



ASLE News

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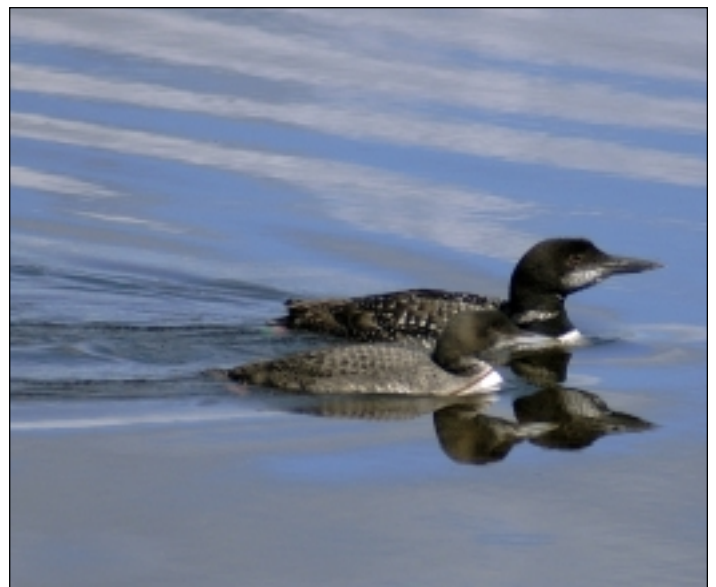
PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Gumbo: Southern Cooking & Our Southern Conference

As I near the end of my year-long term, I reflect upon how grateful I am to have served as ASLE President. This is a wonderful organization. Our numbers are growing; the energy, imaginative-ness, and enthusiasm of our individual members seem to be thriving. That's a good thing, too, for more than ever, the work we can do—the work we *must* do—is vital.

The best movie I've seen all year is Al Gore's film about global warming, *An Inconvenient Truth*. I was delighted to learn, recently, that the Swedish government has mandated this film be shown in all of Sweden's high schools. (Now *there* is a country that makes sense environmentally.) I know many of you have seen it; I can't recommend it highly enough.

The big event in our near future is the 2007 ASLE conference, *Confluence*, to be held at Wofford College in Spartanburg, South Carolina, next June 12-16. Karla Armbruster, ASLE's 2007 President, has been working indefatigably with conference co-organizers and Wofford professors Ellen Goldey and John Lane to organize what sounds like an amazing few days. Already some exciting plenaries have been lined up, including a session on Katrina and its aftermath, a session on Coastal Carolina, and a session on Spartanburg's own Hub City Writers' Project. Also, attendees will have the opportunity to take part in several pre-conference seminars and workshops led by various ASLE members. (Space will be limited; please be aware they might fill up fast.) We'll have the full panoply of regular sessions featuring both academic and creative work during the days of the conference. And, for the first time ever, ASLE will also be bestowing awards for outstanding academic and creative writing at the conference. (See **page 11** for more details.) Finally, several intriguing post-conference field trips are also being planned. It's a bit too early for all the details to be in place but rest assured that the food will be great, live music will be plentiful and thriving, the banquet will be funky and elegant, and both college and town will open their doors to you. I am sure you will have a wonderful time.



Adult and juvenile Common Loon (Gavia immer), Seney National Wildlife Refuge, Michigan. Photo by Lewis Ulman.

All information and signups for the conference will be available on the web site: www.wofford.edu/asle. Follow the links for “call for papers” (also see **pages 4-5**) and “conference registration.” After you click on registration, you'll find information about and a secure site for payment. For the first time, we are working on making it possible to participate in carbon offsetting; that information will be on the web site too.

As the outgoing ASLE President, and as someone who's lived in the South for 25 years, I want to extend my personal invitation to each of you to *Confluence*. The South is complex, surprising, and fascinating. It is the fastest growing region of the United States; because of this, and because of its long history of poverty and racial injustice, its environmental problems are enormous. But its beauty and cultural richness are enormous as well. It gets beneath your skin and I'm not talking about

see PRESIDENT on page 3

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ASLE News—the biannual newsletter of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment—reports ASLE business and publishes information of interest to its membership. Have any news or ideas? Contact newsletter editor Kathryn Miles at kmiles@unity.edu. Thanks to editorial assistant Jennifer Smiechowski for her work on this issue.



Sandstone formation, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Michigan. Photo by Lewis Ulman.

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ASLE News accepts advertisements of interest to our members at rates of \$200 for a full page, \$150 for a 1/2 page, \$100 for a 1/4 page and \$75 for an 1/8 page. Contact Kathryn Miles, kmiles@unity.edu, with inquiries.

PRESIDENT continued from page 1

redbugs, here. Impossible to describe in a paragraph or two, it will remain with you. So as they say, y'all come on down.

Before I close, I owe Richard Kerridge a recipe for gumbo, which I made for the ASLE retreat last spring. There are lots of ways of making gumbo; this one is approximate and flexible, and you can fiddle with it as you like. It is so delicious that I thought you all might like to try it (see box at right).

I teach yoga, so I will end this column as one ends yoga classes: The light in me greets the light in you. Namaste.

— Ann Fisher-Wirth, President



A New Place for the Environmental Imagination

Notes from the ASLE Off-Year Symposium at University of Maine, Farmington

Early June in Maine can be a tricky time – not quite summer, too late to be spring. As Franklin Burroughs has written of the weather in New England, “It is arbitrary, precipitate, and emphatic, less certain than a baby’s bottom.” This capriciousness was on display during this year’s ASLE Off-year Symposium, held at the University of Maine at Farmington from Friday, June 2 to Sunday, June 4. Friday night was so pleasant the attendees gathered at UMF’s Honors House for a cocktail reception on the back deck of the building, but Sunday’s planned outdoor activities were washed out by a cold rain, leaving only the indoor Writing on Place workshop. Nevertheless, the rain allowed those who gathered in the Honors House Sunday morning for a light breakfast extra time to make connections with new friends and fellow travelers on the ASLE path.

