

Revise This - June 2013

Revise This!



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Book Trailers Trending with Wilkes Writers

Savvy writers are taking word-of-mouth promotions to a new level and reaching wider audiences through multi-media and social platforms. To support faculty member David Poyer's

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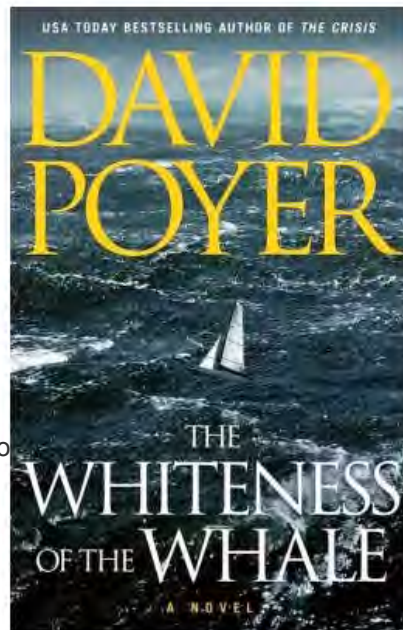
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latest novel, alum Laurie Powers produced a [trailer for *The Whiteness of the Whale*](#).

"She was an incredibly hard charger to get this trailer done before the book came out," Poyer says of Powers. While no one seems to be sure yet how such media impacts book sales, with the trend too early to completely monitor, Poyer says it's a great addition to his promotional platform. "Macmillan linked their book sites to the trailer and it has already had over a thousand hits."



Powers has twelve years experience in visual effects and read an advanced reading copy of Poyer's book to gather ideas. "I looked for phrases and images that stood out to me, or somehow defined the characters or storyline," she says of her process. Her familiarity with the art form was also helpful in determining what would work for the project. "I know book trailers are becoming really popular as I see them everywhere, and I can say that I personally bought a couple of books after seeing promotional videos that friends posted on Facebook."

Short videos are easy to share on social media sites, Powers says, so the portable versatility lends itself to word of mouth promotion. "You can watch a small video on your iPhone on the bus for example. You probably wouldn't open up a website and read book reviews on your phone," Powers says, adding that "everything these days is promoted via multi-media, why should books be any different?"



Justin Kassab, whose debut novel is scheduled for publication with [Kaylie Jones Books](#), an imprint of [Akashic Books](#), has latched onto the trend as well. Kassab says a book trailer was appropriate for his book, *Foamers*, as his "target audience isn't the group reading book reviews; they are the people surfing Youtube for the next great clip to share with all of their

friends. A book trailer has the potential to spread faster, farther, and to

more audiences, than traditional promotions.”

Jones says Mark Dennebaum, Jr. and Twenty Five/Eight, a Scranton company, volunteered their studio and crew to produce the trailer. While the video is in its final editing, photos of the shoot are available on the [publisher website](#) and Facebook page. “With the younger generation of readers, who often choose their books based on trailers or on on-line marketing,” Jones says, “book trailers are much more effective than for older readers who still rely on book reviews and blogs, or word of mouth, to determine what they will read.”

Kassab says the production experience was positive and a part of his creative process. He wrote the trailer draft and then Dennebaum finessed the final script “into something shootable,” Kassab says. “They let me stay on set and consulted me for decisions. Overall, I felt like a kid in a candy store watching something I had written come to life.”

Wilkes Grads Earn National Recognition

M.A. alum Todd McClimans and M.F.A. alum Sandee Gertz Umbach have each recently been honored with national recognition for their creative works. While in the program, McClimans worked with Lenore Hart and David Poyer on his alternate-history middle grade manuscript, *Time Traitor*. The manuscript has been declared one of five finalists in the 2013 National Association of Elementary School Principals Children’s Book Award competition.

“I couldn’t believe that my manuscript, *Time Traitor*, had been named one of the finalists,” says McClimans. “I’ve been struggling to get my manuscript noticed in the slush piles of many agencies. Becoming a finalist let me know that I had written a viable story and that I do have a chance at achieving my dream.”

