

DEPARTMENT OF POPULAR CULTURE NEWSLETTER

VOL. 3 ISSUE 1

EDITORS: JEREMY WALLACH AND ESTHER CLINTON

LAYOUT: PAMELA JEAN WAGNER



From the Editors

Welcome to the first newsletter issue of the 2011-2012 academic year! This semester has seen many changes in the Department of Popular Culture. Things look quite a bit spiffier around the office, thanks to our new secretary, Marsha Olivarez; Dr. Angela Nelson is back with us after a stint with Ethnic Studies and a sabbatical before that; Dr. Montana Miller is now a qualified sky diving instructor; and we (Dr. Esther Clinton and Dr. Jeremy Wallach) got married (to each other).

We hope you enjoy this issue!

The Department of Popular Culture Congratulates Brandi Venable, Winner of the First Annual O'Neill-Stoddard MA Thesis Prize



Brandi Venable enjoys some "light semester reading"

Brandi, who earned her MA in POPC in May 2010, received the first annual O'Neill-Stoddard MA Thesis Prize for her thesis, "Feed Me! Insatiable Children and the Monsters Who Want to Devour Them: Consumption in Clive Barker's *The Thief of Always* and Neil Gaiman's *Coraline*," is currently a first-year doctoral student in Childhood Studies at Rutgers University, Camden. Brandi writes: "Things are going pretty well here. The high school theatre students I've been observing for my ethnography project are performing their play tonight (*12 Angry Men*), so that's exciting! Otherwise, it is that time of the semester when I've come to realize that I have a lot to do and not enough time to do it in. I'm looking forward to Thanksgiving 'break' to get some work done."

Welcome to our new Popular Culture Secretary, **MARSHA OLIVAREZ**, who has already made our building more comfortable and much more attractive. The next issue of the POPC Newsletter will include an interview with Marsha. Welcome to Popular Culture, Marsha!

MEET THE FIRST-YEAR!



Seth Brodbeck

Hometown: Alma, MI
Undergrad: Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, MI with a double major in English and History
Research Interests: Comics (especially literature-themed and creative nonfiction comics), video games, and tabletop role-playing games
Fun Fact: I enjoy watching *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic*



Amber Bryan

Hometown: Whitehouse, OH
Undergrad: BGSU in Popular Culture
Research Interests: Popular Dance
Fun Fact: I am an accomplished equestrian and I have represented our area in multiple equestrian disciplines in many national competitions



Broc Holmquest

Hometown: LaPorte, IN
Undergrad: Indiana University - Journalism
Research Interests: Comic books, video games, film, and rock music
Fun Fact: I'm frequently mistaken for Hollywood heartthrob Chris Hemsworth. To answer your question: No, we're not related (as far as I know)



Mackenzie James

Hometown: Columbia City, IN
Undergrad: Viterbo University in La Crosse, WI. I graduated in May 2010 and a BS in Sociology with a minor in Psychology.
Research Interests: Genealogy (family history), gender, sports, fandom studies, and Internet studies. I generally don't like to be too defined by my research interests though. Like popular culture, my linterests are always shifting and evolving.
Fun Fact: I am an avid Green Bay Packers fan... and yes, I own a cheesehead



Annamarie O'Brien

Hometown: Bowling Green
Undergrad: University of Michigan: Arts and Ideas in the Humanities (concentration in contemporary visual culture and studio art)
Research Interests: Contemporary art, Internet communities, subcultures, new media aesthetics, self-taught/folk/amateur art-making, Internet art, digital folklore
Fun Fact: I performed in a rap group called "Splash Zone" during undergrad. Also, I really enjoy terrible reality television (*Millionaire Matchmaker*, *Real Housewives*, *Jersey Shore*, etc.)



Kate Reynolds

Hometown: Edmond, OK
Undergrad: Oklahoma State University, Major in English with a minor in Gender and Women's Studies
Research Interests: Science fiction literature and media, video game studies
Fun Fact: I once swung on vines in the Amazon rainforest



Eric Sobel

Hometown: Toledo, OH
Undergrad: University of Toledo, double major in English and Art History
Research Interests: Comic books, punk music and action figures
Fun Fact: I've seen the movie *Aliens* over 100 times

Dr. Jeffrey Brown quoted on CNN.com:
<http://geekout.blogspot.com/2011/10/24/are-women-and-comics-risky-business/>

Jeremy Wallach quoted in the LA Times:
<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/news/la-ca-now-40-20111113.02578811.story>

BGSU POPC GOES TO IRELAND

By Pamela Wagner



University of Ireland, Galway

The fall semester kicked off to an exciting start for 2nd year graduate student Sean Ahern, who traveled to Galway, Ireland to attend and present at the conference “Irish Masculinity and Popular Culture 1990 – 2010.”

The conference, held September 23 – 24 at the National University of Ireland, examined the influence the changing Irish political landscape of the last two decades (particularly the election of President Mary Robinson in 1990 and the erosion of patriarchal authority in various aspects of political and religious life), has had on Irish popular culture. As a response to these changes, new images of masculinities have arisen in popular genres, including film, theater, television and music, which reflect the changing roles of men in Irish society. Sean’s paper, “‘Let the Shillelagh Fly’- Dropkick Murphys and Irish Hybridity in Punk Rock,” which was presented as part of a panel discussion on Masculinity and Popular Music, examined the reinvention of Irish folk music and the hybridization of Irish and American cultures as exemplified by the Boston punk band.

