

## Give Me a Break

By Marlia Fontaine-Weisse

Winter Break couldn't get here fast enough. I think it was some time around Week Five I wished it were Week Fifteen—now that it has ended, I wish I had more time! But the positive that keeps me from losing it here at the end is that soon I can spend whole days in my jammies with no one around to judge me.



Looking back at this semester, I admit there are several things I could have handled differently or wish hadn't happened, like anticipating a teething toddler or finding out my father has prostate cancer. Yet, I'm proud of the work we students have done towards advancing scholarship and the strides we've taken to better the English Department both on and off campus.

With this being the final issue of 2011, I wanted to point out that the contents below span December and January. The Academic Pursuits Committee will be enjoying our break, and we have a few suggestions for yours: enjoy it to the fullest extent—surround yourself with friends and loved ones, stay up or out without time constraints, read books without a critical eye, drink coffee because you love to, not because you have to, and if you must complete schoolwork, do so in tiny doses.

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### Academic Pursuits Committee

#### Chairperson

Marlia Fontaine-Weisse  
Vice-President, SAGES

#### Members

Kevin Kelsey  
Brian Harrell

## Winter Break Deadlines

*Reading the World of Big Data*: December 20<sup>th</sup>

Ben Miller ([miller@gsu.edu](mailto:miller@gsu.edu)) and Oriana Gatta ([ogattal@student.gsu.edu](mailto:ogattal@student.gsu.edu))

The journal, *Annals of Scholarship*, is looking for critical and technical articles, interviews, and reviews of methods and texts that address how humanists, broadly defined, create meaning from large collections of data and what are the implications of adoption and development of these methods. Abstracts of no more than 500 words are due by the above date, and general inquiries and ideas for interviews and book/project reviews should be addressed to one of the contacts above.

*The UA Grad-CROW Symposium: January 1<sup>st</sup>*

Email Natalie Hall: [nah28@zips.uakron.edu](mailto:nah28@zips.uakron.edu)

The UA Graduate Committee for Research on Women/Gender is seeking 300 word proposals to present at the upcoming symposium (March 30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>) showcasing graduate students' original research in all fields of women's and/or gender studies. The theme, "Gendered Worlds," is open to any student enrolled in a graduate program whose work centers on women and/or gender. For more information, email Ms Hall.

*Polari Journal: An International Queer Creative Writing Journal: January 1<sup>st</sup>*

<http://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/node/43278>

Polari Journal is holding an open call for submissions for its next issue (published online April 2012). There is no specific theme for this issue; however Polari tends towards the shorter forms: short stories, poetry, essays, scholarly papers, one act plays/scripts and reviews. In general, the word limit for fiction, plays and essays is 6000 words. Reviews should not be more than 1500 words. For poetry, the maximum is 100 lines.

*Pennsylvania Literary Journal: January 5<sup>th</sup>*

<http://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/node/42013>

The PLJ is looking for submissions to be included in their Spring 2012 Issue, called "New Formalism." Those submissions can be from any field of literary study that either address broadly the turn to the aesthetic in critical discourse or focus more narrowly on a particular work or author in terms of new formalist concerns. The full essay should be between 4,000 and 9,000 words and be in MLA format.



“Do the things today others won’t so tomorrow you can have the things others can’t.”

-Anon.

## Spotlight: December Graduates

By Marlia Fontaine-Weisse



This month, we say goodbye to several of our brethren as they embark upon the journey to their careers. Rather than moving on without a backward glance, we asked them if they had any final thoughts they wanted to share with those of us left behind, and here is what a few of them had to say:

**Q. Which professor inspired you the most?**

## **SAGES:**

A student organization that focuses on helping graduate students of all tracks (Composition, Fine Arts, and Literature) in the English field develop professionally during their time at The University of Akron, by providing members with resources to help them publish, present, and prepare. SAGES also strives to promote unity among graduate students of the three tracks by creating events and providing resources that will benefit scholars regardless of their field.

