before their decoding and translation, would necessitate (and sustain) years of specialized study, thus, in the view of most scholars, forestalling "responsible" public release of the "captions" in any form for, to quote one source, "at least—at least—two years."

The subsequent firestorms over archival access, interpretive authority, and what a second source (unfortunately) dubbed "the academic elite's conspiracy to totalize information literacy" that ensued, coincidentally abated when, during a public reading of *Curious George's Dinosaur Discovery* at a local Barnes & Noble, at the exact moment in the narrative when the rock slide George accidentally creates reveals an unknown dinosaur fossil in the compacted sediment, a third source (self-identified as, yes, George) declaimed via the store intercom system several fragments of what he (she?) proclaimed to be original transcripts of the "captions," derived, somehow, from the "unofficial" NEPA Nominalists' Society records.

I'm not quite sure wh to make of all this; however, a few of the sound-byte fragments that emerged that day have proven, for me, reassuring ever since. Here's one: "The partially refurbished banister in the distant [sic] is, of course, unjudging, patiently linguistic. Like the imagined casement framed in the framing frame, referent wood white whittling toward a sign." Here's another: "The footstool is a guardian and a cherished memory. A reminder of why the room matters to begin with, why this Shaming Space is also, in hope and mindful recognition, really not a shame at all."

Perhaps I find these "words" comforting because they are somehow "mine." (I certainly believe in and inhabit the particularized world they would seem to gloss.) Perhaps I (still?) cling to them because the logics of the archive make doing so possible, and because (in yet another development) my own voice has recently been digitized soundless in the ironic Desire2Learn. Perhaps I simply know that I must return to the Rood-like forms of still new wood in the almost finished "home improvements" / "bathroom renovations," timbers felled and whittled, of course, but also wounded in reverse—nail-holed and healed in the paradoxically similar (counter) logic of the whitewash "washed clean in the..." trajectories. Perhaps I'm simply still shaken from last week's "cloudy" water issuing from the taps of Kingston and all that it revealed about the systems (and systematics) upon which I depend. Perhaps it's just the burdens of trying to buy eggs ethically at my local Price Chopper.

Whatever the reasons, I can say with certainty that I'm deeply grateful: for the "shame"; for the "captions" and their "histories"; for what I need to know those "words" and "images," together, must mean; for the costs and the privileges of being (usually) a "contributor."

Thanks to my daughter Gracie's exceptionally fine and varied taste in music, I've been listening to a good bit of Rush of late, and her



Photo Courtesy of Jon Kadjeski

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## Hamill's Hunches

early sense that "e obviously when sh again." She's also salesmen! [guitar]" of what they must their common aval at any moment fee marveling, as we m and the beautiful r Perhaps. I hope. We'll see.

## Kuhar's Cor.

By Dr. Kuhar

"Because of n will follow."

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early sense that "emotional feedback" is a key phrase in "The Spirit of Radio" has been transformative for me, especially and obviously when she sings those words. (What initially drew her to the song was the drum work. ["I want to hear the drums salesmen! [guitar]"—all reminders for which I am also profoundly thankful.) And perhaps "emotional feedback" is at the core of what they must have heard that early morning on the Barnes & Noble floor as the two Georges, in their own ways, sang their common avalanche of song. For at that moment we all might have felt (indeed, that moment suggests we all might always at any moment feel) like *Piers Plowman's* Will: like sleepers waking to the dream of spectacularly impossible perspective, marveling, as we make our way "wide in this world wondres to here," at the fumbblings and the triumphs and the wretchedness and the beautiful magic of that "fair feeld ful of folk...Werchyne and wandrynge as the world asketh."

Perhaps.

I hope.

We'll see.