Sean’s presentation explored the question of what national identity means to those who claim a cultural identity from ancestral homelands abroad. By examining cultural critic Ien Ang’s concepts of diaspora and letting go of the ideas of places of origin versus places of settlement (“where you’re from” versus “where you’re at”) in favor of a new hybridity of cultures, Sean’s presentation considered the “otherness” of being an Irish American, specifically, how the merging of

hardscrabble Irish folk music and American punk rock by the Dropkick Murphys has given new and tangible meaning to being Irish abroad. Importantly, Sean argues that through recoding traditional Irish music and rehashing stereotypically “Irish” symbols such as the Celtic cross, shamrocks and bagpipes, Sean’s argument is that the Murphys have been able to connect with their motherland while maintaining the status of an outsider; in effect creating a “rebel sound” that holds onto traditional values. Sean further argues that, by avoiding parody and applying subversive meaning to these symbols, the Murphys have managed to gain a measure of authenticity and respect in Ireland, despite their Irish-American roots.

The trip to Ireland was a return to familiar turf for Sean, who as an undergraduate spent a semester studying abroad at the National University of Ireland, Galway, and in a way was a return to his own homeland, as Sean himself is of Irish descent.



*Sean, enjoying the Irish scenery during his first visit to Ireland as an undergraduate student abroad
Salthill, Ireland*

While presenting work on an Irish-American punk band on Irish soil was a definite high point of the conference, Sean also enjoyed experiencing firsthand a European approach to academic scholarship.

Other event highlights included meeting Dr. Sean Campbell, one of the event’s two keynote speakers, whose work in Irish studies, popular culture, and music has been influential in Sean’s course of study. Dr. Campbell’s keynote address on Irish masculinity in popular music in England was of particular interest to Sean, as were presentations on Gaelic athletics and their relationship to nationalism and masculine identity in Ireland. Sean said he was proud to represent the BGSU Popular Culture Department at the conference and was appreciative that he was able to do so with the department’s support. Specifically, Sean received funding from the Stoddard and O’Neill Endowment for Studies in Popular Culture.

During his downtime from the conference, Sean was able to participate in other aspects of Irish culture and enjoyed attending a Gaelic hurling match in Salthill, Galway. The sport, along with

Gaelic football, is one of the two traditional sports sponsored by Ireland's Gaelic Athletic Association, a source of national pride and an integral aspect of Irish family heritage and tradition.

Back in the States, Sean continues his academic pursuits at BGSU. Sean has a special interest in looking at modes of communication as they relate to popular culture and is currently working on his Master's Thesis, an examination of the influential punk band The Clash. Sean's thesis will address the communication imagery in the band's music, album art and overall aesthetic style, specifically in relation to its self-proclaimed identity as a "news-giving" group.



Sean attended a Gaelic hurling match, sponsored by Ireland's Gaelic Athletic Association, during a break from the busy conference schedule. Salthill, Ireland

BGSU POPC GOES TO THE PHILIPPINES

By Pamela Wagner



Dr. Wallach presents at "The Impact of Music in Shaping Southeast Asian Societies" conference, September 2011

In September, Dr. Esther Clinton and Dr. Jeremy Wallach joined scholars from around the globe for "The Impact of Music in Shaping Southeast Asian Societies," a conference held September 2 – 3 at the University of Philippines, Diliman. Dr. Wallach, who was an invited guest of the University, had the honor of being selected as the event's closing speaker. Covering a broad range of topics, the conference was a multidisciplinary event that centered on the essential role music has played in Southeast Asian culture and history, particularly over its centuries of sustained contact with India, the Middle East, China, and the West. In addition

to Jeremy and Esther's friend Dr. Christi-Anne Castro from the University of Michigan, the conference attracted delegates from China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand, as well as scholars from the Philippines and the US.

Conference sessions covered a variety of topics, including "Music Subcultures of Continental Southeast Asia," "Ethnoaesthetics of Southeast Asian Music," "Histories of Southeast Asian Music Modernity" and "Music in Critical Social Movements." Adding local flavor to the busy session schedule, breaks in the conference were filled by concerts of classical and contemporary music performed by local musicians and students from the university's music department.

While the conference had much to offer, Dr. Wallach's favorite presentation (by Laverne C. Dela Peña of UP) detailed the emergence of "rap battles" in the Philippines. Combining the native Tagalog language with Spanish and English, these insult battles between rappers are watched by people throughout the country and have gained notoriety via posts on YouTube. Dr. Clinton especially enjoyed a lecture by Dr. Arsenio Nicholas of UP and Mahasarakham University on the ancient trade of bronze gongs throughout Southeast Asia, which explored how recent archeological discoveries from shipwrecks have led to the unearthing of historical trade routes and connections between regions.