The participants – about 40 in all – heard an excellent series of presentations on the symposium topic (Maine’s Place in the Environmental Imagination), from Kent Ryden’s keynote address, in which he tweaked the conference title (his version was, “The Environment’s Place in Maine’s Imagination”), to such familiar ecocritical topics as Thoreau, Katahdin, and Sarah Orne Jewett. Less familiar ones were also discussed, such as Edward Arlington Robinson, Hawthorne, Carolyn Chute, E.B. White, and a Wabenanaki legend, and even Edmund Ware Smith, an obscure regionalist who no one at the

see Off-Year Symposium on page 7

Ann’s Gumbo Recipe

- 1) Make a roux. On low heat in a very large pan, melt about half a stick of butter (4 ounces), then stir into it, without making lumps, an equal amount (4 T) of flour. You may use up to a stick of butter, equally increasing the amount of flour, but I find that makes a rather greasy gumbo. Increase the heat slightly and continue to stir the butter/flour mixture until it turns nut-brown and smells wonderful. This stage is crucial to the *je ne sais quoi* of your gumbo. Be patient; fix a drink, get in your fuzzy slippers, watch the ball game. It can take a good half hour.
- 2) Into this roux, stir vegetables which you have previously chopped: two or three green peppers, two onions, and one bunch of celery. Do not try to chop the vegetables while stirring the roux. After you add the veggies, you will have a full pan. Cook and stir the vegetables until they are soft-crunchy and thoroughly infused with the roux.
- 3) Turn this mixture into a big soup pot, scraping the pan well to get all the yummy tidbits. Add liquid. I use organic chicken bouillon but you can use vegetable bouillon, beef bouillon, or any flavorful stock. Use enough to cover the vegetables, plus a few inches more. Add canned chopped tomatoes with their juice (one large can, maybe two). Finally, add to taste: salt, pepper, a little red pepper, and the hot sauce of your choice. Some swear by Tabasco; I prefer Louisiana Hot Sauce. But there are infinite varieties.
- 4) If you are using chicken and/or sausage, have it ready cooked, and add it to the gumbo now. The classic gumbo sausage is andouillet, but this can be hard to come by. Italian sausage is an acceptable alternative. This is also a clever and tasty way to deal with leftover Thanksgiving turkey.
- 5) Simmer the gumbo for hours and hours, tasting it and correcting the seasoning. That is to say, you won’t be able to leave it alone; each bite makes you want the next one.
- 6) If you are using shrimp, add it at the last minute, boiled and peeled.
- 7) Serve over rice.



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Seventh Biennial Conference of ASLE

Confluence: lit erature • art • criticism • science • activism • politics

June 12-16, 2007

Wofford College, Spartanburg, South Carolina



The Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) invites proposals for its Seventh Biennial Conference, to be held June 12-16, 2007, at Wofford College in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Taking as our theme the many streams of environmental interest and activity that flow together to form ASLE's mission, we seek proposals for papers (15-minute presentation time), panels, roundtables, poster sessions, workshops, and other performances that pertain to our theme or otherwise explore the relations of language, place, nature, and culture.

Proposals are especially encouraged on (but not limited to):

- coastal literature, art, and issues
- literature and environmental issues, particularly of the South
- science and ecocriticism
- environmental politics and art
- activism and environmental education
- class and environmental justice in literature and criticism
- issues of interdisciplinary research and teaching

Submit one-page proposals by January 15, 2007, using our web site: <http://www.wofford.edu/asle>.

Direct any questions to Karla Armbruster at 314-961-2660, ext. 7577, or armbruka@webster.edu.

Preformed panels and roundtables are encouraged. Audiovisual requests must accompany the proposal. Participation is limited to one presentation per person (participation as chair or member of a workshop, seminar, or workgroup will not count as a presentation). All participants must be ASLE members by the start of the conference.

CONFERENCE SITE

Spartanburg, South Carolina, is a community of forty thousand located in the foothills of the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains. Boasting a revitalized downtown, the city offers a lively nightlife as well as opportunities to explore the area's ecological diversity, including a downtown garden and woodland preserve, arboreta at three local colleges, and nearby Croft State Natural Area. With true Southern hospitality, the city will welcome ASLE with an opening reception showcasing food from local restaurants and "environmentally active" businesses and organizations.

Wofford College, our host, has a completely wired campus (and many indoor and outdoor wireless areas), and all of the classrooms we will use for concurrent sessions are computer equipped with projection and Internet capabilities. Wofford's historic 19th century Old Main building includes an auditorium that seats 700 and offers a state-of-the-art sound and video technology system. Conference housing options include the Spartanburg Marriott, brand-new apartment-style accommodations, more traditional dorm rooms, and camping in an "ASLE tent village" on campus (with access to bathrooms).



Wofford's Old Main Building

Spartanburg is easily accessible by car or air; the Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport serves most major airlines and is located just 20 minutes from campus. The Charlotte and Asheville airports are each just about an hour away.

GRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS

The Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment will honor the best work of graduate students by sponsoring two awards for papers presented at the conference: the best scholarly paper in ecocriticism and the best work of environmental creative writing. Awards include a prize of \$100 each, and papers must be submitted by May 18, 2007. For details, please check the conference web site and page 12 of the newsletter.

CONFERENCE INFORMATION AND SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Please see our web site (<http://www.wofford.edu/asle>) for more detailed information, updates, and registration.

Pre-Conference Workshops and Seminars

Although ASLE has offered pre-conference workshops in the past, at the 2007 conference we will provide several more structured workshops and scholarly seminars led by prominent environmental publishers, writers, and critics, including:

- Place-Based Publishing Workshop (led by John Lane, Wofford College; Betsy Teter, Hub City Writers Project; and John Harris, Monadnock Institute at Franklin Pierce College)
- “Conjuring Place,” a workshop for poets and writers of creative nonfiction (led by Ann Fisher-Wirth, University of Mississippi and Sheryl St. Germain, Chatham College)
- A Workshop in Narrative Criticism (led by John Elder, Middlebury College)
- Seminar on environmental justice and ecocriticism (led by Rob Figueroa, Colgate University)
- Seminar on ecocriticism and science studies (led by Stacy Alaimo, University of Texas, Arlington)
- One more seminar to be arranged; check our web site!