Ask an officer  
how to  
**Become a  
Member  
and  
JOIN TODAY!**

*Leon Markam - Dr. Egan. I believe his matter of fact approach to the state of the profession is refreshing and frank. He has a quirky sense of dry humor I appreciate as well as being a font of knowledge which he shares gladly to any and all that ask.*

*Maria Paxos - As an undergrad and grad at the University of Akron, English Department I would have to say Dr. Thomas Dukes. I just think he is one of those professors that changes not only your outlook on your college experience but most importantly the way you approach your everyday life.*

*Shane Fliger - This question was totally the hardest to answer, because (as Pollyanna as it sounds) every single professor I've had has inspired me in one way or another. I haven't gotten along with everyone, nor did I expect to; between conflicts of ideology and differing conceptualizations of the field, discussions and differences of opinion were only natural. That said, I've learned something about the nature of scholarship and the inner workings of the Academy from every graduate course I've been involved in.*

### **Q. What was your most memorable moment?**

*Shane Fliger - My most memorable moment, bar none, was in the Milton seminar taught by Dr. Egan. We were all sitting in the Department's conference room, just catching up, when Egan walks in with a dead serious look on his face. He sits down and begins to introduce himself...and, face as straight as a poker ace, says "You may have heard I worship the Devil - this isn't true. I actually worship several." A few friends and I cracked up, but there was terror in quite a few eyes around that table. Everything I loved about grad school was summed up in that moment: totally irreverent humor, good friends, and demanding-yet-rewarding intellectual work.*

### **Q. What is one piece of advice you want to leave behind?**

*Paula Iken - My advice is this: As you go through the program, value your fellow classmates. They are smart; you will learn much from them, and they will learn from you as well. If you are returning to school after many years away from it, hang in there! You know a lot more than you think you do.*

*Lindsey Render - If I can offer one piece of advice, it would be to never be afraid to try something different. Now is the time to pursue your interests, many of which you may never have had the venue to do so before. Try something new, there will always be somebody who finds it as intriguing or full of opportunity as you do.*

*Maria Paxos - My advice would be to any incoming Graduate student. If you don't think you have the time to do the assignments and or extra reading for your classes, think twice about continuing with the program.*

*Shane Fliger - One piece of advice...hrm..."Always knock twice on a professor's door before trying the knob. Some things can never be unseen."*

*Seriously, I'd tell incoming grad students to push their own boundaries and not be worried about trying new things. Over my two years I found a growing interest for a scholarly area I wasn't sure could work or not, attended/presented/co-chaired at conferences despite my own nervousness, and made a ton of very cool contacts with people. This isn't undergrad; you're surrounded by people who share your geekiness, so just embrace it.*

## Events

### **The BIG BIG MESS Reading Series**

Friday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, at Annabelle's Bar & Lounge from 6p-9p

The BIG BIG MESS, a contemporary poetry, fiction, and nonfiction reading series based in Akron, is featuring poets Jeremy Schmall, Donora Hillard, Jay Robinson, Sean Kilpatrick, and David Giffels at this event. Don't miss out on the magic of poetry, especially when amped up with accompaniment by the May Company!

### **Literary Guild/Upstart Crows-Sponsored Holiday Party**

Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, at Bricco in Downtown Akron from 7p-10p

The English Department faculty, staff, graduates, undergraduates and their guests are invited to this holiday-themed open mic. Please feel free to bring stories about crazy holiday happenings, or even do a dramatic reading of "The Night Before Christmas." Also, there will be a book raffle, so bring singles!

## Have Something to Say?

We value student contributions and look forward to your well-written, appropriately - themed articles. To learn more about how to submit or how to become a committee member, email us at:

ua\_academic\_pursuits  
@yahoo.com

## November Highlights



**Presenters at the MMLA,  
L-R: Marlia Fontaine-  
Weisse, Dr. Hilary Nunn,  
Lindsey Render, and  
Shane Fliger**



**Project Restock made  
up half of this crate!  
Thanks for the  
contributions!**



**Sonny Grant presenting  
at the OVSC**