

## Revise This - September 2008



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## James Jones First Novel Fellowship Winner Announced



Margarite Landry

Margarite Landry, of Southborough, MA, won first place for her novel *Blue Moon* in the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual James Jones First Novel Fellowship, co-

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sponsored by the Creative Writing Department of Wilkes University and the James Jones Literary Society.

Landry was awarded \$10,000. Her novel, which competed with about 520 other submissions, follows the story of a single mother and her son, who bring a lively, troubled foster child into their home.

Landry, who earned a Ph.D. in Victorian Literature from Columbia University, was inspired to craft the story after a boy on the street asked her where she was going. She told him she was going to teach at a college down the street, but the boy didn't even know what a college was.

"I fell in love with the boy," Landry said. "He was so vulnerable."

Throughout the years, Landry has had a variety of writing jobs, including editing math books and ghost writing self-help books. She currently is an associate professor of English/Professional Writing at Fitchburg State College in Massachusetts.

Now that her novel is award-winning, Landry plans to make some final revisions and try to get it published. She also has short stories slated to be released in *Pisgah Review* and *The Bellingham Review*.

The runner-up winners were Matthew Dillon, of Port Townsend, WA, for his manuscript titled *Restoration*, and Nicholas Gerogiannis, of Birmingham, AL, for his manuscript titled *SERE*. They were each awarded \$750.

The James Jones Fellowship was established in 1992 to "honor the spirit of unblinking honesty, determination, and insight into modern culture as exemplified by (the writings of) James Jones." Requests for guidelines should be sent, along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope, to James Jones First Novel Fellowship, c/o Creative Writing Department, Wilkes University, 84 West South Street, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18766, or via e-mail to [jamesjonesfirstnovel@wilkes.edu](mailto:jamesjonesfirstnovel@wilkes.edu)

The submission deadline for entries is March 1 of each year.

## **Award-winning Novelist Jeff Talarigo Joins Faculty**



Award-winning author Jeff Talarigo is the newest addition to the faculty of the Graduate Creative writing Program.

Talarigo is the author of *The Pearl Diver*, winner of the American Academy of Arts and Letters Rosenthal Award. His latest book is *The Ginseng Hunter*. He was born in Pennsylvania and educated at Slippery Rock University. He currently lives in Boston with his wife and son.

When doing a book tour over the summer, Talarigo was encouraged by advisory board member and novelist Colum McCann to join the program's faculty.

What Talarigo plans to stress to fiction students is to write what you don't know. "I like the idea of stepping outside of who you are and writing about what you're not familiar with," Talarigo said. "I also find that it's a challenge, and it forces me to improve my writing with each book and to go in different directions."

Currently, Talarigo is working on a novel about Palestine, influenced by his trips to the region in 1990 and 1993 and plans to complete a solid draft of the novel by the summer. He is also doing research for a novel about Chechnya.

## Etruscan Press Managing Editor Joins Poetry Faculty

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Doris Umbers

Doris Umbers, the current managing editor for Etruscan Press, has joined the Graduate Creative Writing Program as a poetry faculty member.

Umbers currently teaches at Empire State College and received her PhD in English from Binghamton University, where she edited the literary journal *Harpur Palate*. Umbers also worked as an editorial assistant to

Binghamton's Creative Writing Program and as an assistant to the director of the Poetry Center in Patterson, NJ. Her poems have appeared in various anthologies and journals, including *Columbia: A Journal of Literature and Art* and the *Paterson Literary Review*. She also authored, *What Persists*, which was a finalist for the BkMk Press John Ciardi Prize for Poetry.

Umbers had her first experience as a faculty member in January when she stayed on campus to experience the 8-day residency. "Having heard of the residency before joining Etruscan Press, I was delighted to be able to experience it not only as a managing editor, as I did the previous year, but also as a member of the creative writing faculty," she said.

She adds that she noticed a real sense of community among the faculty members and writers and looks forward to working with students who are "self-motivated, who can work outside the classroom and bring that living to their writing."