## Kuhar's Corner

By Dr. Kuhar

### New Endings and 'The beginning that will follow': Social Media and The Humanities

*"Because of who I am, and what I do with my life, I am able to look forward into history and see this new ending, and the beginning that will follow."*

These words are spoken by the "Young Woman" in Israel Horovitz's fantastic one-act play, *Affection in Time*, performed on campus last weekend. Though a bit abstract, the Young Woman's thoughts tell us a lot about how to live in world and on a campus where interpersonal communications and social interactions are undergoing a radical reconfiguration.

This is complicated. How do we assess how our understanding of ourselves is informed by our ability to understand how we and others communicate? What's this have to do with the core values in the Humanities, such as promoting the importance of integrity, ethics, and service; affirming the importance of promoting scholarly excellence; and dedicating ourselves to freedom from intolerance and ignorance, to name a few. Why do this? (I thought we were English majors. Are we still in Kansas?) Let's not forget that our English program, and Humanities programs collectively, focus on developing communication skills, written and oral, as a core objectives. OK, so, where should we look to critique communications and social interactions? The answer may be found, in part, through examining social media.

First of all, a confession: Let me openly admit that I am not a social media junkie. In fact, my 'fixes' are driven largely by my job and my family. I'm not, never have been and may never be, *of the moment* with regard to participation on Facebook or other social media. Yes, I have a Facebook page as part of my role as a faculty member in our English program. Apologies, however, to anyone who has asked to be my friend. For me, the medium is the message, to steal Marshall McLuhan's famous phrase. So, what can I possibly have to say about Horovitz' Young Woman's ideas, social media and your story as a student in the Humanities? (Don't answer, *please*.)

The Young Woman in Horovitz' play contemplates her life story as a narrative. She focuses on who she is and what she does as a way to understand her story. We know about this. We do this all the time. No need for a midterm: It does not need to be taught. We advance our understanding of ourselves and our world, and how to live well in it, when we take what we study in our classes and use the insights gained to reflect on the importance of people in our lives and the stories we live. All Humanities classes are fundamentally concerned with this interactive dynamic. Good education works this way. It's our mission and it reflects our values.

But what about social media? What's the possible connection to Google Plus, Tagged or LinkedIn? Hmm . . . Well, the stories we shape and tell are linked inextricably to our *understanding of and ability to understand others'* stories. This is one reason we love to read. It's a reason why we value diversity. It helps us understand why we get excited by new challenges and opportunities. Robert

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Frost's speaker's contemplation of "two roads" excites our imagination about making the wrong choice. The future is linked to the past. The past is an assurance of the promise found in the energy that comes with "the beginning that will follow." This is what's behind Horvitz' Young Woman's reflections on her stories, on where she was and where she's going.

But where are we finding our "stories" today? Is it OK to look to other cultural forms, beyond the texts and forms that we contemplate in our Humanities classrooms? How can we use what we learn from the "classics"? Can we really benefit from examining social media as an important (*deep gulp here*) interactive blend of technology and social interaction? Is doing this a capitulation to a trend in pop culture or is it a significant and complementary way to advance our understanding of *who we are* and why the Humanities and the Liberal Arts matter *now more than ever*.

We read plenty of stories in our literature, history and philosophy classes that direct toward how to read narratives. Well, social media trains us in narrative, too. Social media trains us in contemplating *interactions* and *self-representations*. It only takes a minute on Facebook to witness the dense intertextuality of representation that defines a user's sense of self or projection of identity. Social media relies on user-generated content. It promotes self-activity as a necessary interface with some aspect of reality. The meanings made construct stories. We post and we read. They are as often visual as language, as performative as linguistic.

We can't deny that social media has become an important (dominant?) way for us to understand the function of stories. Isn't this a key goal in the Humanities? Social media has become an important way for us to reflect on our stories even if we don't want to be associated in these academic halls with articulating this realization. Every representation of who we are – a picture, a song reference, a TV show – seems hell bent on producing meanings. Have you found yourself analyzing the "yellow wallpaper" too closely? What is it about "And miles to go before I sleep" *that really matters?* (I mean *really matters?*) Social media positions us with familiar intellectual structures as well as some of the stuff at the core of studying narrative, literary, visual and imaginative forms. In other words, it presents us with core aspects of studying ourselves.