While almost all the scholars at the conference discussed traditional Southeast Asian musics, Dr. Wallach's closing presentation, titled "Techno-hybridity and Genre Formation in Democratic

COLLEGE OF MUSIC
University of the Philippines Diliman
 Invites the public to the international conference on

The Impact of Music in Shaping Southeast Asian Societies
 2-3 September 2011 at the Abelardo Hall Auditorium, U.P. College of Music, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines

A multidisciplinary conference wherein scholars of Southeast Asian music, with the Ph.D. music faculty of the University of the Philippines Diliman and their peers, present research-based papers on a wide range of topics that address pertinent questions on the crucial role that music has played in cultural exchanges in the region, the collective memory of place, national identity construction, structuring of social relations, the sustenance of local, translocal, and cosmopolitan cultural sensibilities, and in drastic historical moments in the region that reconfigured ways of building societies.

Speakers:
Keynote:
 RAMON P. SANTOS, University of the Philippines

Foreign:
 CHRISTINE BALANCE, University of California Irvine
 CHRISTIANE CASTRO, University of Michigan Ann Arbor
 CHONG KEE YONG, La Salle, Singapore
 JARENDON CHOPPAROT, Mahasarakham University, Thailand
 MICHAEL MCCLELLAN, Chinese University of Hong Kong
 GISA JAHNICHEN, Universiti Putra Malaysia
 JACQUELINE PADRATTINGAN, Universiti Malaysia Sabah
 MOHD ANIS MD NOR, University of Malaysia
 ARSENIO NICOLAS, University of the Philippines/
 Mahasarakham University, Thailand
 JOSEPH PETERS, Simon Fraser University
 EDI SEDYAWATI, University of Indonesia
 JOYCE WA-CHUNG TANG, Hong Kong Baptist University
 YOSHITAKA TERADA, National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, Japan
 RICARDO TRINILLOS, University of Hawaii Manoa
 JEREMY WAYNE WALLACH, Bowling Green State University, USA
 MANOP WISSUTIPAT, Shrinakharinwirot University, Thailand
 BALE VADOMBO, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität-München, Germany
 YS KAH HOE, Szei College, Kuala Lumpur

Local:
 JONAS U. BAEZ
 JESSE BENSINGSEJO
 LAVERNE DELA PEÑA
 ELENA FLORA Z. MIRANO
 MARIA CHRISTINE MUYCO
 RAUL C. NAVARRO
 FELICIANO A. PRESIDENTE
 MOHITO YONENOREVES
 MA. PATRICIA SILVESTRE
 ARMIN TAN
 BASILIO ESTERAN VILLARIZ
 MA. ALEXANDRA IRIGOCHIA, University of Sto. Tomas
 RENATO E. LUCAS, University of Sto. Tomas

CONCERTS
 World Music Piano, Sept. 2, 2011 at 7PM
 featuring **AIMA LABRA-MAK** in a recital of works
 by Liszt, Bartok, Takacs, Santos, and Nemeth.

A concert on Sept. 3, 2011 at 8PM
 of immemorial music and dance that shaped
 Philippine nationhood (1860-1986)
 by **U.P. COLLEGIUM MUSIQUAE** (Arwin Tan, director)
 with the special participation of the
U.P. DANCE COMPANY (Herbert Alvarez, choreographer)
 and **NOVO CONCERTANTE**

To register attendance, please contact Ms. Inoc Barabas or Ms. Yvette Birones (Conference Secretariat), Landline/Fax (632) 929-6963,
 Mailing Address: College of Music, Abelardo Hall, UP Diliman, Quezon City 1101. E-mail: 2011UPMusicConference@gmail.com; musconf@up.edu.ph

Funds
MUSAR Foundation, Inc.
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U.P. COLLEGE OF MUSIC EXTENSION PROGRAM
JAPAN FOUNDATION

Endorsed by the Commission on Higher Education, Office of the President, Republic of the Philippines
 Memorandum (Date 2, 2011) is available for download at www.up.edu.ph/musu/2011. For full conference brochure

Indonesia,” examined the influence Western music has had on Southeast Asian cultures, as well as the need for scholars to study the variety of popular music genres that have emerged in Southeast Asia. In particular, the presentation explored how while the global explosion of rock music coincided with decolonization in Southeast Asian societies, this did not mean that rock music was therefore a rearguard attempt at mental re-colonization, as many third world leaders and nationalist intellectuals of the time feared. Instead, Dr. Wallach stressed the parallel destabilizing role the music has played in both western and non-western countries. In addition, the presentation examined how popular American music has been appropriated and reworked by Southeast Asian youth, who have used it as a foundation to create innovative sounds all their own. The presentation was a unique and rare opportunity to address such a diverse and accomplished group of scholars, composers and artists and, to Dr. Wallach’s immense relief, it was met with appreciation and enthusiasm by those in attendance.

The Philippines conference was not the first time Dr. Wallach has been invited to present his research abroad; he has also been invited to speak at conferences in Semarang and Jakarta, Indonesia

(see Vol. 2 No. 3), and in Leiden, the Netherlands. He has also given invited presentations on his Indonesia research throughout the US, at Colorado College, Duke University, Haverford College, the University of Denver, the University of Michigan, and the University of Wisconsin—Madison.