Students working with Umbers can expect to learn about linguistics and nature and how they influence poetry. "The endangerment of our biological environment is in part caused by language. I bring that learning to my own poetry as well as my teaching," Umbers said.

She also wants to stress to students the importance of revision and patience in the writing process, which she learned from working on her manuscript and trying to get it published. "One of the more important things I can bring to the program is the idea of a poet's work as a lifetime of work, a continuum, and the patience such a view requires—not just patience but the resolve to work tirelessly despite the ever changing world of publishing," Umbers said.

Students will also be able to approach her about opportunities with Etruscan Press, which is housed in the creative writing office of Wilkes University. The press offers internships in all aspects of the publishing world. Umbers would also like to share with students the work of the poets the press publishes, including William Heyen and H.L. Hix, both National Book Award finalists.

## **Student Profile: Rev. Raphael Ezech**

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Rev. Raphael Ezech

M.A. student Rev. Raphael Ezech is proof that the low-residency Graduate Creative Writing Program of Wilkes University extends beyond the borders of the United States.

Ezech was born in Umodioka Village, located in southeast Nigeria, and moved to the United States nine years ago as part of a missionary congregation called the Missionary Society of St. Paul of Nigeria. He worked in a regional headquarters in Houston for a year, before being reassigned to New Orleans and later Chicago, where he currently resides and works as the pastor of Corpus Christi Church in the city's south side.

"Mostly, I do what every pastor in a Catholic parish does – minister to parishioners, celebrate the sacraments, work with various ministries in the parish and work with the administration of the parish and parish facilities," Ezech said.

When searching for creative writing programs, Ezech did a simple Internet search and discovered the program at Wilkes. He found it appealing not only because of its low-residency aspect, but also because it was one of the few programs he found that offered poetry, fiction and screenwriting as areas of study.

Ezech's faith and experience of two cultures have had a direct influence on his creative thesis, a screenplay and novel he's working on about a boy named Jamar who struggles to overcome poverty. The screenplay and novel are set in a Nigerian village and also Chicago, tracing Jamar's journey.

"I believe that people in Africa and the Western World can learn a lot from each other," Ezech said. "I wanted to bring aspects of Nigerian and American cultures and lifestyles together."

The family theme that runs through Ezech's thesis is also a reflection of his home culture. "In my culture, immediate and extended family relationships and communal spirit run very deep and play vital roles in everyone's lives," he said. "I see a lot of individualism here in America."

Ezech is uncertain how long he will be living in the United States, but he does know any transfer to another country by his missionary organization

would not happen until a few years, allowing him to complete the graduate program.

#### Faculty Notes

##### **Marlon James**

Marlon James' second novel, *The Book of Night Women*, will be published in February by Riverhead Press. The book focuses on the story of Lilith, a Jamaican slave who works on a sugar plantation at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, and The Night Women, a group of slaves plotting a revolt.

##### **Michael Mailer**

*The Lodger*, a remake of Alfred Hitchcock's 1927 film produced by Michael Mailer, will be released on DVD on February 10. The movie stars Simon Baker, Rachel Leigh Cook and Hope Davis and follows the story of a modern serial killer emulating Jack the Ripper.

##### **David Poyer**

David Poyer's latest novel, *The Weapon*, was published in November by St. Martin's Press. The book is the 11<sup>th</sup> in his Dan Lenson series.

#### Student Notes

##### **Chris Bullard**

M.A. student Chris Bullard had two poems, "Million Dollar Movie" and "Godzilla Agonistes" published in the Popular Culture section of the winter 2008-2009 issue of the journal *Umbrella*.