Interestingly, social media texts, from the moment they are posted, create an absence formed around what is immediately, somehow, simultaneously outdated. The pictures from last week's Homecoming dinner in the Student Ballroom seem out of time only days after being posted. The absence of the present is a genuine feature of the contemporary postmodern sensibility inhabited in social media. This absence, as revealed in Horowitz' Young Woman's linkage of the "new ending" with "the beginning that will follow," drives and informs our hunt for awareness. (I'm sounding too academic. *I apologize.*) Here's what I'm trying to say: These observations – about how we tell stories about ourselves and read others' stories on social media – can inform a sense for how to understand the importance of your work in Humanities classrooms, whether it reading, critical thinking, collaborating or writing.

Sounds big. Nah . . . Or does it? Well, let's see: It's necessary (if not essential) for us, as students of culture, to understand how we get along with others, how we confirm the dignity of others and why we want to be valued and understood ourselves. Social media seems inherently aware, available to and prescriptive with regard to these ideas. It shows, even celebrates, difference. As a result, we hope, it makes us more tolerant of others and respectful of difference. (again), I know. But it's not. The better we understand the contemplations of representing oneself, the better chance we have of understanding our shared human condition. *This is a core goal in your work in the Humanities.*

Like Horowitz' Young Woman's contemplation of the 'plot' in her story – the relationship between endings and beginnings – social media promotes a contemplation of who we are in narrative forms. This seems true even if we agree that these forms may never reach the level of 'classic.' When we study the plot of a novel, the symbolism of a stage prop in a play or an image in a poem, we are wise to reflect on one of the fundamental reasons we study literature: To understand the story of *who we are*. Social media compels us, it seems, to want to tell more about *who we are*. Every detail matters. In addition to this, our audiences are familiar with the fragmentation of form that informs social media structures. They intuitively process a syntax of identity that, at once, responds to and creates new text out of apparent fragmentation. At one level, albeit a very basic one, this is what we ask of ourselves when we read and arrive in class to share ideas: The ability to generate new meanings that can serve our stories as we go forward. This is also important to understanding contemporary society, and it's the stuff of contemporary experience.

One of my favorite lines in literature is spoken by Oedipa Maas in Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*: "Shall I project a world?" Today, we have to consider our "projected" iden-

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Photo Courtesy of Desiree Wren

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tivity in social media or, at least, the role of social media in influencing how we understand who we are. This is true whether we posting or tweeting on Treme, South Park or the presidential debate. We surf from Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter to Google Plus, Tagged, or CafeMom. The textual surfaces we engage, if only indirectly, impact our understanding of what it is to be human. We see ourselves in others and others in ourselves. This is the stuff of the Humanities. The 'stories' we read, fragmented and unconventional with regard to our conventional sense for classroom stories, will nevertheless impact how we read and how understand others. This, too, is the stuff of your work in the Humanities.

The value of the Humanities is real. As a student in the Humanities you know about contemplating the complexities of stories, of representation and of life as these complexities are informed by examining starts and endings. Like the Young Woman, we "look forward into history" – and tell ourselves *who we are* – every time we share an idea in a classroom or cafeteria discussion that explores questions and ideas that are central to a life well lived. Why did Edna swim out away from shore in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*? What is Robert Frost's speaker getting at when he reflects on, "Two roads diverged in a wood" in "The Road Not Taken"? What led Sethe in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* to commit an unspeakable act? Answers, or potential answers, to these questions are impacted by how we interact and communicate with each other.

