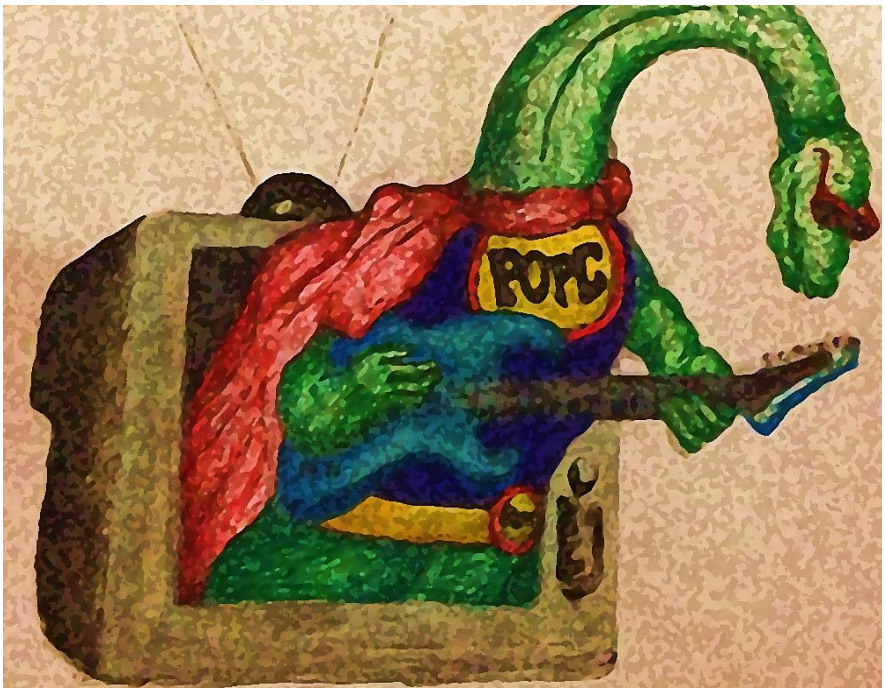

Department of Popular Culture Newsletter May 2015

EDITING AND LAYOUT BY ESTHER CLINTON AND JEREMY WALLACH

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A Fond Farewell to Dr. Marilyn F. Motz

by Esther Clinton and Jeremy Wallach

It is with sadness that we write this story about Dr. Marilyn Motz. Not because her story itself is sad, but because she's leaving Bowling Green. There has always been something comforting knowing that Marilyn was probably in her office down the hall and that you could just go see her and say almost anything to her. Not surprisingly, she was begged (somewhat in jest, but only somewhat) not to leave at her retirement dinner (her husband pleaded with her not to listen).

Marilyn was kind enough to answer some of our questions (in addition to providing many of the photos in this newsletter):

When did you start working at the Department and what was it like back then?

I started working in the Department of Popular Culture in the Fall of 1980. There was a lot of skepticism both on and off campus about studying popular culture. You had to get used to a certain amount (a lot, actually) of

(con't on p. 9)

Below: *Dr. Motz prepares to cut the cake at her retirement party on May 7th. Photo by Jeremy Wallach.*

Marilyn Motz, Scholar: An Appreciation

By Esther Clinton

Dr. Marilyn Motz was a history undergraduate at the University of Michigan, where she received her BA in 1972. In 1973 she earned her MA and in 1982 her PhD in American Culture at the University of Michigan. Although her degrees are in American Culture, folklore has become her primary disciplinary home. One of her best-known and influential publications is "The

(con't on p. 10).

Meet the New Boss:
Dr. Kristen Rudisill

POPC's Incoming Chair

Dr. Kristen Rudisill joined the faculty of Popular Culture in Fall 2007. A specialist in Indian popular culture, Kristen holds a BA in Religion from Bryn Mawr College, an MA in History of Religion from the University of Chicago Divinity School and a PhD in Asian Studies from the University of Texas at Austin. Her dissertation focuses on the interactions between class and caste in Tamil popular theater and her current research explores issues of identity, globalization and performance among India's emerging middle class, particularly young people. She is also in negotiations to find a publisher for her translations of several Tamil plays into English. Her work has appeared in *The Asian Theatre Journal*, *South Asian Popular Culture*, and *Studies in Musical Theatre*, among other journals. She has received many grants while at BGSU, including a Fulbright-Nehru Senior Research Fellowship and an Institute for the study of Culture and Society (ICS) Fellowship. She was also awarded Stoddard-O'Neill funds and a Faculty Mentor Enrichment Grant. In 2010 she co-organized the BGSU Asian Popular Culture Symposium. In 2014 she received tenure and was promoted to Associate Professor.