##### **Richard Fellingner**

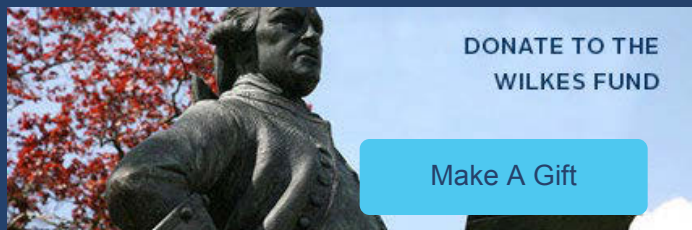
M.F.A. student Richard Fellingner had a short story, "A Completely New Life," accepted for publication in an upcoming issue of *The Potomac Review*. It will be the fourth story published from his rust-belt short story collection.

##### **Carol MacAllister**

M.A. student Carol MacAllister's short story, "Red Light," was short-listed in the 2008 Christmas Chiller contest in the U.K.

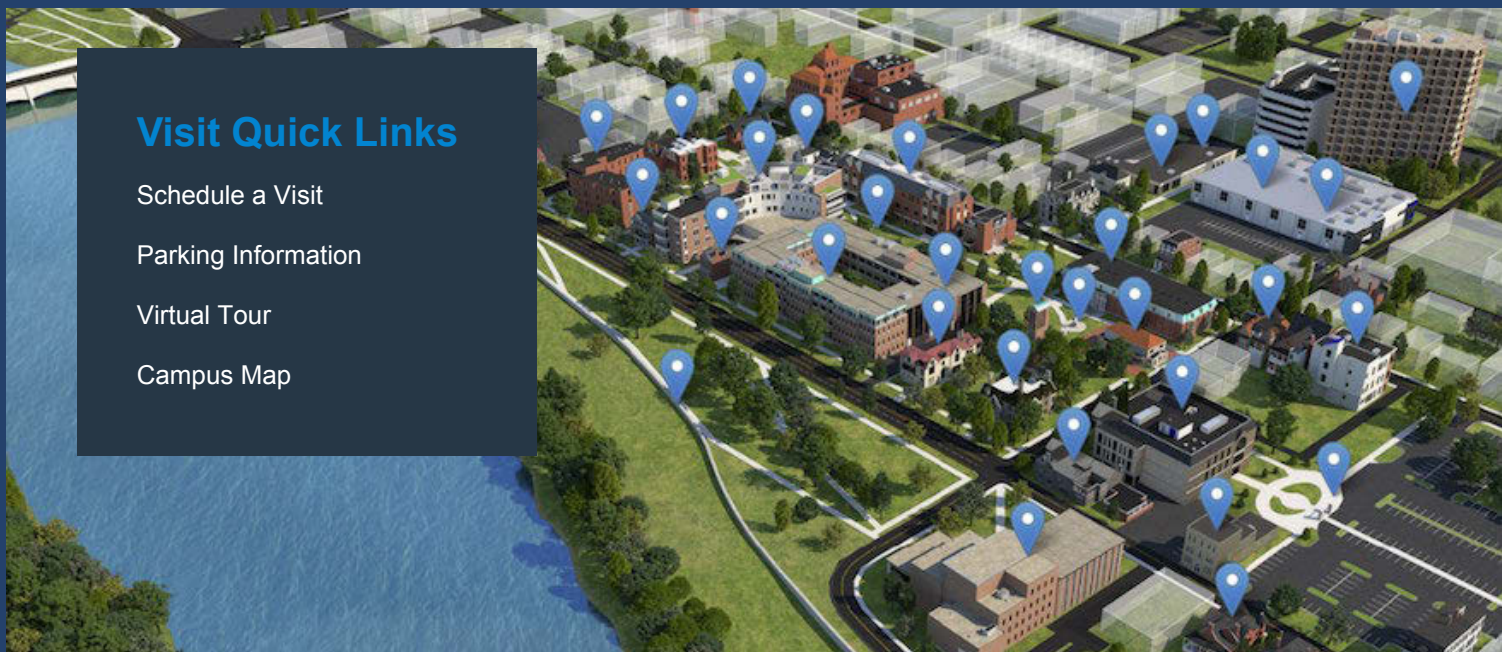
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