Each workshop and seminar will last three hours and will be limited to 15 participants. Advanced registration is required and will begin October 15; registration will close March 15 (or when full, whichever is earlier) for workshops and January 15 for seminars. Some pre-conference preparation will be required for seminars, including short position papers; as titles of position papers will be listed in the conference program, we encourage (but will not require) seminar participants to consider attending the seminar in lieu of presenting at the conference itself (rather than doing both).

Please check the conference web site for further information and updates regarding individual workshops and seminars.

Workgroups

In addition to paper and poster presentations, this year's conference will feature workgroups on the following topics:

- Criticism and Theory: Is there a distinctly “ecocritical” method?
- Engagement and Activism: How should ecocriticism become more publicly engaged?
- Writing and Discourse: What are the current issues and problems in ecocomposition?

Each workgroup will meet for a three-hour period during concurrent sessions and will give conference-goers the opportunity to discuss a question of common interest for longer than ordinary sessions allow. Participation will require pre-registration and be limited to fifteen people per workgroup. Selection will be determined on a first-come, first-served basis, with a final deadline of March 15; workgroups may require some pre-conference preparation.

Post-Conference Field Trips

As usual, there will be a variety of exciting half-day field excursions on Thursday afternoon and several post-conference field trips, ranging from whitewater rafting on the National Wild and Scenic Chattooga (“Deliverance”) River to exploration of Gullah culture on the coast of South Carolina. Please register for field excursions and trips when you register for the conference; space will be available on a first come, first served basis.

Talking About Diversity

A Conversation with Priscilla Ybarra and Kathryn Miles

Priscilla Ybarra is assistant professor of English at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. She and Levita Mondie-Sapp serve as co-coordinators of the ASLE caucus on diversity. I recently spoke with Priscilla about the development of her own commitment to the organization as well as the most pressing issues relating to diversity and environmental writing.

ASLE president Ann Fisher-Wirth joked in her last column that ASLE folks always start by reporting on the weather. What's it like at Texas Tech today?

It's sunny and cool. I rode my bike to campus today and it was a little cloudy, but it burned off by lunch time, so I ate lunch outside.

I'm envious. Can you tell readers a little bit about your background and how you became interested in ASLE?

I was a nerdy undergraduate at the University of North Texas. My sophomore or junior year, I attended a symposium on our campus for the Texas Society for Environmental Restoration. There I met William Jordan, who was the keynote speaker and is a major advocate of ecological restoration, and he told me about ASLE. This was back when it was just starting. I began checking out the journal ISLE, and then I finally joined while I was a graduate student at Rice. My first conference was at Northern Arizona in 2001.

And what are your current research interests?

Chicana/o literature, and Chicana/o environmental writing in particular. No one really taught that at my undergrad, so discovering it was a formative experience. I'm interested in 19th century Mexican American writing, which is a period that we are just beginning to explore in depth in Chicana/o literary studies. It's a powerful time period. Mexico lost half its land after the U.S.-Mexico War, and Mexican Americans came into being "officially" in the nineteenth century as a result of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. And, of particular interest to environmental study, the U.S. was figuring out what to do with its newly acquired Mexican territory, and Mexican American citizens, at the same time that major innovations were being made in U.S. environmental thought and practice. The transcendental writers and the beginning of national parks are just two examples. And we must keep in mind that the first national parks and natural monuments were established in territories that had very recently been Mexico and were inhabited largely by Native American and Mexican American populations.

I also work on contemporary Chicana/o cultural production and its relationship to environmental issues; I am just beginning a project on the new Culture Clash play *Water and Power* and its commentary on the restoration of the Los Angeles River.

Speaking of issues relating to ethnicity and the environment, what do you think are the most pressing issues with regards to diversity and environmental literature?

It's really about taking a hard look at the way we have been setting up the literary history for environmental writing. We're already starting to do this, with some studies tracing environmental literary history to works much earlier than Transcendental writings. But still, the ways we have structured literary history can be alienating to certain ethnic groups or can make minority groups' contributions invisible. So often, people tend to think of nature writing as an isolating retreat from daily life. We read people like Thoreau and Muir as isolating themselves from society and emphasize their individual strengths. But that literature can also be read as being very connected to society. Their retreats were facilitated by society at large. So much of environmental literature depends upon social organizations, and that connects with diversity issues. For ethnic groups or minority groups, environmental writing is located in every day spaces. You can't talk about nature without also talking about family or traditions associated with the environment.

Can you give an example?

Environmental literary study has privileged introspective nature writing and individual exploration of nature. While this perspective is understood in certain Anglo American contexts, it is becoming increasingly obvious that it is insufficient as a paradigm for the study of other environmental literatures. More particularly, it cannot account for non-Anglo American mediations of nature. Chicana and Chicano writers, with their concern for social justice and community, nonetheless take up their pens to reflect on the natural environment, albeit differently than conventional ecocriticism expects. But Chicana/o literary study has also been complicit with overlooking Chicana/o writers' environmental insights, largely because the environment has been perceived to be a lesser priority than the seemingly more immediate needs of social equity. However, broadening the category of nature writing to *environmental* writing, and considering the close ties between social justice and environmental issues reveals the ways that Chicana/o writers demonstrate how human interaction with the environment differs along lines of ethnicity and class. *Under the Feet of Jesus*, a novel by Helena María Viramontes, is a great example of this dynamic in contemporary Chicana/o writing.

You mentioned that we've already started shifting our perspective. Are there other changes that you see with regards to diversity and the ASLE organization?

In a lot of ways, I don't think I have noticed that much change. I attended my first diversity caucus meeting in Arizona, but I mostly just tried to listen. When I returned at the last conference in Eugene, it seemed like the caucus was on the verge of dissolving. I felt—and I still feel—like it is very necessary. That's part of why I was able to be convinced to become one of the diversity caucus coordinators. I'm really glad that it hasn't dissolved. There's a lot of work we can do: adding more panels, but also really committing to more plenary speakers and other big events.

How do you feel about the directions in which environmental literature and diversity seem to be heading right now?