The conference was just one aspect of a busy week for Drs. Clinton and Wallach, who were guests of Dr. José Buenconsejo, Dean of the University of the Philippines School of Music and served as guest lecturers in a graduate seminar in ethnomusicology (topic: structural anthropology). During their stay at the University (the most prestigious school in the country), Drs. Clinton and Wallach were invited to tour the school’s music library and viewed its musical instrument collection, which includes a vast array of gongs, bamboo zithers, flutes, jaw harps, drums, and the like. Most notable was a tour of the University sound lab, where the massive collection of late famed composer and ethnomusicologist Dr. José Maceda’s one-of-a-kind field recordings of highland Filipino musicians and other Southeast Asian groups is being painstakingly transferred from audiotape recordings (some quite degraded) to high-resolution digital wave files.



Dr. Clinton tours the UP School of Music musical instrument collection with UP graduate student, Roan Opiso

In addition to scholarly pursuits, Drs. Clinton and Wallach traveled to downtown Manila to meet family members of Dr. Wallach’s sister-in-law Cristina, who is from the region. They enjoyed a meal of local favorites before boarding the plane for the long trip back to Detroit early the next morning.

For more information please visit:
<http://tinyurl.com/dyhrtpw>

IDEAS AND INSPIRATIONS

The first in an occasional series of opinion pieces by POPC Faculty, students and Alumni

Post-9/11 Cinema

By Dan Shoemaker



Film is important as public discourse, and relevant to the public, partly because it is a mass medium that is market-driven. That is, the producers of film have some motive to try to make films relevant to the audience. The relationship is not perfect; for example, the main demographic for viewing films is 18-24 year olds, and so one gets a lot of films about characters in that demographic, or aimed at that demographic (e.g., Shia LaBeouf films, or twentysomething romantic comedies). However, historically, Hollywood has a pretty good track record of being responsive to societal trends in the USA. For example, look at film production between 1967 and, say, 1987. In the late 1960s, films like *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Easy Rider*, and *2001: A Space Odyssey* did a fair job of expressing both the critical and utopian concerns of 1960s youth counter-culture. Later, after Watergate, Hollywood produced a cycle of conspiracy films like *Three Days of the Condor*, *Chinatown*, *The Conversation* and *The Parallax View*, all of which expressed deep cynicism about government and/or corporate abuses of power. When the public lost its taste for that sort of discourse (e.g., apparent in public reaction to President Carter's "malaise" speech) the mood began to shift toward a loss of faith in liberalism and began to embrace a more nostalgic or even reactionary brand of conservatism. Hollywood responded with films like *Star Wars*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and *Red Dawn*, which combined genre styles reminiscent of the 1940s (adventure serials and war films) with Manichean morality in keeping with Reagan Administration

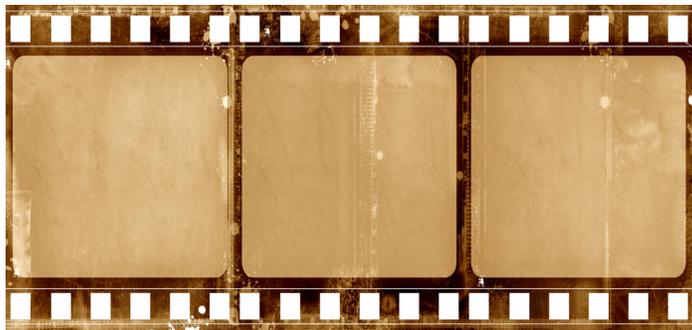
rhetoric and policy. In 1986 and 87, after Reaganomics had increased the gap between the haves and have-nots, you start to see films like *Some Kind of Wonderful*, *Wall Street*, *They Live*, and *Robocop*, all of which explicitly address issues of social class (and the latter of which remains the most explicit critique of privatization on film). Despite all the talk about Hollywood being ruled by liberal elites, Los Angeles is still an American city with all the problems thereof, and most of the people who make our movies are our fellow citizens and have some familiarity with the world in which most of us live. Issues from daily life make it onto celluloid, albeit with some time lag.

I think there are some clear lines of demarcation that can be drawn between pre- and post-9/11 American films, especially in regard to the treatment of certain topics. The mid-90s action/espionage romps *True Lies* and *The Long Kiss Goodnight* both include scenes in which it is made explicit that torture is a method that only bad guys would use, and the pre-9/11 terrorism fantasy *The Siege* makes the case that using torture is un-American. In the post-9/11 exploitation film *Hostel 2*, the heroine doesn't defeat the club of murderous sadists who run the hostel; she buys her way out of her predicament and joins them. There is no moral difference between the heroine and the villains, and her triumph is merely an instrumental one. Whether or not our government should torture detainees to obtain intelligence is a moral question; using torture to achieve an intelligence-gathering goal is a question of instrumental reasoning that sidesteps moral and ethical questions (asking "How can we do it?" instead of "Should we do it?"). Even the question of whether waterboarding counts as torture is cast in instrumental rather than moral terms (i.e., splitting hairs about whether waterboarding meets a semantic definition of torture sidesteps the ethical question of whether detainees should be made to feel like they're drowning).