Kristen enjoys strategy and board games of all sorts, is an avid Scrabble player and has repeatedly defeated both of us. She brings the same sense of focused intensity to economic and budgetary matters. This academic year (2014-2015) she took a year-long accounting course at BGSU, and she intends to continue studying accounting, which will doubtless serve her well in her capacity as chair. Her vision for the department includes recruiting more students, improving the website, and maintaining strong relationships with department alumni and potential donors. As she writes in her vision statement, "We need to update everything and do some online marketing for both the undergraduate and graduate programs." She continues, "I think we are doing a lot of things right, and much of my vision for the department is simply to continue on with our current initiatives, or actually move on some of the things we've been talking about doing." She also hopes to "lead the department in pursuing global initiatives," which she is well positioned to do as an active member of the Asian Studies program and as part of a new cross-departmental globalization initiative. Kristen was the department's unanimous choice and was praised for her integrity, accessibility, and professionalism. We are thrilled to have her as our next chair!

Meet the New *Real* Boss: DeeDee Wentland

Everyone knows an academic department is really run by the departmental secretary. DeeDee Wentland, who started in the position this past semester, was kind enough to tell us about herself in her own words.

My family moved to Bowling Green in **1975** when my mom took a faculty position at BGSU. Both my parents are retired college professors, both Speech and Language Pathologists. Our family moved around a lot when I was young as my parents were pursing their graduate degrees. I was born in Beardstown, Illinois and lived in Wisconsin and Mississippi before moving to Ohio.

I guess you could say I've got BGSU in my blood. My mom was a faculty (*con't on p. 10*).

The Year in Pictures

A TV Legend at 93

Dr. Chuck Coletta (r) with the legendary Carl Reiner on March 30, 2015. Photo courtesy of Dr. Charles Coletta.

Bikes and Lowriders

Dr. Dylan Miner of Michigan State University presents his research at the Popular Culture Colloquium on February 26, 2015. Photo by Susana Peña.

Matt Donahue rocks the house at the Electric Guitar in Popular Culture Conference at Grounds for Thought Coffee House in Downtown Bowling Green, March 28, 2015. Photo courtesy of Dr. Matthew A. Donahue.

A POPC Success Story Returns

Honorary Doctorate Recipient and Popular Culture benefactor Eileen O'Neill (MA '90) chats with graduate student Yu Zheng and Dr. Marilyn Motz at a reception in her honor on December 19, 2014. Photo by Bianca R. Garza. For more information about her visit : http://www.bgsu.edu/news/2014/12/the-four-rs-to-success.html

International Popular Culture Class, Fall 2014. Photograph by Marilyn Motz.

Matti Pomeroy and Briana Pocratsky. Photo by Susana Peña.

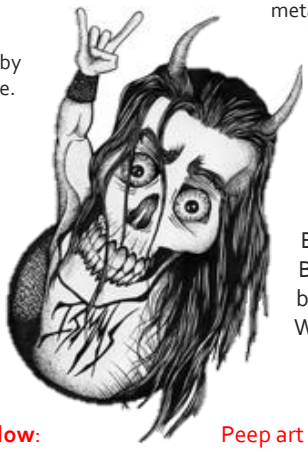
Dr. Steve Waksman's keynote address at the Electric Guitar and Popular Culture Conference, March 2015. Photo by M. Motz

Alex Nader, Briana Procratsky, and Matti Pomeroy with Dr. Marilyn Motz at Spring 2015 graduation. Photo by Josh Catalano

Below: First-year graduate students on Shatzel porch, August 20, 2014. Photo by Susana Peña.

Conferencing with Rock Stars

Esther Clinton and Jeremy Wallach met Alex Skolnick (left) at the Metal and Cultural Impact Conference at the University of Dayton this past November. Mr. Skolnick is best known as the guitarist of legendary Bay Area thrash metal band Testament. Photo by Bryan Bardine.



Buzz Bloodshot by Michael Weigman.

Below: Peep art created by Dr. Montana Miller's 2015 Folklore and Folklife graduate seminar The scene depicts (in the forefront) what students THOUGHT grad school would be like; small white bunny peeps are TA's as a big white bunny peep "professor" lectures to blue peep undergrads. Depicted to the left in the background, "what grad school turned out to be": Big white bunny peep is institution/thesis looming over small squashed white grad student peep. Photo courtesy of M. Miller.

DeeDee Wentland and friends. Photo courtesy of DeeDee Wentland.

Retirement cake for Marsha Olivarez's retirement, November 20, 2015. Photo by M. Motz

Dr. Matthew Donahue, Rebecca Denes and Jacob Brown at the Electric Guitar and Popular Culture Conference, March 2015. Photo by S. Peña.

2014-2015 University Awards

Anna Mullins, BGSU Distinguished Thesis Award, 2013-2014, for "*Sucker Punch* and the Political Problem of Fantasy to Female Representation"

Anthony Thibodeau, Shanklin Graduate Student Research Award, 2014, for research on his MA thesis on "Anti-colonial Resistance and Indigenous Identity in North American Heavy Metal"

Popular Culture Scholars Association and **Culture Club, Outstanding Educational Program Award** for Ray Browne Conference on Cultural and Critical Studies, 2014

Popular Culture Scholars Association and **Culture Club** - Cultural Studies Scholars' Association, **Graduate Student Senate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award** for Ray Browne Conference on Cultural and Critical Studies, 2015

Dr. Montana Miller, BGSU Institute for the Study of Culture and Society Fellowship for 2015-2016 (semester on leave from teaching) to work on book manuscript, *Blue Skies, Black Death*

Matt Donahue and Marilyn Motz chat with Eileen O'Neill, December 19, 2015. Photo by Bianca R. Garza.