I think it's one of the most exciting directions in scholarship right now. Of course I'm going to say that because it's my research area, but it really is. I think that diversity issues provide a lot of opportunity for inter-disciplinarity and working with community organizations. Historically, environmental issues would maybe just be lumped into social justice, but now conferences and organizations are devoting entire days to environmental issues and minority groups. The recent day dedicated to environmental issues at The National Latino Congreso, the first meeting of its kind in a generation, is just one example.

Do you see that affecting the larger discourse about the environment?

Definitely. It's an opportunity for environmental scholars to dialogue with contemporary movements and to recognize that everyone has an environmental heritage, but we just have to work at finding out each group's particular contribution and environmental heritage. A particular relationship to the environment is a point of pride for many cultures. Plus, I think everyone agrees that we have to attract more and more people to the movement, especially under-represented groups. Literary scholars are in a unique position to do that because they can recognize an environmental heritage that will be in conversation with the larger movement.

An important question we haven't covered yet: what are you reading right now?

I'm reading a great book with my students called *The Squatter and the Don* by María Amparo Ruiz de Burton. She was the first Mexican American writer to publish a full-length novel in English in the U.S. It's a book about land possession and dispossession in the United States, and the students are learning a lot about the changes occurring in California after the U.S.-Mexico War.

One final question. Will folks see you at the 2007 conference?

Absolutely. And the caucus will be working to plan several panels dealing with diversity. It's going to be a great conference. But then again, it always is.

Off-Year Symposium continued from page 3

symposium had ever heard of before (introduced to us by Richard Hunt of Delaware Valley College). Judging from post-symposium evaluations, attendees thought the value of the papers was excellent. The organizer did, too!

The concluding panel on Saturday afternoon brought together three local writers – poet Wes McNair, fiction writer Patricia O'Donnell, and nonfiction writer Robert Kimber – who talked about their experiences of using Maine in their writing, and their awareness of how they construct an “environmental Maine” in their own work. Afterwards, most attendees gathered in downtown Farmington for cocktails, a

convivial meal, and conversation. Die-hards later returned to the Honors House for a late night viewing of Andy Goldsworthy's “Rivers and Tides.” And then the rains came.

Even still, the symposium was a great success.

Several attendees commented on the virtues of the symposium size, versus larger national conferences: the intimacy of the gathering allowed for people to meet almost everyone who came, and have the time to form friendships and intellectual bonds. Those of us who hosted the event (which included Gretchen Legler, Michael Johnson, Jeff Thomson, Paul Outka and Eric Brown, all from UMF) would agree that symposiums are well worth doing, and would urge other ASLE communities to consider hosting one in 2008.

– Michael Burke, Conference Organizer



Panel presentation at the ASLE Off-Year Symposium, University of Maine, Farmington.

2006 Election Statements from Candidates for Vice President and Executive Council

Each autumn, ASLE members are invited to elect a new vice president and two new executive council members. The vice president serves one year as vice president, the subsequent year as president, and the year following as past president. Executive council members are selected for three year terms.

Your ballot for the 2006 ASLE election will be mailed to you if you live in the United States. To expedite the process and ensure that ballots are received on time from international members, please download a ballot from the web site (www.asle.umn.edu) if you live outside the U.S.

Read the statements from our candidates for vice president and executive council below, make your selections, and send your ballot—postmarked by December 1, 2006—to Kathleen R. Wallace, ASLE Elections, Graduate School, The Ohio State University, 230 N. Oval Mall, Columbus, OH 43210.

Vice President

Rochelle Johnson, *Albertson College of Idaho*

I have long hoped for the honor of serving ASLE as its Vice President. This may sound downright silly, but it's true: my involvement with ASLE has been so meaningful that sometimes I feel that it, rather than the college that employs me, is my professional home.

I found my way to ASLE in the early 90's and have since held several roles in the organization. As a graduate student, I assisted in planning the first conference and co-edited the essay collection that grew out of that meeting. From 1999-2001, I served on the Executive Council and was the Mentoring Coordinator. Since 2001, I have regularly reviewed both books and manuscripts for *ISLE*, and I have compiled and contributed the "Calls for Papers" section to each issue of *ASLE News*. I also serve as "Professional Organization Liaison," coordinating formal affiliations with other professional societies and ensuring ASLE's presence at many conferences.

Recently, I have felt increasingly compelled to know that the study of literature and environment truly matters and that ecocritics can do some good for the earth. This desire has led me to re-shape my pedagogy, scholarship, and community service. For instance, I incorporate bioregional themes into composition classes and focus environmental studies seminars on pressing issues such as food and justice. As Chair of the Environmental Studies Program, I work with students to help guide our college toward more sustainable practices. In my most recent scholarship, I uncover the relevance of nineteenth-century painting, literature, and landscape design to our current ecological crisis. And in my local community, I participate in efforts to restore ecological viability to a nearby stream.

My passion for doing work that serves the physical environment leads me to have high hopes for ASLE's future. As an organization, ASLE is doing well: its financial state is steady, its conferences are largely successful, and its administration lies in the very capable hands of the Managing Director. Because of its success, ASLE is in a strong position to be a model of environmental responsibility to the profession, and rather than grow complacent in our success, I'd like to see ASLE grow revolutionary.

Already the Executive Council is discussing ways to offset the carbon emissions that accompany our meetings. Surely we can do more. We could consider other methods by which ASLE might help address the environmental crisis. I don't think it would be appropriate for ASLE to undertake local activism projects; nor do I believe that we should compromise ASLE's original mission or its vitality, both of which attracted us all here in the first place. Rather, I encourage the leadership to consider how our publications, conferences, and membership activities might best demonstrate a commitment to ecological integrity while we continue to explore the relationship between our literature (and other cultural productions) and our physical surroundings.

ASLE has become the bedrock of my professional life, so I am here for the duration. Nevertheless, I would be honored and delighted to serve as VP for this productive, passionate organization.

Mark Long, *Keene State College*

Why vice president? Well, I'm in my fourth year as chair of an English department and I have found, much to my surprise, real pleasure in the mix of detail-oriented work, ongoing collaboration, and long-range planning required for success in such a position. I should mention, too, my three-year term on the ASLE Executive Council where I collaborated with council

colleagues in a pre-conference planning year (drafting the job description for the ASLE Managing Director position) and a conference year (assisting with planning and staging the conference in Boston). And the timing is right. With the years of working toward tenure behind me (I'm currently associate professor of English and American Studies at Keene State College in New Hampshire), I'm looking forward to spending a bit more time with my two children Nathaniel and Ellinore, to planting more varieties of garlic and potatoes, and to cultivating the people and initiatives of ASLE.