Sandee Gertz Umbach took 2nd place in the Working Class Studies Association’s national “Tillie Olsen” Award for Creative Writing for her published book of poetry, *The Pattern Maker’s Daughter*. Each year, the WCSA issues a number of awards to recognize the best new work in the field of working-class studies. The review process is organized by the past-president of the WCSA, and



submissions are judged by a panel of three readers for each of the five categories of awards. Comments from judges included this remark: “Sandra Gertz Umbach has a fresh way of seeing the everydayness of working lives.”

While in the program, Gertz Umbach worked with Neil Shepard. The alum says her mentor “helped me to push to the finish line on this book when at times it seemed impossible.”

McClimans also credits the Wilkes writing program for the development and success of his project. “I can’t overstate how much I learned from David Poyer and Lenore Hart,” the alum says. “Dave taught me how to take an idea from beginning to end with the *dreaded* outline, to hone my voice for brevity and exactness, to trust my story and myself, and to push through self-built walls. With Lenore, I learned to pull my language together and to further hone my voice to reach younger readers. I’m so grateful for their guidance, support, and friendship. I wouldn’t be here without them.”

Post-Grad, Post-Production: Kevin Conner and the Big Screen

M.A. alum Kevin Conner’s film, “Pitchfork,” is in post-production. The film began as a short film project during his time in the Screenwriting Foundations course taught by Ross Klavan. Conner says the film has a simple premise: “A no-luck farmer finds happiness again. It’s a basic love story, with just a few twists.”

Since graduating, Conner has continued working with artistic directors Todd Oravic and Ryan Wood, both recent undergraduate Wilkes

students. “Working with Todd and Ryan has been great,” Conner says. “Their energy, enthusiasm, and knowledge made completion of the film possible. I learned an awful lot from them. They are two talented gentlemen.”

Conner is thankful for his time in the Wilkes program for connecting him with the greater writing community. “In my opinion, this is the great intangible of the Wilkes program,” he says. “We all need help from others to keep projects moving along, and the program provides writers with the community necessary to see ideas through. It’s a very valuable resource.”

Fantasy Comes To Life for Alum Lauren Catron

M.A. alum Lauren Catron says the Wilkes creative writing program has prepared her for what’s about to happen this summer: her debut novel, *Changeling Eyes*, will be published by indie press Booktrope Publishing.



Between preparing the manuscript and planning for post-publication marketing efforts, Catron feels better educated about the publishing process thanks to her time at Wilkes. “It’s important to learn how to promote myself and do some of the work on my own,” she says, adding that contemporary publishing relies so much on the author’s efforts.

Catron said David Poyer was “the most amazing mentor ever” as he helped her finesse her editing skills and make her manuscript the best possible prior to publication. “I still find myself reading books and thinking, ‘Poyer would never have let this slide’... I realized that when my book got published, it meant my books stood a better chance by comparison because I had Poyer in my corner. Thanks for getting me started, Dave.”

Changeling Eyes is the first book in her series, *The Aesir Chronicles*, and “focuses on Lrill, her struggle with her powerful heritage, and the revelation that there is a core of truth at the center of every legend.” Catron says the series will offer an alternate history of Earth, spanning from the creation of the world to its destruction and rebirth.

The alum says her favorite memory of attending the Wilkes program was “the moment when I realized any random member of the CW program was probably going to understand me better, as a person and a writer,

than anyone else I had ever known.” She is currently at work on the sequel to *Changeling Eyes*.

Success with MFA Internships in Education

Earning real world experience is part of the Wilkes creative writing curriculum. In their final term, M.F.A. students have the option to pursue Education or Publishing internships as part of the 620 project semester. As a faculty supervisor, Nancy McKinley has seen many of her mentored students go on to secure post-graduate positions in local colleges. One college in particular, Elizabethtown College, has four Wilkes grads on their payroll: Rick Fellingner, Jeff Minton, Donna Talarico, and Tyler Grimm.