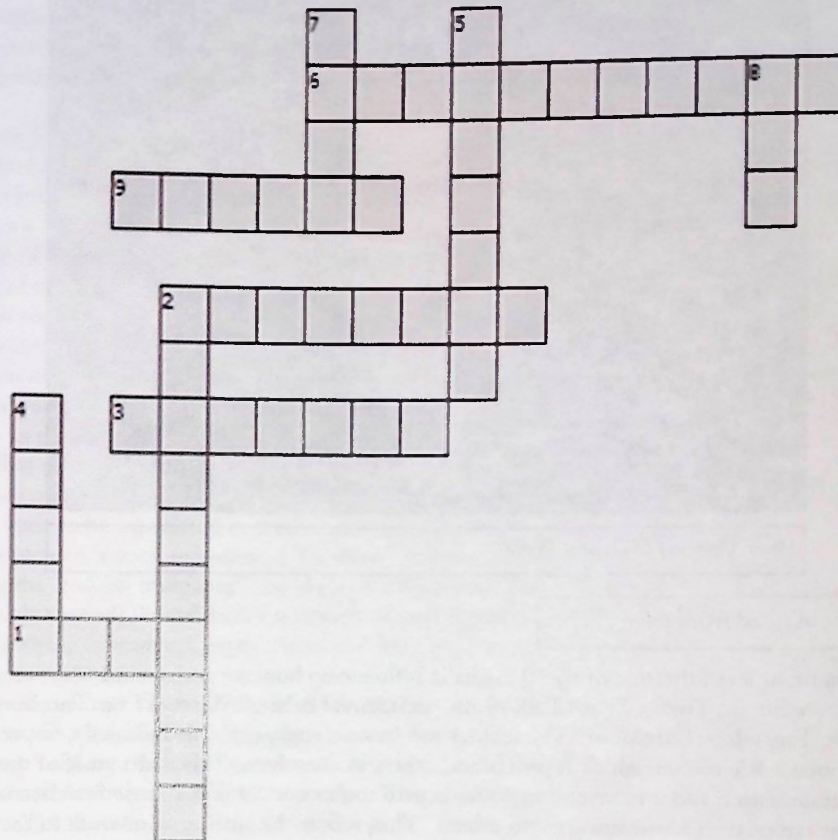
Social media, for all its power of representation as something 'new' and 'unique,' represents, at once, a new medium for understanding ourselves *and* really just another platform for interaction with others as well as with ourselves. It shows us how, as with Horowitz' Young Woman, we understand the complexities of the journey toward finding the right language to shape a narrative of identity that will allow us to tell a story we want to tell.

And the stories told seem familiar: We know these thoughts even if these images, pictures and texts seem abstract and fragmented. Self contemplations work this way. We've heard it before: "And miles to go before I sleep"; "You do not do, you do not do"; "First having read the book of myths"; "A screaming comes across the sky." These writers – Robert Frost, Sylvia Plath, Adrienne Rich, and Thomas Pynchon – understand the complexity of representing a voice or an identity.

Social media sites compel us, it seems, to represent a response to the dynamic interchange between a "look forward" and a "new ending." We know about these interchanges. Every Wilkes student has responded to this contemplation – if only in action, without *the fancy syntax of identity* possessed by Horowitz's Young Woman – by taking classes at the university, by enlisting in *the Army of Colonels*. Closer to home, as Humanities majors, we are uniquely positioned to contemplate the plot of our life stories and to examine how new forms, such as social media, can advance our sense for how to shape the story that we want to tell about ourselves and our world. Like the Young Woman in the play, you are able to "look forward into history and see this new ending, and the beginning that will follow."

## Hunger Games Crossword

All clues and answers are based on Suzanne Collins' best selling trilogy



### Across:

1. Has a talent for making fish hooks
2. Mentor for District 12
3. Female tribute from District 12
6. Main industry of District 11
9. Doubles as a weapon creator for the Capital and a rebel with the districts in Mockingjay

### Down:

2. Head gamemaker in Catching Fire
4. Post-apocalyptic America
5. Allies with the main character in Catching Fire
7. Best friend and hunting partner of female tribute from District 12
8. 12 year-old tribute from District 11

If anyone is interested in writing for *The Inkwell* please contact:  
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