Let me say, also, that I'm wildly enthusiastic about the direction of ASLE. We've been extremely fortunate to stage our conferences and off-year symposia in a range of places; we've taken a leap and hired a Managing Director, Amy McIntyre, who reminds us almost daily why we need her; we've designed fresh conference activities and session formats, including the seminars and work groups we'll have for the first time next summer in Spartanburg; we've collaborated with our graduate liaisons in creating opportunities for experienced faculty to mentor graduate students about the academy, including the rewards of working at colleges and universities of all sizes and missions; and we continue to develop new initiatives, including the Syllabi Collection, ASLE-CCCC, the Caucus for Diversity, the Online Bibliography and, most recently, the ASLE Dissertations-in-Progress database. I'm proud to have played a role in a few of these developments.

What might I bring to the positions of vice-president and president? My work would be guided by an overarching philosophy of developing existing communities and initiatives while promoting new ideas and programs. I'm interested, first and foremost, in strengthening the ties among members of the organization. In my work as the Coordinator of the ASLE Mentoring Program I have seen first-hand the fruits of exploring common interests between new and more experienced members of the field; and I will continue working closely with members of the ASLE graduate caucus on initiatives—such as the one-on-one job conferences and the roundtable discussion of academic life we organized at the Eugene conference. Second, I will continue to make visible the enormously interesting and diverse intellectual work of ASLE members. During the past few years I've been working with Laird Christensen and Fred Waage on the forthcoming collection of essays *Teaching North American Environmental Literature*; in this work with Laird, Fred, and the many contributors, I've been inspired by the expanding range of materials and methods in our field. Third, I will work with members to determine upcoming conference sites that reflect our membership. In fact since joining the Executive Council I've advocated for the right institution (and individual!) to help us stage the biennial

conference in Canada; and, if elected, I will set to work on behalf of all of us to see if we might make this happen. Finally, if the recent past is any guide, collaborations with ASLE members outside North America will surely continue to be among the most exciting developments in our community. Might we use this network to create new opportunities for scholarly and/or teaching exchanges?

More time exploring forests and fields and pond edges with Nathaniel and Ellinore, more garlic and more potatoes to share with family and friends, more energy devoted to the people and the initiatives of ASLE—these activities would fit well within the day-to-day pattern of my work as a reader, writer, and teacher. I'm honored to be nominated for this position and grateful for the opportunity to think about how serving as your vice president might shape my days in the coming years. Thank you for considering me.

Executive Council

Janine DeBaise, *SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry*

It's possible that you've met me at an ASLE conference. At sessions, I've read my poetry or talked about ecofeminism. I've put together roundtables on science writing or urban nature writing. Perhaps you've seen me at the Diversity Caucus or ASLE-CCCC. But more likely, you've met me at the breakfast table or at an evening jam session or on a hike through a desert. Like most of my ASLE friends, I especially value the conference events that build community and encourage informal conversations.

I teach at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in upstate New York, which means that many of my colleagues are scientists. So I am especially interested in the ways that ASLE encourages interdisciplinary scholarship. At ESF, I teach a first year writing course that is integrated with a botany course, a class in which I ask students to investigate their relationship to place. In the spring, I teach contemporary nature literature and an urban environmental literature course. The advice and scholarship of my ASLE colleagues informs just about every thing I teach.

Last summer, I spent two weeks with ASLE folks, rafting through the rapids of the Colorado River, sleeping under the stars, and exploring the side canyons. For the last ten years, the ASLE community has influenced what I read, what I write, what I teach, and how I live my life. My hope is that as we grow and mature as an organization, we continue to function as a community of people who support and challenge one another.

see Election Statements on page 10

Election Statements continued from page 9

Thomas Hallock, *University of South Florida*

As an early Americanist living in the South, I am in a good position to serve as an ambassador for ASLE into less frequented areas. My scholarship focuses on eighteenth-century American nature writing: first a book (*From the Fallen Tree: Frontier Narratives, Environmental Politics, and the Roots of a National Pastoral*), now as co-editor of *William Bartram Manuscripts*. My reasons for teaching literature and the environment are not surprising. I like to go outside. And I love to hold classes outside. There are samples of student work on-line from courses that I have taught at the U. of Mississippi's Biology Field Station (<http://www.baysprings.olemiss.edu/naturewriting/>) and from a course on the Rivers of Florida (http://www.stpt.usf.edu/coas/florida_studies/rivers/index.htm).

As a transplanted Floridian, I dream of an ASLE/Gulf Stream. This regional body would look beyond narrowing national or linguistic boundaries to develop the fluid, material connections between the US South, the Caribbean, and the Gulf Basin. My home university supports work in both Latin American and Environmental Studies, and with the Executive Council, we could make that dream a reality.

Rick Van Noy, *Radford University*

I first encountered something like ecocriticism while reading Glen Love's *Western American Literature* article on "Revaluing Nature" in the basement of the Western Washington University library. After completing my MA, I worked as a technical writer for architects, engineers, and environmental scientists in New Jersey. Once a week, I tried to speed through choked-with-traffic Rt. 1 to attend a summer reading program at Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Nature center led by McKay Jenkins (via Princeton's William Howarth). I went back to graduate school. I am the author of *Surveying the Interior: Literary Cartographers and the Sense of Place* and am currently working on a collection of nonfiction essays about getting kids outside. I am an Associate Professor at Radford University in Virginia.

My first ASLE conference was in Missoula and I'm pleased that it will come to nearby South Carolina next year. I hope to bring a conference to the Southern Appalachian Highlands and Radford/Virginia Tech area in the near future, once it is ready to swing east and south again. At present, I'm working on reviving the New River Symposium, a multi-disciplinary conference once put on by the National Park Service. I feel like I possess some of the institutional memory of ASLE, but also want to see it grow and change in the future. As a member of the Executive Council, I would like to see ASLE continue to be

a big, open air tent, welcoming both writers and scholars and also those with a nonprofessional interest in literature and the environment. Even kids.

