

Revise This - April 2011

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Major Film Producer Susan Cartsonis Joins Creative Writing Advisory Board

Cartsonis is a producer and also serves as President of Storefront Pictures. She is known for producing such blockbusters as *What Women Want* (starring Mel Gibson) and *Where the Heart is* (starring Natalie Portman, Ashley Judd, and Sally Field). Cartsonis served as an executive for Twentieth Century Fox for

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nearly a decade before leaving to build two successful film companies. During her tenure at Fox, she helped develop and supervise *Nell*, *The Truth About Cats and Dogs*, *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*, and many others, including a film adaptation of Wilkes faculty member Beverly Donofrio's *Riding in Cars with Boys*.

Prior to her career at Fox, Cartsonis was an instructor for New York University's Dramatic Writing Program. She received her M.F.A. in Dramatic Writing from N.Y.U. and a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre from U.C.L.A. Cartsonis credits her degree as instrumental in her development as a producer, "When you work with writers, it's invaluable to be able to speak to them as someone who has written screenplays and plays and respects the creative process, struggle, and sheer challenge of creating something and seeing it through to completion." Throughout her career, Cartsonis has always stayed connected to teaching, serving as a speaker and graduate critique professional at UCLA, USC, and SCAD. With such strong professional and academic records, she is a welcome addition to our Creative Writing Community. "Mentoring is part of being a producer—with writers young and old," says Cartsonis, "Creative writing programs are so important in generating the next batch of talented film makers, novelists, and story tellers."

Cartsonis's latest project, *Beastly*, is in theaters now.

Lenore Hart's *The Raven's Bride* is released to Positive Reviews

Author and Creative Writing Faculty Member, **Lenore Hart**, has released her much-anticipated new novel, *The Raven's Bride*. The book chronicles the courtship and eventual marriage of Edgar Allen Poe and his thirteen-year-old cousin, Virginia Clem. The book has been called "an impressive, original work that illuminates its subject," by Publisher's Weekly.



Hart is no stranger to success, her break out novel, *Becky*, chronicling the life of Mark Twain's heroine Becky Thatcher, was also very well-received by the literary community. When asked what draws her to stories in which she gives voice to women who are largely considered

supporting figures, Hart said "I like the challenge of rendering what it must've been like to be a woman living in a different era (probably a lot more than I'd actually enjoy the reality of it!) It's fascinating to immerse oneself in the food, clothes, manners, and customs of different eras and places."

The Raven's Bride was a labor of love for Hart, requiring much research that meant spending two and a half years (figuratively) in Poe's 19th century world. One of Hart's biggest challenges was keeping up with the Poes. "They moved all the time! I had to leave out some of their abodes or it would have been incredibly confusing. They were in Baltimore, Richmond, Philadelphia, and New York City (twice)". Look for *The Raven's Bride*, published by St. Martin's Press, online or at an independent bookseller near you.

Creative Writing Director Bonnie Culver Elected to AWP Board of Directors



Bonnie Culver was elected to the board of directors for the Association of Writers and Writing Programs. Culver is only the second low-residency director to hold such an honor. The program was founded in 1967 as the Associated Writing Programs. Created to

support the growing presence of literary writers in higher education, the mission of AWP is to promote literary talent and achievement, to advance the art of writing as necessary for quality education, and to serve the makers, teachers, students, and readers of contemporary writing.

Culver looks forward to the possibilities her AWP position may provide for the Wilkes Creative Writing Program. "Our inclusion means that the issues, concerns of low-residency programs are being heard directly by AWP and its membership. Grants, awards for emerging writers, arts support such as NEA (and its future), setting standards of assessment and quality of all successful programs are part and parcel of what is addressed by the Board and the AWP membership. Wilkes is now there at the table, being a part of that national conversation."

Culver's appointment allowed her a unique perspective at this year's AWP conference, held in Washington, D.C. She arrived two days earlier than attendees for board meetings, and things only got busier once the crowds started filing in. "Board members are expected to attend sessions, meet and greet and thank sponsors, go to receptions, special dinners, host writer guests at dinners, and even introduce writers at open sessions." But, the busy week paid off, says Culver, "Because Wilkes was a major sponsor of the conference, I had the honor of introducing

Mary Gaitskill this year; Jim [Warner, Assistant Director,] introduced poet/memoirist Sapphire!"

Faculty/Staff Notes

David Poyer's latest novel *Ghosting*, a story of a dysfunctional family threatened on a weeklong sailing excursion, was published by St. Martin's Press in November, 2010.

Faculty members **Tony Morris, Beverly Donofrio, and Lenore Hart**, were among the visiting writers included in the first Ossabaw Island Writer's Retreat, organized by Morris himself. Ossabaw Island is a secluded retreat just off of Savannah Georgia. "Participants were strongly affected by the beauty and serenity of the island," says Morris. "They commented on the spirit, tone and mood of the retreat—particularly the near-magical presence and sense of natural and human history locked into a place 'that time forgot.'"

Nancy McKinley's short story, *Glue*, has been accepted by Gulf Coast.