“I’m thrilled to see so many interns get hired for teaching positions,” McKinley says. “Their placement speaks to the value and professionalism of the M.F.A. Internship in Education. The interns receive training and experience in the Best Practices of Teaching that can be applied at the college level, Artists-in-the Schools, workshop groups, and secondary levels.”

Alum Rick Fellingner tends to two roles at Elizabethtown College. He’s both an adjunct writing professor and a faculty fellow in The Writing Wing. “In the latter, I oversee the college’s writing tutors, mentor advanced writers, and hold writing workshops for faculty and community members,” he says. Fellingner credits his Wilkes internship for equipping him with the experience and practical tools to serve his students needs. “From the start, I was able to teach with a firm grasp of the writing process and I felt completely comfortable leading a classroom.”

Such comfort and confidence is something alum Jeff Minton says not everyone possesses, which is why the internship experience is so valuable. “If your goal is to teach, take 620. There is just too much to know,” Minton says. “You need experience. Many applicants don’t have it, and given the extreme competitiveness in academia for English teachers, this will give you a crucial leg-up—not to mention a world of connections.”

Many of those connections begin in the Wilkes program, and Nancy McKinley says the internships offer not only professional guidance, but also skills in balancing the creative success of graduates. “Throughout the internship semester,” she says, “the M.F.A. students have regular

online discussions that foster a community of writers-as-teachers wherein they share ideas, garner support, and remind one another about the importance of making time for their own writing.”

Alum Donna Talarico combines her creative and professional skills in a position outside of the classroom. Talarico chose the Internship in Publishing and worked with Phil Brady to offer social media and website support for Etruscan authors. Now Talarico applies her combined skills as the integrated marketing manager in the Office of Marketing and Communications at Elizabethtown College. “Today, marketing writing is more about story-telling and less about selling,” she says. “I was able to contribute to establishing a new voice and personality for the college, and completely revamp our messaging and style. The craft portion of the M.F.A. program no doubt played a big role in this transition.” Talarico says her work day encompasses creative writing in every aspect. “I think the M.F.A., coupled with my communications background, gives me such a unique perspective on marketing—so much so that it has allowed me to innovate and, often, allow my institution to stand out from others.”

The internship experience provided through Wilkes offers students concrete skills for the workplace—and a supportive learning environment that often translates to confident and compassionate instruction. After only two semesters of teaching, alum Tyler Grimm was recognized for his classroom presence when he was nominated for the Richard Crocker Outstanding Service to Students Award. Grimm says the annual award is decided by the students. “It is so important to me that these nominations come from the students and not from other faculty,” Grimm says. “It tells me I’m doing something right and making a positive impact even as I’m still honing my classes and teaching methodology.”

Grimm credits his success to the Wilkes residency and internship, while giving a nod to faculty members Nancy McKinley, Lenore Hart, and Kaylie Jones. “Both Nancy and Lenore provided such insight and knowledge during 616 that I did not feel *that* overwhelmed when beginning my internship,” he says, adding that the development of syllabi, lesson plans, rubrics, and his pedagogical practices were also supported by Jones. “Throughout the program, she taught me how to provide feedback on students’ writing, which is obviously invaluable. The rest, though, came from working through questions and concerns with Nancy. Her approach to the internship is as individualized as possible.”

An important part of the internship experience is encouraging M.F.A. students to balance their professional obligations with their creative ambitions. After all, our students are writers who came, first and foremost, to our program to explore their craft and pursue their personal writing dreams. “Our interns learn how to navigate time constraints whereby they find ways to balance writing with working as a teacher-of-writing,” says McKinley, arguing that fulfilled writers create fulfilled

instructors. "Thus the interns bring a level of enthusiasm to the teaching environment that heightens their instructional delivery. I think that's a key aspect of our success and why so many of our graduates get hired for teaching jobs."

Announcements

New Program Tracks: Ever thought you wanted to start your own press, e-zine, or literary journal? Thanks to the initiative of Akashic Books editor Johnny Temple and Etruscan's founding editor Phil Brady, alums and current students now have the option of pursuing a Master of Arts in Publishing! This new track will open at the June 2013 residency. Wilkes alums will take only an additional 18 credits to earn the M.A. in publishing.