POPC Undergraduate Scholarships and Awards, 2015

Ray & Pat Browne Scholarship in Popular Culture	*$1,000*	*Chas. Dorn*
Stoddard & O'Neill Popular Culture Scholarship (2015-16)	*$1,000*	*Emily Dushek*
Popular Culture Department Achievement Award	*$500*	*Patrick McAdoo*
Popular Culture Research Award	*$500*	*Emily Dushek*

Stoddard & O'Neill Popular Culture Scholarship (Spring 2015)

$1,000 Charles Dorn

CARNIVALS OF GRIEF AND SHRINES TO DEMOCRACY

A dialogic interaction about the theatre of the streets when humor is displaced on the terrain of terror and the popular imagination finds grief in carnivalesque laughter while erecting shrines to democracy, this trialogue between Claire Tancons, Jack Santino and Florian Goettke will displace the dichotomic debate between freedom of speech and multicultural sensibility in an expository analysis of unbridled, uncensored and uncouth behaviors and representations at the edge of tolerability. Inspired by Jack Santino's notions of carnivals of grief in relationship to the shrines to Charlie Hebdo in Paris in the aftermath of the terror attacks, the program will also address carnivalesque humor in carnival itself, as recently paraded in the streets of Cologne and Düsseldorf.

(See Santino faculty note, page 8.)

Faculty and Student Notes

Jamie Clements is a graduate student in the Department of Popular Culture currently finishing his Master's thesis on the subject of race in *Dungeons & Dragons*. He has accepted an offer from the American Cultural Studies department at BGSU and will be attending next fall while also serving as a graduate instructor. While working and studying in the Popular Culture program, he has presented twice at the Ray Browne Conference on Cultural and Critical studies. His research interests include tabletop role-playing games, identity and self-perception, myth in modern culture, and nerd culture. Anyone interested in contacting him can do so at pclemen@bgsu.edu.

In 2013 **Dr. Esther Clinton** and Dr. Jeremy Wallach co-edited a special issue of the journal *Asian Music* focused on Indonesian music genres. Also in 2013 they co-organized, with Dr. Matt Donahue, the very successful Heavy Metal and Popular Culture Conference at BGSU. Her article "Proverbial Play: J.R.R. Tolkien's Use of Proverbs in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*" came out in the 2014 issue of *Proverbium*: *Yearbook of International Proverb Studies*. She was on the Planning Committee for the November 2014 Metal and Cultural Impact Conference in Dayton, Ohio. She and Dr. Wallach are now working on an edited volume about heavy metal and race, a topic she will be presenting at the Modern Heavy Metal Conference in Helsinki, Finland this June. She is also an International Partner for the MHM Conference and looks forward to traveling to Finland for the first time and reinforcing ties with Finnish popular culture scholars at the University of Turku.

Dr. Charles Coletta writes: For the last academic year I have been the interim Director of the Chapman Learning Community at Kohl Hall. Chapman is a mostly freshmen community of approximately 150 students. We had a number of successful events this year. Two of the best were:

1. We invited BGSU alums Marc Sumerak and Valentino Zullo to speak at an event devoted to Comic Books, Superheroes, and Pop Culture. Marc is a writer/editor who has worked for Marvel and various other comics companies. Valentino is now a grad student/social worker who is studying at Case Western Reserve University. He spoke on using comics as therapy in the VA hospital setting. He also discussed some of the psychology of the superhero genre.
2. I also brought Rev. Wanda Johnson to campus as part of the Black Lives Matter campaign. She was here for two screenings at the Gish Theater of "Fruitvale Station," which depicts the killing of her son Oscar Grant at the hands of a transit cop. Rev. Johnson is portrayed in the movie by Oscar winner Octavia Spencer.

This past year saw the publication of the four-volume *Comics Through Time*. I contributed 70 entries on various aspects of comic book and comic strip history.

In April I went to the Turner Classic Movie festival in Hollywood. I was able to connect again with BG alum Eva Marie Saint.

Finally, just yesterday I was invited to be a guest speaker at the Cleveland Public Library. They do a series based on comics and graphic novels each year. It looks I will be discussing the legacy of Archie Comics for the company's 75th anniversary.

Rebecca L. Denes writes: After six years of undergraduate and graduate courses in the department, I'll be leaving with my MA in August! I've had some truly amazing opportunities this past academic year (and in previous years!), including co-chairing the Ray Browne Conference on Cultural and Critical Studies (a collaboration of the Popular Culture Scholars Association and the Culture Club: Cultural Studies Scholar's Association) with Dan Elkan of American Culture Studies and co-organizing the Electric Guitar in Popular Culture Conference with Dr. Matt Donahue and Jacob Brown. I also worked with Dr. Jeremy Wallach to coordinate the Popular Culture Colloquium Series, which featured presentations from faculty and graduate students from the University and special guests from other institutions.