Although not explicitly related to torture, a preference for instrumental reasoning over moral reasoning can be seen in films like *21*, *Shoot 'Em Up*, and *Wanted*. So, I would argue that we have moved away from moral reasoning and toward an instrumental reasoning paradigm since 9/11, and that this shift can be seen in our entertainment. Talk about drastic cuts to state and federal budgets without taking into account the harm that would result is a symptom of the same kind of thinking.

Likewise, I think our films have become more hospitable toward a belligerent, authoritarian masculinity. The mid-80s Harrison Ford vehicle *Witness* ultimately denounces violence as counter-productive (after Ford's detective has lived among the Amish). In contrast, *Boondock Saints* (barely released before 9/11, but gaining cult status thereafter) tells the story of two brothers who embark on a vigilante kill-spree that is endorsed by their biological father, an agent of the federal government, and God (and the issue of Due Process pales in comparison to the Almighty, and is treated as a mere matter of opinion in the film's denouement). But we might do well to ask ourselves which of these two storylines is more in keeping with the teachings of Jesus Christ. In *300*, which was released in 2007 as politicians were debating the merits of a troop surge in Iraq, there is no legitimacy granted to a position against war. Instead, those characters who oppose war are depicted as either corrupt or insufficiently masculine (and we might think about characterizations of John Kerry in 2004 as someone who was dishonest about his war record, or someone who was too intellectual and a waffler).

I think the 9/11 attacks rank on the same Richter Scale of the imagination and memory as Pearl Harbor, Hiroshima, and the assassination of JFK. All these events were shockingly unexpected, and seemed to auger a sea change in popular consciousness. 9/11 was bewildering to a lot of Americans because the attacks challenged our collective self-concept; we don't think of our nation as being hated by anyone, because we think of ourselves as the good guys. But maintaining that self-image in a post-9/11 world means separating American ends from the means used to achieve those ends (torture, rendition, illegal wiretapping, etc.), which I think explains the substitution of instrumental reasoning for moral reasoning in both our execution of policy and our popular culture.



Popular Culture Scholars Association

By Pamela Wagner

Students and faculty from all disciplines are invited to join the Popular Culture Scholars Association. Founded in 2011, the student-run organization is dedicated to the scholarly study, research and teaching of Popular Culture, as well as providing outreach to scholars and students interested in the field. Dr. Marilyn Motz serves as faculty advisor for the organization and numerous faculty members from the Department of Popular Culture are active participants.

According to 2nd year Popular Culture grad student Myc Wiatrowski, who serves as president of the PCSA, the organization was formed by students as a means of running the monthly colloquium series that is sponsored by the Bowling Green Department of Popular Culture. The group is responsible for finding and booking all speakers for the series. In addition to being responsible for the operation of the colloquium series, the PCSA puts forth calls for papers, as well as disseminates papers related to student interests in various fields of cultural study.

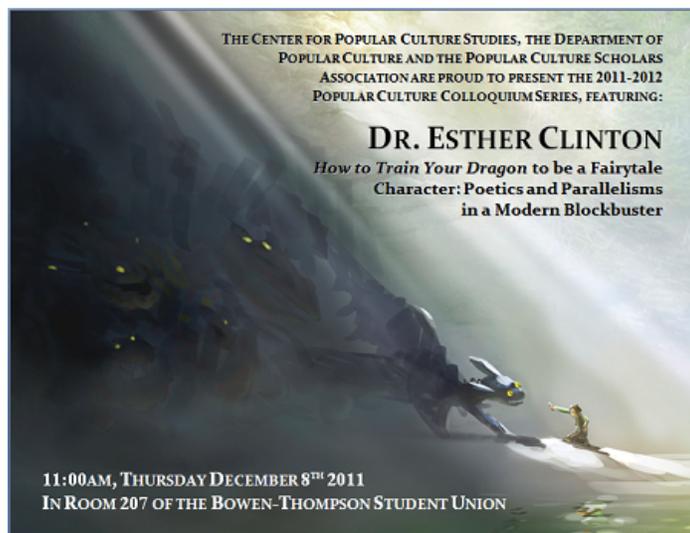
An important aspect of the PCSA is that it is open to undergraduates, as well as graduate students, with both groups sharing equal authority and control over group operations and governance. As PCSA President Wiatrowski noted, "undergrads are the heartbeat of the university," and the PCSA encourages and seeks undergraduate involvement in both membership

and event participation. The group also works closely with Culture Club, the graduate student organization responsible for the annual "Battleground States" conference, in sponsoring extra-curricular events and activities for students inside and outside the field of cultural study.

In honor of important landmarks in the history of the Bowling Green Department of Popular Culture, such as the 40th anniversary of the first Popular Culture Master's Degree awarded by the university, as well as the 40-year anniversary of the department, the PCSA is sponsoring "Popular Culture in the 21st Century: The Ray Browne Conference on Popular Culture," which will take place March, 2012. The event will feature paper presentations, as well as panel and roundtable discussions on a variety of topics relating to the study of Popular Culture and its role in the 21st century. The PCSA is proud to announce that Dr. Gary Hoppenstand, Editor-in-Chief of *The Journal of Popular Culture* and distinguished faculty at Michigan State University will serve as keynote speaker. Dr. Hoppenstand is an alumnus of BGSU, having earned his M.A. in Popular Culture and Ph.D. in American Culture Studies from the university.