Have you found the world of documentary film fascinating? The Wilkes low residency program has also added a Master of Arts in documentary film, which will begin in January, 2014. Like the new publishing degree, alums need only take an additional 18 credits to earn this degree. The curriculum is being developed now working with Robert May and SenArt Films and other to be named companies.

Other program updates: Due to student requests, all M.A. graduates will have their area of study on their diploma, beginning with the fall graduation. For example, if you complete a screenplay for your thesis, your diploma will now read: "Master of Arts in Creative Writing specializing in screenwriting." Beforehand, all diplomas simply read, "Master of Arts in Creative Writing." Should you wish to return to Wilkes and specialize in another area of study, you need only take the last 18 credit hours to earn a second M.A.

For more information on any of these new possibilities or to apply to any of the newly revised program tracks, please email or call Dr. Culver or Ms. Dawn Leas. Deadline to apply is May 31, 2013.

Etruscan Press is delighted to announce that Dr. Jaclyn Fowler has agreed to accept the position of Managing Editor of Etruscan Press. Jackie received her M.F.A. and M.A. from Wilkes University's Creative Writing program.

Prior to coming to Etruscan Press, Dr. Fowler taught English, Creative Writing, and Education to K-12, undergraduate, graduate, and adult learners in both the traditional ground and asynchronous online classrooms. She also served several independent schools as head of their academic programs and sits on the PA State Board of Private

Schools.

Dr. Fowler received her doctorate in Education and Second Language Acquisition from The Pennsylvania State University.

Faculty/Staff Notes

Bob Arthur is heading up The Edge Theater, a new theater on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. His first show included two short-shorts: “GPS” by Bonnie Culver and “LifeSwap” by Jean Klein.

Susan Cartsonis, faculty and advisory board member, was recently honored for her accomplishments in film by the Crohn’s & Colitis Foundation of America at their 6th Annual Women of Distinction luncheon at the Beverly Hills Hotel. The speech she gave is shared online on *The Write Life*. Susan also attended the Forbes’ Women’s Summit in NYC.

Bonnie Culver has an essay in an upcoming anthology, *Writing on the Water: Words on the Allegheny River*, which is scheduled for publication with Mayapple Press. The anthology will include a CD with poetry and music from Jerome Rothenberg and Pete Seeger. Her essay, “Moon on the Water,” is about a month-long canoe trip Bonnie took in 1969 on the river.

Gregory Fletcher’s short play, “The Moon Alone,” was produced in March by Artistic New Directions at the Shetler Studio Theatre, Off-Off-Broadway.

Jean Klein is coordinating HaveScripts.com, an e-catalog of plays available for stage, readings, and classrooms. Current Wilkes faculty plays available with HaveScripts include selections from Bonnie Culver, Jan Quakenbush, Robert P. Arthur, and Jean Klein.

Dawn Leas has a poem, “Bonfire,” forthcoming in the 2013 issue of *Connecticut River Review* and two poems, “A Winter Conversation” and “The 6:45 Train,” forthcoming in the upcoming issue of *Word Fountain*. Her review of *Water-Rites* by Ann E. Michael appears in the April 2013 issue of *Poets’ Quarterly*, and she has work included in the forthcoming anthology, *A Commonplace Book: A Community Memoir Project* edited by Jennifer Hill. Dawn also wrote a feature article about the Wilkes Creative Writing Program for The *IndependentNEPA* magazine, owned and published by alum John Plucenik. She will also have a poem, “Seaside Heights, 2011,” in the Harbors and Harbor Towns-themed issue of *San Pedro River Review*, scheduled to be released in June.

J. Michael Lennon has a number of events planned for the summer and fall, leading up to the October release of his Mailer biography, *A Double Life*. Lennon also has a new [website](#).

Nancy McKinley's short story, "No Matter Where," received an Honorable Mention in the Westmoreland Arts & Heritage 2013 Poetry and Short Story Contest.