Dr. Matt Donahue was involved in many academic and creative activities for 2014-2015. He is a sponsor and mentor for visiting scholar Dr. Rama Alapati, Assistant Professor of English, Dept. of Humanities and Social Sciences, A.U. College of Engineering, Andhra University, in Andhra Pradesh, India. Additionally, Donahue organized the Electric Guitar in Popular Culture Conference along with two of the Department

Drs. Donahue (l) and Alapati (r)

of Popular Culture graduate students, Jacob Brown and Becky Denes. The conference featured presenters from India, Finland, France, England, Canada and the United States. The conference also featured performers, including Skip McDonald, Kelly Richey, Kimi Karki, Chuck Stohl and Donahue himself. In terms of the arts, Matt Donahue exhibited artwork in the group show titled Undisclosed at Gallery 333, which is affiliated with the Toledo School for the Arts, and at the Concourse Gallery in Upper Arlington, Ohio. He also gave a presentation at the Milan Public Library, in Milan, Ohio, on the History of Rock and Roll and gave a presentation on the social and political nature of American punk and rap music at the Social Protest Music Conference at the

University of Limerick in Limerick, Ireland.

Alexandra Garner is completing her first year in the Masters of Popular Culture program, focusing on medievalism in adaptations of television, fantasy literature, and video games, as well as gender and sexuality in fandom studies. She has presented at several conferences this year: "Retelling the Green Knight in *Guild Wars 2*" at the Midwest PCA/ACA conference in Indianapolis in October; "*Outlander* and the Visual Representation of Scottish/British Identity Politics" at the Ray Browne Conference on Cultural and Critical Studies here at BGSU in March; and "Alanna's Broken and Reforged 'Sword in the Stone': Medievalism and Gender in *The Song of the Lioness*" at the national PCA/ACA conference in New Orleans in April. Later this month she will present "Arthuriana for Children: Narrative Integrity and the Medieval in Gerald Morris's *The Squire, His Knight, and His Lady*" at the International Congress for Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, MI. She has also organized and will be presiding over her own panel there, called "Modernizing the Medieval for a New Generation: Medievalism in Children's and Young Adult Literature." She looks forward to completing ethnographic work for her thesis this summer, which is tentatively titled "The Erotics of Fanfiction: Queering Fans, Works, and Communities in Modern Internet Fandom."

Dr. Rebecca J. Kinney joined our faculty in August 2012. She holds a Ph.D. in

Ethnic Studies from the University of California, San Diego and is enjoying being back in the Midwest. Dr. Kinney's interest in popular culture is at the intersections of narratives of race and place. Since coming to BGSU she has taught a number of courses including the school-wide capstone course for undergraduate majors in CCS, undergraduate courses on race and popular culture and graduate courses on interdisciplinary research methods and cultural tourism. She reflected on the specifics of teaching about race and popular culture in the article, "'But I Don't See Race': Teaching Popular Culture and Racial Formation Theory in an Era of Colorblindness," published in 2014 in the journal *Transformations*. This past year she was at work on completing her book, *Detroit as Beautiful Wasteland: Race, Place, and America's Post-Industrial Frontier*, which is under contract with the University of Minnesota Press. Dr. Kinney has an article forthcoming in July 2015 in *Race & Class* titled, "The *Auto-Mobility* of *Gran Torino's* American Immigrant Dream: Cars, Class, and Whiteness in Detroit's Post-Industrial Cityscape."

Dr. Montana Miller is the recipient of the Institute for the Study of Culture and Society Fellowship for Fall 2015, which will allow her to complete the research and writing of her book, *Blue Skies, Black Death: Skydivers and the Ambiguity of Belief* (working title). Montana's ethnographic project has involved five years of observation and two years of in-depth interviews with experienced skydivers (those with thousands of jumps) from many different countries, regarding their attitudes, perspectives and beliefs regarding risk and mortality.

Montana spoke about her research to the Zonta Club of Toledo (an organization advocating for women's rights and leadership) in January 2015 and this spring was guest speaker for the Kiwanis Club of Bowling Green as well as the Rotary Club of Bowling Green.

Montana also participated in a successful Faculty Learning Community over the spring, headed by Terry Rentner of the Department of Journalism and Public Relations (School of Media and Communication) and Faith Yingling (director of the Wellness Connection at BGSU). This learning community spent the year developing and pursuing goals concerning the "ethic of care" that can be created through better understanding (among students and faculty) of mental health issues, stressors facing this generation of students, and how to support one another and exhibit caring without crossing professional boundaries. This faculty group, which we hope will continue into next year and beyond, wrestled with deep and complex issues of confidentiality, compassion, and fairness; we made presentations to the larger university community and are working on further methods of outreach for the future.

The students (from a range of departments including Popular Culture) who took Montana's spring graduate seminar in Folklore and Folklife continued an annual tradition of creating an example of "Peep folk art" (a recent trend promoted by the *Washington Post*'s annual diorama contest) at Easter 2015 (see photo on previous page).