For detailed information regarding the upcoming "Popular Culture in the 21st Century: The Ray Browne Conference on Popular Culture," as well as information on joining the PCSA, readers are encouraged to visit the organization's website: <http://bgsu.orgsync.com/org/pcsa/home>.

Readers can also follow the PCSA on Twitter at @BG_PCSA, and join the group on Facebook via the "Popular Culture Scholars Association" Facebook page.



2011 - 2012 POPC Colloquium Schedule

Event Coordinators: Myc Wiatrowski and Brian Keilen
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Angela Nelson

September 22, 2011: Dr. Jeremy Wallach

"Like a Real Dinosaur': Notes on the Quest for Authenticity in Popular Culture"

October 20, 2011: Dr. Matt Donahue

"The Heavy Metal T-shirt in Popular Culture and Beyond"

November 17, 2011: Marc Sumerak - Writer/Editor Marvel Comics; BGSU Alumnus, "Craft of Comics"

December 8, 2011: Dr. Esther Clinton

"How to Train Your Dragon to be a Fairytale Character: Poetics and Parallelisms in a Modern Blockbuster"

January 18, 2012: Dr. Pavitra Sundar - Assistant Professor, Kettering University; Department of Liberal Studies

February 16, 2010: Dr. Dan Shoemaker

February 23, 2012: TBA

March 22, 2012: Grad Student MA Thesis

April 19, 2012: Grad Student MA Thesis

Faculty and Student Notes

Sean Ahern: One thing of note I have done since the last update was present at the Irish Masculinity Conference at the National University of Ireland, Galway at the end of September [see the article about Sean's trip elsewhere in this newsletter]. I am also working on adapting that essay for possible publication in an edited volume from the conference and another essay for publication in a volume tentatively titled "Skinned to the Bone: Aggressive Music in the Contemporary World."

Dr. Jeffrey Brown: I just had an article titled "Supermoms? Maternity and the Monstrous-Feminine in Superhero Comics" come out in *The Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* (Vol. 2, No. 1, June 2011). It was a special issue on "Superheroes and Gender."

Jared Brown: In October I started work as a news production intern for the PBS station in Bowling Green. My primary responsibility concerns producing news stories about events in the Northwest Ohio region. The stories will be aired in between scheduled programming on WBGU.

Dr. Esther Clinton: presented "Hobbit Metal?" at the annual meeting of the Canadian branch of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music in Montreal in June. In September, she travelled to Manila to attend a conference on Southeast Asian music and in October she presented "The Gothic Menace Then and Now: Gothic Literature, Heavy Metal Music, and Moral Panics" at the American Folklore Society conference in Bloomington, Indiana. In December, Dr. Clinton will give a Colloquium talk on *How to Train Your Dragon*.

Dr. Matthew Donahue conducted ethnographic research on the On-U Sound Record label and legendary music producer Adrian Sherwood in Ramsgate, England. Donahue first hooked up with Sherwood when his band Universe Crew signed with Sherwood's On-U Sound Records subsidiary Green Tea Records back in 1997. In addition to spending time with Sherwood, Donahue also met up with music legend and Ohio native, Skip "Little Axe" McDonald.

For information on Adrian Sherwood: <http://www.adriansherwood.com/> and for Little Axe, see: <http://www.little-axe.com>

Donahue had two of his art cars featured in Louisville at the Kentucky Art Car Weekend sponsored by the Louisville Museum of Art and Craft and at the Hot Times Music and Art Festival in Columbus, Ohio and three of his art cars were featured at Maker Faire Detroit at the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. His art cars at Maker Faire Detroit were featured on MSN's *Exhaust Notes* website: <http://tinyurl.com/c6kz969> and were also featured on the *Cars in Depth* website: <http://tinyurl.com/6mnfnpu>

Dr. Donahue gave a presentation on his research related to the heavy metal t-shirt titled "The Heavy Metal T-Shirt in Popular Culture and Beyond" for the Department of Popular Culture Colloquium Series on October 20th.



Dr. Matthew A. Donahue with Adrian Sherwood (left) and Skip "Little Axe" McDonald (right) at On-U Sound Studios in Ramsgate, England

Dr. Angela Nelson: My book chapter, "Middle-Class Ideology in African-American Postwar Comic Strips" in *From Bourgeois to Boogie: Black Middle-Class Performances*, eds. Vershawn Ashanti Young and

Bridget Harris Tsemo (Wayne State University Press) was published in Spring 2011. My journal article, “‘Put Your Hands Together’: The Theological Meaning of Percussion and Percussiveness in Rap Music,” was published over the summer in *Americana: The Journal of American Popular Culture (1900 to Present)* and my essay in response to the novel *The Help* was published this month in *JENdA: A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies* (“A Black Girl from South Carolina Responds to Novel *The Help*”). I read a paper, “Tyler Perry’s Gospel Musical Stage Plays and Black Popular Culture” in the African American Culture Area of the Popular Culture Association at its Annual Meeting in April 2011. At this meeting, I also participated in a roundtable discussion about the graduate course on black popular music that I taught during spring semester for the Black Music Culture Area, a subject area that I co-chair with William C. Banfield (Berklee College of Music). I served as a member of the Winifred O. Stone Award and Presidential Diversity Enhancement Review Committee and the Applauding Excellence Student Life Award Committee during Spring 2011 and I completed my appointment as Acting Chair of the Department of Ethnic Studies on June 30, 2011. I was invited to make a presentation to middle-school and high school social studies and civics teachers on the connections between popular culture and law-related TV shows, novels, comic books, and movies at the Ohio Center for Law-Related Education Annual Law and Citizenship Conference in September.