Jim Warren, *Washington and Lee*

I've been a member of ASLE since the 1996 meeting in Missoula, Montana, and it has been the best part of my professional life outside my own university. The organization has taught me a great deal about ecocriticism, about teaching environmental writing, and about how institutions develop. I'd be honored to give back to ASLE by serving on the Executive Council.

There isn't any real agenda I want to push, except for the clear directions I've seen us heading in the last several years. We've been building our diversity, in intellectual and in social ways, and that should continue to be a major part of our future. We've reached out to other organizations and other disciplines, and we need to do even more of that in the next several years. My sense of current scholarship and teaching tells me I need to learn more and more science in order to enrich my community. So, for example, I'd like to establish more connections with scientific organizations such as the Ecological Society of America. Finally, we've been showing our commitment to environmental justice—fertile ground for continuing growth as a community.

Currently, I'm finishing a 10-year stint as chair of the English Department at Washington and Lee University. I've gained a certain calmness in handling administrative decisions and the inevitable changes that take place. I've also made it a point of pride to foster the growth of my younger colleagues in scholarship, teaching, and service. I'd like to think that might help me work effectively on the Executive Council, too.



Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), W. C. Sterling State Park, Michigan. Photo by Lewis Ulman.

ASLE Awards: Call for Submissions

This academic year marks the first for the ASLE Awards, which recognize outstanding achievement in scholarship and creative writing. The biennial ASLE Awards (given in conference years) will be awarded in four categories: best book-length publication of scholarly eco-criticism, best book-length publication in creative writing, best scholarly paper delivered at the biennial ASLE conference by a graduate student, and best creative reading given at the biennial ASLE conference by a graduate student. A committee of scholars and writers will review all books and papers submitted; winners will be announced at the conference banquet in June. The official conference CFP for the 2007 conference, which will be held at Wofford College in Spartanburg, SC, is available on pages 4-5 of this newsletter and at the conference web site, <http://www.wofford.edu/asle>.

GRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS IN ECOCRITICISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL CREATIVE WRITING

The Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment will honor the best work of graduate students by presenting two awards for papers presented at the 2007 conference. The first of the two graduate student awards will be given for the best scholarly paper in ecocriticism by a graduate student presented at the 2007 conference; the second honors the best work of environmental creative writing (any genre) by a graduate student presented at the 2007 conference. Both categories will be judged by an international panel of judges. Winners must be members of the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment, or an international affiliate of the association, as of June 1, 2007. Both awards include a prize of \$100, publication in ISLE, and inclusion in the conference banquet program.

Papers must be submitted as an email attachment no later than May 18, 2007. Submissions, and any questions, should be sent to tlynch2@unl.edu.



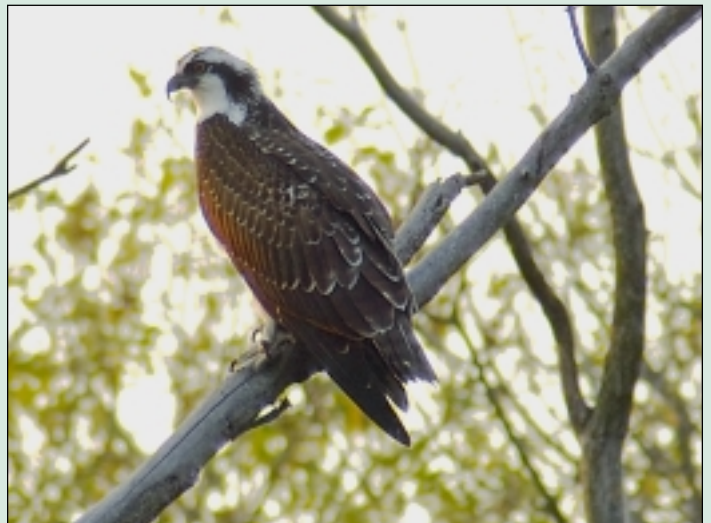
ASLE AWARDS IN ECOCRITICISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL CREATIVE WRITING

The biennial ASLE Book Awards will be presented in two categories: the best book-length monograph of scholarly ecocriticism originally published in 2005 or 2006, and the best book-length publication in any genre of creative writing, with an environmental theme, originally published in 2005 or 2006. Works may be submitted by either the author or publisher, and either must include a letter of nomination detailing why the monograph warrants consideration for the award. Works of narrative scholarship, or works that in other ways blend scholarly criticism with creative writing, can only be submitted in one category. This designation must be indicated in the accompanying nomination letter.

Works for consideration must be written in English, and nominees must be members of the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment, or an international affiliate, as of January 1, 2007. Three copies of the nominated book, and the nomination letter, should be sent to:

Tom Lynch, ASLE Awards Coordinator
Department of English
University of Nebraska, Lincoln
202 Andrews Hall, P.O. Box 880333
Lincoln, NE 68588-0333

Deadline for receipt of all materials is January 1, 2007. Awards will be presented at the conference banquet; both include a prize of \$500 and inclusion in the conference banquet program.



Osprey (Pandion haliaetus), W. C. Sterling State Park, Michigan. Photo by Lewis Ulman.

Calls for Papers, Manuscripts, and Conferences

If you would like to announce a call for papers or a conference of interest in an upcoming issue of *ASLE News*, please contact Rochelle Johnson, Project and Professional Liaison Coordinator, at rjohnson@albertson.edu or 208-459-5894.

Calls for Papers

October 31, 2006. *Writing Landscape: An Interdisciplinary Symposium.* March 19, 2007, Stewart House, University College (London, England). This interdisciplinary one-day symposium will explore the relationship between landscape and creative writing, paying particular attention to the processes of writing and reading. Papers should address one or more of the following themes: the relationship between landscape and writing; ways of understanding the writing process; landscape, literature, and identity; the influence of literary constructions of landscape; the history of literary writing in and about landscape. Send inquiries or abstracts of 300-500 words to Catherine Brace, Dept. of Geography, University of Exeter, Cornwall Campus, Penryn TR10 9EZ, UK (email: cbrace@exeter.ac.uk); or Dr. Adeline Johns-Putra, Department of English, University of Exeter, Cornwall Campus, Penryn TR10 9EZ, UK (email: a.g.johns-putra@exeter.ac.uk).