Dr. Angela Nelson writes: During the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 academic years, my 2005 book chapter "'God's Smiling on You and He's Frowning Too': Rap and the Problem of Evil" was selected for reprint in *The Hip Hop and Religion Reader* (2014); my book chapter "'Put Your Hands Together': The Theological Meaning of Call-Response and Collective Participation in Rap Music" was published in *Urban God Talk: Constructing a Hip Hop Spirituality* (2013); and "Studying Black Comic Strips:

Popular Art and Discourses of Race" was published in *Black Comics: Politics of Race and Representation* (2013). I now serve on the Editorial Board for the *Popular Culture Studies Journal* of the Midwest Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association and as a Reviewer/Advisory Editor of the *Culture, English, Language, and Teaching* (CELT) journal. Finally, I will begin my appointment as Interim Chair in the Department of Ethnic Studies in August 2015.

Matti Pomeroy is a graduate student in the Popular Culture department and will be graduating Spring 2015. During her time at BGSU Matti served on the School of Cultural and Critical Studies Recruitment Committee and participated in Dr. Sarah Rainey's "Toss the Tiara" event. Matti and fellow Popular Culture graduate student Briana Pocratsky developed Pop Culture Pug, a media literacy website for parents and educators that analyzes children's films for cultural content (gender, race, the body, disability, LGBTQ). Matti hopes to continue her research on media literacy and youth culture in the future.

Briana Pocratsky is a graduate student in the Popular Culture department and will be graduating this semester with a graduate certificate in Women's Studies. During her time at BGSU, Briana served as a tutor for the Learning Commons and also worked with Dr. Vikki Krane's research group regarding photographic representations of collegiate female athletes and how children perceive the images of the athletes. Briana and fellow Popular Culture graduate student Matti Pomeroy developed a media literacy website for parents and educators, called Pop Culture Pug, that analyzes children's films for cultural content (gender, race, the body, disability, LGBTQ). After graduation, Briana will attend George Mason University on a Presidential Scholarship to earn her PhD in sociology. Briana hopes to continue her research on media literacy and children's media in the future. http://popculturepug.com/

Dr. Kristen Rudisill writes: Well, it's been a busy year for me! My big news is that I had a baby August 1, 2014. Sivaji Nathan Vela has kept me running. I was on parental leave in the fall, but back to teaching full time in the spring with my Global Popular Culture class and brand new Introduction to Asian Religions class, which just got approved for Bowling Green Perspectives. Research-wise, I've managed to be productive, though not as much as normal. The spring 2015 issue of the *Asian Theatre Journal* is a special issue on Women in Asian Theatre, and includes my article "Pritham Chakravarthy: Performing *Aravani* Life Stories." This article concerns a 2001 ever-evolving one-woman play called *Nirvanam* that Pritham Chakravarthy developed using material from interviews she conducted with members of the transgender community of *aravanis* in Chennai, India. When they saw her perform another play, several approached her and asked her to "tell our story," which she continues to do with grace, respect, and deep affection. My review of Sudipto Chatterjee's book *Theatre Staged: the Colonial Theatre in Calcutta* also appears in this issue. Current projects are stacking up, and I have been invited to contribute to a special issue of the women's studies journal Samyukta on Women in Indian Theatre and an edited volume titled *From Bollywood to Hallyuwood: Mapping Power and Pleasure Across Pop Empires,* so I'll be working on those this summer before starting my new job as Popular Culture Chair in the fall.

Dr. Jack Santino presented "Identités masques et exprimées dans les carnavals et les defiles contestaires, at the conference Jeux Carnavalesques/ Jeux d'Identités Musée des civilations de l"Europe et de la Méditerranée in Marseille, France on June 14, 2014. He was also the Keynote Plenary speaker at the conference Culture(s) et résistance(s) at the University of Nîmes, in Nîmes, France on June 21, 2014. His paper was "Imagery and Ideology of the Street: Popular Culture and Political Protest."

As part of his ongoing and developing research on carnival and politics, Jack Santino offered a new course, "Carnival and Street Theater" for the Department of Popular Culture, Spring semester, 2015. In February of 2015, he attended the conference Carnaval et Politique, and consulted with scholars at the Université Paris Diderôt. He attended the prelenten carnival in Paris, and then documented several spontaneous shrines – sites of popular grieving in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo killings. His photos and writings on this subject led to another invitation. In March, 2015, a special panel devoted to his ideas, which he termed a "Carnival of Grief," was held at Reitveld Academy, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Stateside, Jack Santino was an invited participant in a panel at the American Anthropological Association's 2013 meetings, where he spoke about political murals as dark tourism in Northern Ireland. In October 2014 Jack Santino convened a plenary Fellows panel for the American Folklore Society, Folklore and the Crossroads. He presented his own ideas in a presentation called "Folklore: A Crossroads Discipline."

Professor Santino would enjoy discussing any of these topics with any interested parties.