Dr. Montana Miller continues her work in the emerging field of Internet Research Ethics; over the summer she wrote “Face-to-Face with the Digital Folk: The Ethics of Fieldwork on Facebook,” which will be the concluding chapter for the forthcoming book “Folk Culture in the Digital Age,” edited by Trevor Blank. Dr. Miller traveled to the University of Missouri at Columbia in September to give a seminar on Internet research, working with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the research community there. She presented a similar workshop to the researchers and IRB members of Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland at the end of October. Dr. Miller is also developing an ethnographic study of skydivers’ traditions and beliefs. She presented a paper on this topic, “‘Blue Skies, Black Death’: The Practice of Ritual and Belief among Skydivers,” at the American Folklore Society annual meeting in Bloomington, Indiana on October 13. With 500 jumps now under her belt, Dr. Miller has had the opportunity to observe many

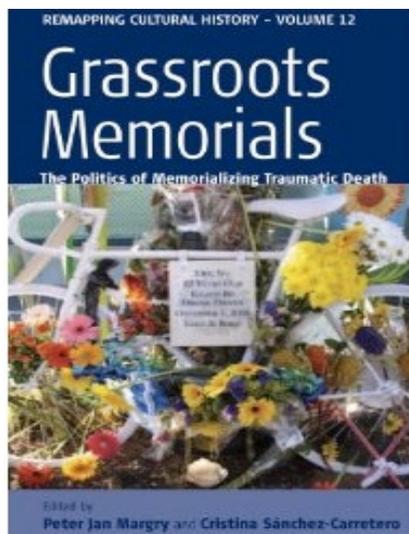
rituals surrounding death during her past year participating in this subculture.



Over Thanksgiving break, at Skydive City in Zephyrhills, Florida, Montana Miller passed the certification exam to be an AFF (Accelerated Free Fall) skydiving instructor who can take people on their first jumps. Here, she walks in from the landing area carrying her parachute after her successful evaluation

Dr. Jack Santino was the Visiting Guest Professor in Residence at Kemerovo State University, Siberia, Russia, September 26 - 30, 2011. The theme for the week was “European Languages and Culture,” and Dr. Santino was asked to lecture on folklore and Popular Culture Studies in Ireland, Great Britain, Spain, and France (all places he has lived and

worked). In addition, Santino delivered lectures on topics related to American holidays, festivals and rituals of social conflict, and the public memorialization of death. Siberia, he reports, is lovely at that time of year and not at all what one expects. It was his second invited residency there.



Dr. Santino spent this Thanksgiving weekend in Paris, where he served on a dissertation committee at the Sorbonne (University of Paris IV). The dissertation was "The Family in American Situation Comedies, 1950-2004." The defense was held on November 26,

2011 and was, he reports, much more formal than those in which he has participated in the US. The proceedings began at 2 PM and ended at 6 PM - followed by champagne!

Publications:

Santino, Jack. "The Study of Ritual and Festival in Everyday Life" in *Culture and Concept* (2010: Kemerovo University Press). Larisa Prokороva, ed. Article in both Russian and English.

Santino, Jack. "Between Commemoration and Social Activism: Spontaneous Shrines, Grassroots Memorialization, and the Public Ritualesque." In *Grassroots Memorials: The Politics of Memorializing Traumatic Death* (2011: Berghahn Books). Magry, Peter Jan and Cristina Sanchez Carretero, eds.

Jack Santino is editor of the Ritual, Festival, and Celebration series at Utah State University Press. The first volume in the series has been published: *Winter Carnival in a Western Town*, by Lisa Gabbert (2011: Utah State University Press), with a foreword by Jack Santino.

Dr. Jeremy Wallach presented papers in Montreal; Manila; and Bloomington, Indiana; saw the publication of one co-written article; a book chapter; and completed the final preparations for his next book. But by far his biggest accomplishment was persuading Esther Clinton to become his wife.



Dr. Jeremy Wallach conducting research for his POPC Colloquium Presentation during the summer at the Jurassic Golf miniature golf course in Wildwood, NJ, minutes away from a former apartment of Myc Wiatrowski

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WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Julie Rowse '08 returned to the high school classroom upon graduation. She currently teaches AP Language and Composition, Journalistic Writing, and Popular Culture Studies at Bellevue West High School in Bellevue, Nebraska. She is also the newspaper advisor. Julie recently presented at the National Council of Teachers of English National Conference as part of a panel titled "From Now to Next: Theories and Strategies for Effectively Incorporating Technology-Aided Literacy Practices" and has conducted workshops for Nebraska educators about using social networking media in the classroom.