Dave Poyer debuted two new books this spring: a novel, *The Whiteness of the Whale*, for which he was touring on Cape Cod and Nantucket recently, and an oral history, *Happier Than This Day and Time*, which he will be reading from on Hatteras Island, Kitty Hawk, and Manteo Island next month.

M. Kilburg Reedy, our frequent visiting entertainment lawyer, is co-producing a new Broadway play, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, starring Sigourney Weaver and David Hyde Pierce. The show has been honored with six Tony nominations, including Best Play, as well as Drama Desk, Drama League, and Outer Critics' Circle nominations for Best Play.

Juanita Rockwell was granted a writer's residency at Wildacres Retreat, NC, and is directing Jordan Harrison's *Act A Lady* for Iron Crow Theatre, playing May 25-June 8 at Baltimore Theatre Project.

Neil Shepard's new e-book, *Scavenging the Country for a Heartbeat*, is available from Northampton House Press.

Student/Alumni Notes

M.F. A. alum Amye Archer was a featured reader at KGB in New York, as part of the At The Inkwel series.

M.A. student Cheryl Bazzoui's essay, "On Becoming Unplugged," was published under her pen name, Ann Mccauley, in the February 2013 issue of *Working Writer*.

M.F.A. alum Chris Bullard has had his chapbook, *Dear Leatherface*, accepted for publication by Kattywompus Press later this year. His full-length collection, *Back*, is also scheduled for publication this year with WordTech Communications.

M.F.A. student Kait Burrier's monologue, "Gin on the Rocks," was

produced by the Jason Miller Playwrights Project in Rock Bottom: Monologues About Starting Over at the Scranton Public Theatre. Her one act play "Spill" will be produced by Gaslight Theatre Company in their Playroom series during the last two weeks of June at Downtown Arts. Kait also had an article about *The Office* wrap-up party published in *The Weekender*.

M.F.A. alum Tara Caimi's memoir excerpt, "Without Words," was published in *Outside In Literary & Travel Magazine*.

M.A. alum Chris Campion, along with many other Wilkes creative writing alum, read the opening chapter from his new novel in progress, *Office Fire*, at New Visions Art Gallery for its bi-monthly writers and poets showcase.

M.F.A. alum Jason Carney has three poems in the latest issue of Union Station Magazine. He is also now a contributing editor at *Poets' Quarterly*.

M.A. alum Erin Delaney was recently featured at the April Faculty Poetry Feature at Misericordia University's Speaker Series, "From Mouth to Mic: Waxing Poetic II," and was a Poetry Feature at New Visions Monthly Writers Showcase and Poetry Reading. She is currently working at Misericordia University teaching African American Literature, American Immigrant Literature, and Modern World Literature. She is currently teaching Sophomore Seminar at Southern New Hampshire University.

M.F.A. alum Brian Fanelli's poem, "Writing the Last Word," has been accepted for the June issue of *Spillway*, and his poem, "Temp Worker," has been accepted by *The Oklahoma Review*. A third poem, "Goodbyes in a Blackout," was accepted by *North Chicago Review*. In addition, Brian recently enrolled in SUNY Binghamton's Ph.D. program and completed his first semester in May.

M.F.A. alum Patricia Florio's short story, "Golden Boy," was published in the summer issue of *Newtown Literary*.

M.F.A. alum Jenn Freed recently published her young adult historical fiction novel, *The Last Encampment*, with Northampton Press.

M.F.A. alum Sandee Gertz Umbach's book, *The Pattern Maker's Daughter*, received 2nd place in the national Tillie Olsen Award competition for Creative Writing given by the Working Class Studies Association.

M.F.A. alum Virginia Grove published an excerpt of *Break* in the latest issue of *Survivor's Review*. She was also a reader at Misericordia

University's series, "From Mouth to Mic: Waxing Poetic II," in celebration of National Poetry Month.

M.A. student April Line's column "Understanding Henry" will come out in the maiden issue of *West Branch Life*, a new publication of *The Williamsport Sun-Gazette*. She has also recently accepted a position as staff editor at Evolved Publications.