Between the start of 2013 and mid-2015, **Dr. Jeremy Wallach** authored or co-authored ten publications and co-edited a journal special issue with Esther Clinton. On May 8, 2015, the BGSU Board of Trustees promoted him to the rank of Professor. Jeremy is also proud to report that his first doctoral student, Dr. Colin Helb, American Culture Studies PhD '09, received tenure and promotion this year in the Department of Communications at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania.

FAREWELL TO MARILYN, from first page

ridicule and even hostility. But there was a high degree of energy and enthusiasm in the department. Two of Ray Browne's favorite phrases were "I have an idea" and "Let's do it." We learned how to operate in the crevices of the institution, with very few resources but also not a lot of surveillance. We spent very little money and still would usually come to the end of our budget allocation around March; then we couldn't order any supplies until July so we learned to make do. But I think being in a house across the street from the rest of the campus, furnished from the Surplus Warehouse and exempt from some regulations, created an environment that encouraged creativity and innovation.

The department faculty was about half the size it is now, so we could not offer as wide a range of courses. Mike Marsden, Popular Culture professor, was Director of the American Culture Ph.D. Program, an interdisciplinary program involving several departments. Many of the ACS Ph.D. students were actively involved in Popular Culture research and activities along with Popular Culture faculty and MA students, and they have gone on to become leaders in the field.

Changes in technology have made a big difference. When I started teaching here, the copy machine was across the street in the English department. There were no answering machines, so the secretary would tape a note to a faculty mailbox with a phone number so we could return a call (except that some years we could not return long distance calls due to the cost). Films were on large heavy reels that were threaded onto a projector in the back of the classroom. As the film played, it wound onto a second reel (although that didn't always go as planned). I remember getting my first computer. It was less powerful than my smartphone is now. The dot-matrix printer used rolls of paper with sprocket holes on the sides, so you had to peel off all four sides of each sheet at the perforations. That was a huge advance over the typewriter! Before that, we used a ditto machine to run off syllabi and exams. You made a master by typing onto a sheet of paper with a second sheet behind it that was coated with ink. The ink stuck to the back of the top sheet where the typewriter key struck it. If you made a mistake, you had to scrape off the ink with a razor blade and retype the word. We would insert each page into the mimeograph machine and crank it. Each revolution printed one sheet, but they got fainter as the ink was worn off the master. By far the most drastic disruption since 1980 was the internet: using the computer to communicate and access (and share) information changed everything!

Was there a professor who was particularly supportive of your research agenda? How many women were in the department then, and was it hard to be a woman at that time?

I was hired when Susan Arpad, who was the only woman in the department at that time, became Director of the Women's Studies Program. Her office was in another building, so she was not around on a daily basis, but I was also affiliated with the Women's Studies Program so I worked with her there. I felt welcomed and supported by my colleagues in the department, in spite of the fact that some

Shawn Sowers (principal designer) and Kevin Sauder (president and CEO) from Sauder Woodworking Company at Marilyn Motz's final class. Photo by Susana Peña.

of us disagreed on many issues. We all (except Ray and Susan) ate lunch together almost every day in the basement of the house, and that created a sense of community. In hindsight, I suppose I was socialized into academia that way. Although the general ambiance was male-centric (in conversation, research topics, course content, etc.), I never felt excluded or disrespected or that my voice was not heard. Chris Geist, especially, encouraged me to pursue research and teach courses that included women and gender issues, but I didn't feel limited to those topics. The Popular Press was in the building also: Pat Browne, the managing editor, was an advocate for publishing books and journal articles on topics related to women and gender, and I think that made a difference in the atmosphere. The university as a whole had significantly fewer women faculty and administrators than today, and that was a much more difficult environment than within our department. The greater diversity of our faculty and students now (in many aspects, not just gender) has been a hugely positive change.

Who is your all-time favorite popular culture theorist?

Michel de Certeau (*The Practice of Everyday Life*).

What was your favorite thing about being chair?

Being able to initiate or encourage innovative projects and bring together the resources to make them happen.

What was your least favorite thing about being chair?

Preparing time-consuming reports that are never used for anything.

Of your many publications, which is your favorite?

"The Practice of Belief" (*Journal of American Folklore*). [See accompanying article. –Eds.]

What projects have you been working on lately?

During my last year at BGSU, I was able to participate in several new ventures. In September, I was one of three invited speakers at the Launch Seminar of the Popular Culture Studies Master's Degree Pathway at the University of Turku in Turku, Finland. I have a chapter on "Material Culture and Heritage" in the forthcoming book, *A Companion to Popular Culture*, edited by Gary Burns. I also developed a new course for Spring 2015. Working with Sauder Woodworking Lead Designer Shawn Sowers, the students implemented a design process to apply their knowledge of popular culture to potential innovations in furniture. Their final group project was a business proposal that included their original designs for several innovative items of furniture for dorm rooms and other small living spaces, which they presented to Kevin Sauder, President and CEO of Sauder Woodworking.

What advice do you have for the new chair?

Notice what each person is good at and help them use those skills to make a meaningful contribution that is recognized as important.

What will you miss most about the Department?