Juanita Rockwell's short play, *Language Monkey*, was accepted for production in this summer's Source Festival, Washington D.C. Rockwell also directed Jennifer Nelson's play, *24, 7, 365*, which toured to The Atlas Theater (DC), Hylton Performing Arts Center (Manassas, VA) and The Harris Theater (Fairfax, VA). Finally, Juanita's full-length play, *Between Trains*, was included in Philadelphia Fringe Festival, Fall 2010.

Neil Shepard has placed poems in the current issues of the Harvard Review, Hunger Mountain Review, NOR (New Ohio Review) and online at Fogged Clarity. He also has a Jazz poem due out soon in the jazz magazine Brilliant Corners.

Jim Warner, Nancy McKinley, Alum Joseph Nalbone and Alum Starr Troup presented a panel session "Virtual Mentoring Made Real: The Evolving Tech of a Low-Residency Program" at the AWP Conference, 2011.

Bonnie Culver, Jean Klein, and Ross Klavan presented a panel session "Playwriting and Screenwriting: Our Business in the Academy" at the AWP Conference, 2011.

Student/Alumni Notes

M.F.A. student Amye Archer, has placed an excerpt from her memoir,

Fat Girl Skinny, with PANK Magazine, as part of their This Modern Writer Series.

M.F.A. student Ally Bishop, director of the Lit Outloud Reading Series, hosted another successful event this past February. Readers included Bishop, **Alum Rick Fellingner**, **Alum Brian Fanelli**, **M.F.A student Amye Archer**, **Alum Lori Meyers**, and **M.F.A. student William Prystauk**.

To celebrate Women's History Month, *Violet Oakley Unveiled*, a one-woman play written by **MA Student Cindy Dlugolecki**, was performed at the Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC) Rose Lehrman Arts Center.

M.F.A. Alum Brian Fanelli's poem "Dive" was published in March by the journal *Young American Poets*. In addition, Erika Funke of WVIA Radio interviewed Fanelli regarding his poetry chapbook, *Front Man*, for her ArtScene program.

M.F.A. Alum Patricia Florio has entered into a contract with Sue Richter at Sera Publishing. The two will be presenting, *East Meets West*, *American Writers Review*.

M.A. Alum Jennifer Diskin has published a chapbook, *Wear White and Grieve*, with Naissance Chapbooks by chapbookpublisher.com.

M.F.A. Alum Rick Fellingner's novel, *Memoirs of a Little League Dad*, has been named a quarter-finalist in the Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award contest.

M.F.A. Alum Joseph Giomboni's screenplay, *Ripple*, was a quarterfinalist in the Scriptapalooza 2010 International Screenwriting Competition. The script made the cut of 377 from more than 3500 entries.

M.A. student Tyler Grimm had an article published in Celebrate Gettysburg Magazine, and has since become a contributing writer for the publication.

M.F.A. Alum Matthew Hinton's play, *Quiet Cowboy*, was produced by The Gaslight Theater Company in Scranton, PA in January.

In November 2010, Finishing Line Press released **M.F.A. Alum Dawn Leas's** first chapbook, *I Know When to Keep Quiet*. Leas has also led a workshop and reading at the West Pittston Library.

M.A. student Kimberly Loomis-Bennett has placed poems from her MA thesis, *Soiled Doves*, in The Legendary, and The Copperfield Review.

M.A. Alum Gale Martin's novel, *Deviled by Don*, advanced to the second round of the Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award contest.

M.A. student Laura Moran had two poems accepted from her MA mss, a novel in verse called *Jump the Snake*, by the journal Redactions (Issue 14) due out this summer.

Cinderella and the Lone Prince, book and lyrics by **M.A. Alum, Lori Myers**, was staged last summer by Gretna Theatre, Mt. Gretna, PA. Also, Lori's short story, *Stranger on a Train*, was published by Dark Fire Fiction.

M.F.A. Alum Taylor M. Polites' book, *A Red and Dying Evening*, has been picked up by Simon & Schuster. Look for it in February of 2012.

M.F.A. student William Prystauk's screenplay, *Risen*, has won first place in the Horror Screenplay Contest, and was a semi-finalist in Shriekfest. His screenplay, *The Darwin Witch*, was selected as a top-ten finalist in Shiver's First Short Horror Screenplay Competition. In addition, Prystauk's short screenplay, *Catalyst*, has also placed second at WILDsounds, and was recently picked up by an up and coming production company, and expanded to a ten-minute film.

M.A. student Anastasia Savage's YA novel, *Any Witch Way*, is being published by JournalStone Publications. The novel is available for presale on Barnes&Noble.com.

M.F.A. Alum Donna Talarico was hired as web content editor in the office of marketing and communications at Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, Pa.

M.F.A. Alum Starr Troup was named Managing Editor of Etruscan Press, following a successful internship with the press, which is housed at Wilkes University.

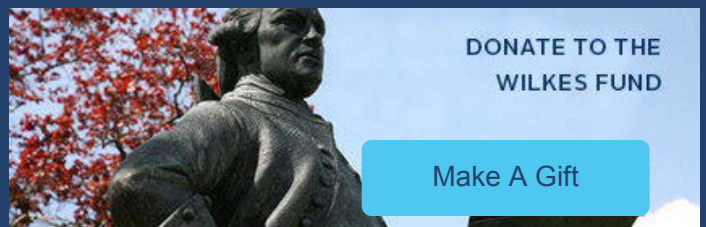
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