December 1, 2006. *Literature, Ecocriticism, and Environment.* Panels to be held at the Southwest/Texas Popular & American Culture Associations 28th Annual Conference (Albuquerque, New Mexico) February 14-17, 2007. Send abstract or paper electronically, including email address and affiliation, to Ken Hada, Literature, Ecocriticism, and Environment Chair, at: khada@ecok.edu. For information, visit the conference web site: <http://www.h-net.org/~swpca/>.

December 1, 2006. *The New River Symposium.* May 31-June 2, 2007, Radford University (Radford Virginia). The symposium will celebrate the ecological and social value of the New River, bringing together the river's diverse constituents and providing a forum for partnership, research, and policy development. It will focus on the current state of the New River and on the integration of science, policy, and communities in addressing the problems facing the New River Watershed. Presentations should address a non-specialized audience, working to share information across disciplinary lines. Selected papers will be published in a conference proceedings. Send inquiries or 200-word abstracts and 50-word biographical statements (include email and mailing address) to Rick Van Noy at rvannoy@radford.edu.

December 25, 2006. *ASLE Japan-Korea Joint Symposium. Place, Nature, Language: Thinking about "Now" in Japanese and Korean Environmental Literature.* August 19-21, 2007

(Kanazawa, Japan). ASLE-Japan and ASLE-Korea invite proposals for the joint symposium. Confirmed keynote speakers include Ko Un and Kazue Morisaki. Presentations should approach environmental literature and discourses in Japan and Korea. For detailed symposium and submission information, visit <http://www.asle-japan.org/english/>.

December 31, 2006. *Geography and the Book of Nature: The Natural World in Transition, 1300-1600.* April 14-15, 2007, Hattingen, Germany. As the critical re-assessment of the medieval/early-modern divide is gaining pace, certain questions remain: to what extent were late-medieval readings of the natural world—as the Book of Nature—subjected to the new hermeneutics of reading Scripture? Does the apparent compatibility of verisimilitude in art with traditional allegory yield insights into the changing perception of the natural world? How do map-making and the nascent discipline of cartography address the relationship of humankind with nature? Particularly welcome are papers that pursue these and other questions across and beyond the fields of literary studies, art history, cartography, and history, although presentations from any discipline are invited. Send abstracts not exceeding 300 words for 20-minute papers, including a working title for the proposed paper, contact details, and institutional affiliation, to: book-of-nature-2007@rub.de.

February 15, 2007. *Ecocriticism, Ecofeminism, and Southern Women Writers.* Proposed panel for the Modern Language Association Convention, December, 2007. Send inquiries or 2-4 page proposals for papers exploring matriarchal and indigenous societies, environmental balance, economic and community sustainability, and other issues present in the writing of southern women to Mae Miller Claxton (Western Carolina University) at: mclaxton@email.wcu.edu.

Conferences of Interest

October 20-21, 2006. *Comparative and Interdisciplinary Perspectives on North American Borderlands* (Louisville, Kentucky). The Filson Institute for the Advanced Study of the Ohio Valley and the Upper South will sponsor this conference examining the nature and variety of North American borderlands and their peoples from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Papers will be placed online on the Filson Historical Society's website prior to the conference. For information, contact A.

Glenn Crothers at: Crothers@filsonhistorical.org; or consult the web site at: www.filsonhistorical.org/institute.html.

October 26-27, 2006. *Surrealism and the American West.* Arizona State University, (Tempe, AZ). This meeting will explore the multifaceted Surrealist engagement with the myths, landscapes, and cultures of the American West. For information, visit the conference web site: www.public.asu.edu/~cmesch/SurrWesthome.htm.

November 9-12, 2006. *Engaged Romanticism: Romanticism as Praxis.* The 2006 International Conference on Romanticism, Arizona State University (Tempe, AZ). For information, contact Mark Lussier at: mark.lussier@asu.edu.

November 16-18, 2006. *Food: Representation, Ideology, and Politics.* Centre for Advanced Studies, Department of English, Jadavpur University, (Kolkata, India). This meeting will examine the ideological, political, and social significances of food, including its role in colonization and empire-building. For information, contact Rimi B. Chatterjee at: rimibchatterjee@yahoo.co.in.

November 18, 2006. *Sustainability and the Literary Imagination: Transdisciplinary and Intercultural Perspectives.* Department of English, National Taipei University of Technology (Taipei, Taiwan). Keynote speakers include Greg Garrard and Ursula Heise. For information, contact Hans Bergthaller at: hbergtr@ntut.edu.tw.

December 5-7, 2006. *Nature and Time in Literature and the Visual Arts.* University of Delhi (Delhi, India). This interdisciplinary seminar will explore the conceptualization and representation of nature and time and their interrelationship in literature and the visual arts. For information, contact Shormishtha Panja at: panjashormishtha@yahoo.com.

January 4-7, 2007. *The 3rd International Conference on Environmental, Cultural, Economic, and Social Sustainability.* University of Madras (Chennai, India). This interdisciplinary conference aims to develop an holistic view of sustainability, in which environmental, cultural, and economic issues are inseparably interlinked. For information, visit: <http://www.SustainabilityConference.com>.

February 16-18, 2007. *Live the Life You Have Imagined: Writing, A Sense of Place, and Making a Life in Nature.* 13th Annual Robinson Jeffers Association Conference, University of Hawai'i (Honolulu, HI). Papers will consider the relation between Jeffers, poetry, writing, and crafting a life. Keynote speaker is W.S. Merwin. For information, contact Ron Olowin at: rpolowin@stmarys-ca.edu; or Peter Quigley at: quigleyp@hawaii.edu.

February 19-24, 2007. *Environment: Survival and Sustainability.* Near East University, Northern Cyprus (Turkey). The aim of this conference is to contribute to the worldwide debate and efforts on strengthening the bridge between theory and practice in meeting environmental threats and challenges. Presenters include three Nobel Laureates as well as participants from 75 different countries. For information, contact Dr. Hüseyin Gökçekü_ at css2007@neu.edu.tr or visit the conference web page: www.neuconference.org.