Definitely the faculty and students. People ask if I remember all the Popular Culture MA students and majors. Yes, I do, and in my memory they are all twenty-something years old. I would love to hear from or about any of them!

DR. MARILYN MOTZ, from first page

Practice of Belief," published in the *Journal of American Folklore* in 1998. This article looks at belief in relation to, sometimes in opposition to, Enlightenment thought, and she presents the discipline of folklore as trying to mediate between regard for alternative ways of knowing and desire to fit into the more skeptical world of scholarship. She writes in the concluding paragraph, "Attention to actual incidents of practices of belief allows us to consider the complex relationships among people, and the power differentials they represent, as well as the linkage between individual experience and cultural models" (Motz 1998, 352). The issues she discusses in this article are at the center of all studies of culture and her work suggests ways in which scholars, particularly folklorists, might try to approach complex questions of belief, behavior, and power.

Though perhaps most famous in popular culture circles for her Barbie doll essay (Motz 1992) much of Marilyn's work examines what US material culture and practices can tell us about everyday life, particularly women's everyday lives, in the period spanning the antebellum 19th century to after World War I (e.g., Motz 1983, 1989, 1996). This focus on history might be somewhat surprising in Popular Culture, but I think having a historian on our faculty has been an advantage. Too often Popular Culture is understood to be ahistorical, "the culture of right now" (whenever "now" may be). However, like all texts, Popular Culture texts respond to and challenge past texts, so in order to understand them, one needs to understand their history. Also, it is too easy for history (even with the growth of social history) to become a story about great men (usually "men," which is part of the problem) and their words and actions. Everyday life is left out of such constructions of history, yet of course everyday life affects everyone's words and actions. Marilyn's focus and the legacy she leaves us with is one of the main differences between the Bowling Green Approach and the British CCCS approach associated with scholars such as Stuart Hall. Her work and legacy remind us that the Bowling Green Approach can be more than "cheerful trainspotting" (a description Simon Frith once applied to our department's work) by combining the CCCS's focus on power with our own interests in creativity, vernacular aesthetics, and everyday life.

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WENTLAND, page 3, con't.

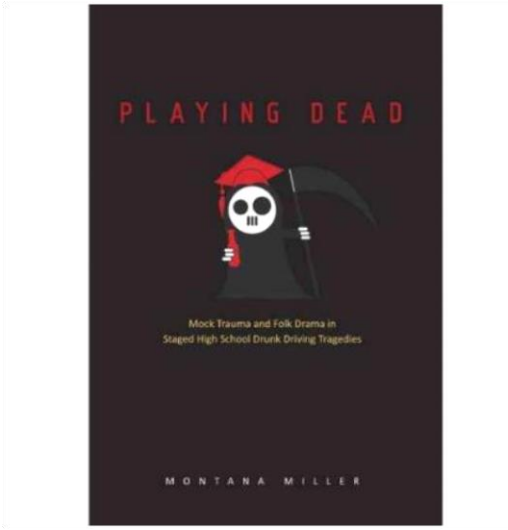
member here for 21 years and my middle sister and I both graduated from BGSU. I earned a Bachelor of Arts with a double major in Business and French in 1988. The highlight of my career as a student at BGSU was spending an academic year abroad in Tours, France.

After graduation, I held positions in retail and restaurant management. I became employed at BGSU in 1993 as a Food Service Worker, serving pizza and pasta and, one day a week, washing dishes at the dining center in Founders. Just as I was about to be furloughed for the summer, I was offered my first office job in Financial Aid and Student Employment. I've worked in a variety of offices at BGSU, holding administrative positions in Admissions and the Dean's Office in the College of Business Administration. In 2003, I began my first secretarial position in an academic unit in the History Department, responsible for the graduate program and budgets. I like the rhythm of an academic unit and I love helping students. In 2010, I moved to Biological Sciences as the secretary for the graduate program. Though I miss my graduate students terribly, I'm happy to be here in the School of Cultural and Critical Studies. The faculty have been very welcoming, I love the physical environment in Shatzel Hall, I enjoy being closer to the heart of campus, and it's wonderful to work with two competent and caring staff members, Stephanie and Beka.

Outside the office, I enjoy being active. My husband Tom and I have been married for 12 years and we both love being by the water: boating, kayaking, or walking along the river. We also enjoy visiting museums and historical sites. I love being a tourist! I'm a certified Zumba instructor and hold an AFAA group exercise instructor certification. You'll find me at the Rec Center taking fitness classes just about every day. I try to take advantage of all of the wellness programs and challenges that are offered to us as employees at BGSU.

My daughter, Katie, is 19 years old and I have a 25-year-old stepdaughter, Brittany. I'm blessed with two grandsons; the oldest is 1½ and the other was just born in May. I'm expecting my third grandchild in July, a girl! Life is good!