I look back on my time at BGSU and the Popular Culture Dept. with a great deal of affection. Loved attending my classes and teaching my Introduction to POPC classes. (Also enjoyed the nights out at Howard's - hope it is still there).

My contact info is:
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Joliet, IL 60435
mjf59@yahoo.com

Rick Claypool '06 is still fighting the good fight on Public Citizens' Online Action Team.

For information on his latest campaign, go to <http://www.citizen.org/Page.aspx?pid=5228>



Julie Rowse, '08 at graduation with her thesis advisor, Dr. Montana Miller

Marty Fitzgerald '83 writes: I saw the "Where are they now?" request in the POPC newsletter and wanted to respond. I attended BGSU from 1981-1983 and received my MA in 1983. I was in the group that included Garyn Roberts, Gary Hoppenstand and R. Sue Smith. I still correspond with Garyn. The faculty when I was there included Ray [Browne], Jack [Nachbar], Chris [Geist], Marilyn [Motz], George Ward and Mike Marsden. I believe that Marilyn was my faculty advisor - not sure if she remembers me. I used to have several Elvis Presley posters in my office upstairs - that might jog her memory. After I left Bowling Green I worked in a bookstore for a few years. I was hired by the law firm of Mayer Brown in Chicago in 1988 and I have been here ever since. I work in the Tax Controversy Department as a Tax Litigation paralegal.

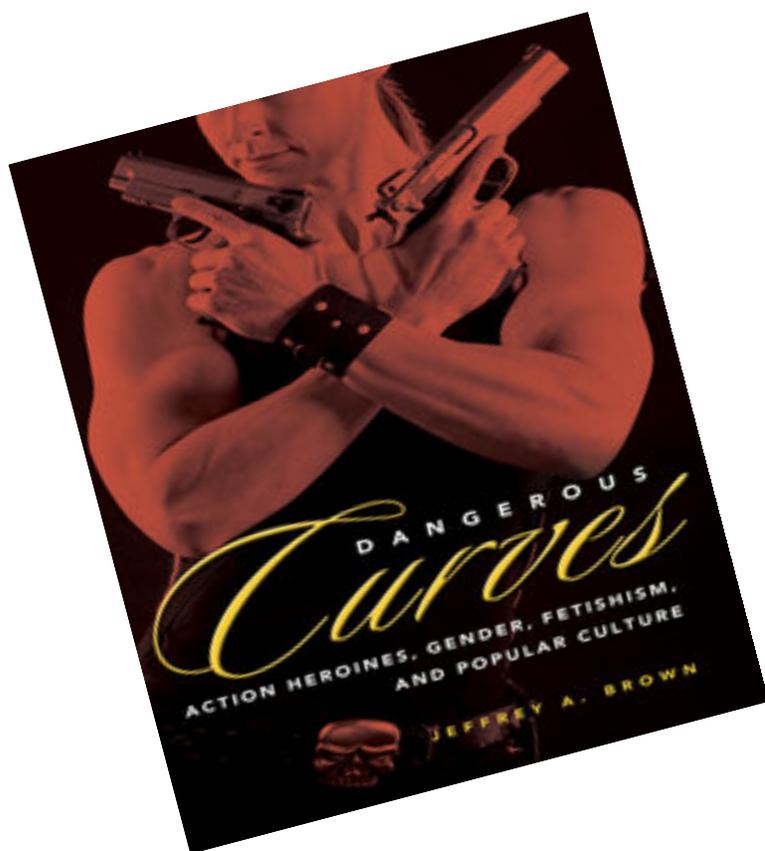
I married my wife Eileen in 1996. No kids, but we have two three-legged dogs, Barney and Thelma Lou. That's a long story if you want to hear it. They were actually written up in our local paper a few years ago.



Dr. Esther Clinton and the first-year graduate students

In Our Next Issue:

- We say hello to the first Director of the School of Cultural and Critical Studies!
- We take a look at Jeremy Wallach's new co-edited volume *Metal Rules the Globe*
- More details on events commemorating the upcoming 40th anniversaries of the POPC MA program (2012) and the Department of Popular Culture (2013)



Review of *Dangerous Curves* by Jeffrey Brown

“[T]his is a deeply trenchant study, demonstrating that even though these figures of female self-determination have proliferated in recent years, their true power is limited by an industry, and a culture, dominated by masculinist concerns...Highly recommended.” G. A. Foster, University of Nebraska--Lincoln, *Choice* (July 2011): 2077.

Dr. Brown also appears in a new documentary by Georgia State University professor Jonathan Gayles (<http://blacksuperherodoc.com/>). Gayles mentions Dr. Brown's research in this podcast interview, which also contains clips of the film: <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/18087431>.

Review of *Modern Noise, Fluid Genres* by Jeremy Wallach

“Indonesia, it is safe to predict, in the coming decades will take its rightful place in the literature on the global music industry as one of the world's most dynamic regions. Jeremy Wallach's *Modern Noise, Fluid Genres* may well be the book that will give direction to this new literature for years to come.” ---Veit Erlmann, University of Texas, Austin, *The World of Music* 51(2): 173-74.

Modern Noise, Fluid Genres has been reviewed in twelve publications in four languages.

<http://www.modernnoisefluidgenres.com/reviews/>