M.F.A. alum Bill Lowenburg's monograph, "Crash Burn Love," was recently featured with a 14 picture spread on Slate.com's photo blog, *Behold*.

M.A. alum Laurie Loewenstein had a short story published in the Mondays Are Murder series from Akashic Books.

M.F.A. alum Carol MacAllister was recently accepted in the Horror Writers Association. Alum Monique Lewis also conducted an author interview with Carol and wrote a review of her e-book, *Mayan Calendar Reveal*, which can be found at attheinkwell.com.

M.F.A. alum Ginger Marcinkowski is now a regular column contributor to *Book Fun Magazine*.

M.A. alum Gale Martin was featured at the Annual Book and Author Luncheon of the Willingboro chapter of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) on April 26, where she gave an author talk, followed by a book signing. She will appear at the fourth annual BookFest PA, part of the 2013 Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts, on Saturday, July 13, 2013, sponsored by the Schlow Centre Region Library.

M.A. alum Lori A. May was featured in an interview at *r.kv.ry Quarterly Literary Journal*, where she has new poetry in the latest issue. She also has an essay in a recent issue of *Northern Cardinal Review*.

M.A. alum Todd McClimans's alternate-history middle grade manuscript, *Time Traitor*, was declared one of five finalists in the 2013 National Association of Elementary School Principals Children's Book Award competition.

M.F.A. alum Chad Mullen's book, *The Mirror of Aberrantine*, is scheduled to be published by Northampton House Press.

M.A. alum Lori M. Myers had her short story, "Dante's Window," published in the inaugural issue of *Rock Bottom Journal*. She also recently interviewed singer Helen Reddy for an article in *B Magazine*.

M.F.A. alum Adrienne Pender's thesis play, "Somewhere in Between," will be produced at Theatre in the Park in Raleigh this September as part of their 2013-14 mainstage season.

M.F.A. alum Sarah Pugh's original series, "Killjoy," made the Top 25 Semi-Final round of the Austin Television Festival's Pitch Competition.

M.F.A. alum Carrie Reilly will be teaching and writing in South Africa for two years while serving in the Peace Corps.

M.A. student Bill Schneider has traded his surfboard for the Stylebook. He accepted a graduate assistantship with the Wilkes University Marketing and Communications Department beginning in late May.

M.F.A. alum Joseph Schwartzburt reports that Amelia Gray, recent PEN/Faulkner finalist for her novel *Threats*, will be the headliner for Seersucker Live: A Literary Performance, Episode 7.

M.F.A. student Michael J. Soloway will have an excerpt from his memoir, *Share the Chameleon*, published by *Split Lip* magazine in September 2013. Also, his latest essay, "I Submit to You," is online at *The Write Life*.

M.F.A. alum Rachel Luann Strayer has entered into an official agreement with Ellery Schaar of Repurposed Theatre in San Francisco, California, for the production of her play, *Drowning Ophelia*. Performances will be scheduled for the fall of 2013.

M.F.A. student Edith Ajoke Morenike Trenou will provide editing, writing, and translation services at Saahelia.com. Edith, who is fluent in six languages, holds a master's degree from the Sorbonne Nouvelle as well as an advanced translating and interpreting degree from Georgetown University.

M.A. alum Kevin Voglino's second book, *Tea Time Boys*, is now available from Rogue Phoenix Press.

M.F. A. alum Jim Warner was a featured reader at KGB in New York, as part of the At The Inkwel series.

M.F.A student Barry Wolborsky wrote an article for EW.com about *The Office* wrap-up party in Scranton.

M.F.A. alum Morowa Yejidé joined University of Maryland University College (UMUC) as an online Adjunct Professor. She is teaching Advanced Technical Writing.

M.F.A. student Dawn D'Aries Zera had her work, "Disillusionment," presented in May as part of a production of monologues at The Olde Brick Theater in Scranton. Also, her short story "Cuffs," initially prepared for an oral presentation class during a residency, is in the summer 2013 edition of *Big Pulp* magazine. She also offered a reading in April at KGB bar, NYC, as part of alum Monique Lewis's reading series At the Inkwell.

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