REVIEWS



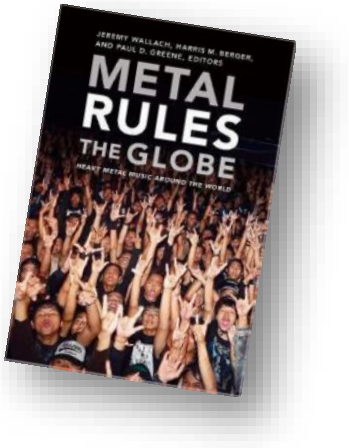
Miller, Montana. *Playing Dead: Mock Trauma and Folk Drama in Staged High School Drunk Driving Tragedies*. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2013.

"In describing the programme and its growth, Miller relies on archival documents, ethnographic observation, in-depth interviews, and textual analysis of website discourse. Her qualitative tapestry presents a compelling picture of these programmes. The analysis, while properly sceptical, is simultaneously sympathetic to how these programmes actually work and have power to change the hearts and minds and acts of (some) teens. Central to Miller's analysis is how frames operate in emotionally gripping performances. As she powerfully recognizes and richly describes, reaction to this folk drama varies widely. Miller concludes by suggesting that 'play can be tragically horrifying and yet strangely satisfying' (133). In this she implicitly argues for an approach that permits what we might term a 'folkloristics of fun.'...

Despite and because of its rare and specialized case, *Playing Dead* is a gem. Unusual and uncommon settings permit us to visualize social relations and meaning-creation that might otherwise be obscured. Nestled within powerful institutions—law, medicine, education, and family—the Every 15 Minutes programme provides for commitment to a set of moral claims and a space for resistance to those claims. Let us raise a glass to Montana Miller's bubbly achievement—adults only."

Gary Alan Fine, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois

Reviewed in *Folklore* 125 (August 2014): 262-265.



Wallach, Jeremy, Harris M. Berger, and Paul D. Greene, eds. *Metal Rules the Globe: Heavy Metal Music around the World*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011.

"**It is rare to find an anthology that realizes the possibilities of the form**...The book excels in two ways. First, it presents a strong introduction that anchors the contributions to an emerging research agenda. Second, the editors have arranged the chapters in such a way that enables them to converse with one another, and not just with the research agenda outlined in the introduction. This is something that editors of collections often hope to achieve, but rarely do."

— **Emma Baulch**, Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Reviewed in the *Journal of World Popular Music* 1.2 (2014): 318-323.

Where Are They Now?

Some Updates from POPC Graduates

Jeena Kim (Popular Culture MA, 2014) is grateful to have had the opportunity to work with Dr. Marilyn Motz before her retirement. Dr. Motz was generous with her time, thoughtful with her advice, and her seminar on DIY culture played a major part in widening Jeena's understanding and appreciation of the art forms that fit under Popular Culture's wide umbrella. After graduation, Jeena's interests transitioned from wanting to study texts to wanting to design them. To that end, she now enjoys reading about industrial design and design theory in her spare time. Jeena is currently attempting to engage with this field in both theory and practice, as she is also teaching herself to draw and has had the occasion just this past month to 3D print a small fennec fox at the library. She lives in Chicago with her fiancé and recently started working as a program associate at IES Abroad, a nonprofit study abroad organization.

Tony Thibodeau (Popular Culture MA, 2014) writes: After graduating from the BGSU POPC MA program, I relocated to Flagstaff, Arizona with my family in the summer of 2014. I have been teaching part-time in the Ethnic Studies program at Northern Arizona University, and it has been rewarding to be back in an engaging academic environment. I am pleased to report that I will be serving as a full-time instructor in the Department of Anthropology at NAU in the fall of 2015, teaching intro-level cultural anthropology classes, and I hope to continue my research into expressions of ethnic identity in popular music and the intersection of traditional and popular culture. I am looking forward to further applying the education I attained through the POPC grad program at BGSU, and I am continually grateful for the unique perspective that this experience has given me. Finally, I want to congratulate Dr. Motz on her retirement, thank her for all the support she gave me while I was at BGSU, and wish her the very best for all her future endeavors.

Nicholas Ware (Popular Culture MA, 2010) intends to graduate from the University of Central Florida with a PhD in Texts & Technology in December 2015. He plans to move to New York City to continue his academic career as well as harness his passion for improv comedy. He has four articles in collected volumes to be released in 2015 and 2016 that deal with games studies in relation to sex and love, narrative, professional wrestling (in a book that also features Popular Culture alum Nicholas Porter), and American football culture.

Dr. Margaret King '72 is BGSU Popular Culture's very first MA graduate. She is currently Director of The Center for Cultural Studies & Analysis, a Philadelphia-based company that, according to its website, "is a think tank that decodes how consumers determine value in products, concepts, and ideas." For more information: http://www.culturalanalysis.com/

Jeena Kim. Photo by S. Peña

Jeremy Wallach, Anthony Thibodeau, and Esther Clinton at reception for 2014 Shanklin Award Nominees. Photo by S. Peña.

Nicholas Ware and the Fall 2008 Theory and Methodology Class. His classmates are (left to right) Mallory Jagodzinski, Meredith King, Liz Mason, and Puja Batra-Wells. Photo by sixth seminar member Nicholas Reinhard.

Department of Popular Culture

Newsletter May 2015

School of Cultural and Critical Studies

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