Calls for Manuscripts

October 20, 2006. *Natural Subjectivity.* This forthcoming collection, to be called *Natural Subjectivity: The Textual Making of the Human and/or Natural Subject* (Cambridge Scholars Press) will focus on the textual construction of human, animal, and/or environmental subjectivity/identity. The collection will explore the relation between language (the text, discourse, and/or ideology) and subjectivity or identity both in the human and the natural realm. The collection aims to contribute chiefly to the disciplines of Literary and Environmental Studies. Articles from any theoretical approach and discipline will be welcomed and should focus on the way the text(s) (fiction or not, belonging to any period or cultural tradition) constitutes the human or natural subject/identity in relation to each other. The study should seek to answer these or similar questions: What is subjectivity/identity? What is its relation to the environment? Does subjectivity necessarily imply consciousness and agency? How is the subject constituted within the text on a formal, structural or aesthetic level? Is there any subjectivity achieved outside the text? Is this a speaking subject? What are the consequences of this speech? Is any kind of agency attained through this speech? What is the relationship between the subjective and the objective world? 500-word abstracts for proposed articles should be submitted electronically with a brief professional CV to: p_ferrer72@hotmail.com. Full articles due February, 2007.

February 1, 2007. *Dive In!: Gleaners to the Rescue.* Dumpster diving, food banks, shopping at Goodwill, using material from construction sites, salvaging old tractor parts . . . anything having to do with re-using resources after “the regulars” have gone in – that’s the gist of a new anthology, edited by Laura Pritchett, and to be published as part of the Rocky Mountain Land Library Series. We’re looking for lucid, lively, accessible essays – especially those that discuss the environmental impact of gleaning – what’s being saved, how, and to what effect. We’re interested in encouraging a greater and more mindful awareness of the land, being conscious of our daily choices, and being aware how those choices directly impact the natural

see CFPs on page 14

CFPs continued from page 13

world. Essays can take many forms, including personal stories of gleaning, observations of the best you've seen, ecological musings, and celebrations of the practice of gleaning. They should be between 2,000 - 5,000 words and submitted as email attachments (Word.doc files only, please!). Send questions and submissions to Laura Pritchett at: L_pritchett@msn.com.

April 30, 2007. *Maine's Place in the Environmental Imagination* (Cambridge Scholars Press). Submissions sought for a volume on Maine's unique position in the national environmental imagination, and on the authors who created that position. Possible subjects include Thoreau, Jewett, E.B. White, Henry Beston, Rachel Carson, Ruth Moore and others; possible topics include Maine Gothic, the image of Maine in contemporary literature, and Maine in film. Submit inquiries or abstracts to Michael Burke, University of Maine at Farmington, Farmington, ME 04938 (mdburke@maine.edu). Full articles (10-30 pages) due April 30, 2007.

May 31, 2007. *Essays and Criticism on Contemporary Great Plains/High Plains Poets*. The editors of this proposed collection seek essays and articles about poetry and poets who live in or write about the Great Plains: the geographical area from the Missouri River to the Rocky Mountains, from Texas to the grasslands of Canada. Send inquiries or electronic copies (in the form of Word or RTF files or in the body of an e-mail) of critical essays or articles, along with a short (100-word max.) biographical note, to editors Greg Kosmicki (The Backwaters Press) and Angie Kritenbrink at: greatplainspoetry@gmail.com.

No deadline given. *Approaches to Contemporary American Literature*. Series editors Aliko Varvogli (University of Dundee, UK) and Chris Gair (University of Birmingham, UK) seek proposals for e-books to be included in a new series of approaches to American literature since 1970, which will include environmentally-themed volumes. For more information, visit: www.humanities-ebooks.co.uk; or contact the editors at: a.varvogli@dundee.ac.uk or C.H.GAIR@bham.ac.uk.

No deadline given. *Transformations*. This peer-reviewed interdisciplinary forum for pedagogical scholarship explores intersections of identities, power, and social justice. The journal features a range of approaches, from theoretical articles to creative and experimental accounts of pedagogical innovations, by teachers and scholars from all areas of education. The editors seek original articles and media reviews. For more information, contact: Jacqueline Ellis and Edvige Giunta, Editors, *transformations*, New Jersey City University, Academic Affairs, Hepburn 309, 2039 Kennedy Boulevard, Jersey City, NJ 07305; or visit: www.njcu.edu/assoc/transformations.

ASLE News Notes

ASLE-Canada Chooses a Name

The branch of ASLE forming in Canada has chosen a name, Association for Literature, Environment and Culture in Canada / Association pour la littérature, l'environnement, et la culture au Canada, or ALECC. A committee has formed to draft bylaws, and once they have been ratified a call for nominations to form an executive body will follow.

ASLE Emeritus

Each issue, *ASLE News* honors those ASLE members retiring from teaching. If you would like to acknowledge someone in this new feature—or if you yourself will be retiring during the 2006-2007 academic year—please contact Kathryn Miles (kmiles@unity.edu). We will include a very brief account of the institutions of employment and years taught in an upcoming newsletter.

Graduate Student Liaison Needed

The executive council currently has an opening for one graduate student liaison. The ASLE graduate liaison is a two-year term that begins immediately. Interested graduate students should send a c.v. and letter of application explaining their experience with ASLE, why they want to be a liaison, and what they bring to the position to Ann Fisher-Wirth (afwirth@olemiss.edu) by 31 October 2006.

On-line Databases

The ASLE graduate student committee maintains two databases on the organization's web page: "dissertations in progress" and "Syllabi in Literature and Environment." If you are interested in contributing to either, please contact Tom Hillard (thillard@email.arizona.edu).

Host an Upcoming ASLE Function

Interested in hosting the biannual conference in 2009, 2011, or 2013? Want to propose an off-year symposium? ASLE wants to hear from you! Please consult the "Guidelines for Conference Proposals" on the ASLE web site (www.asle.umn.edu) and submit your proposal.

Mentoring Program

ASLE is currently seeking faculty willing to serve as mentors for ASLE's graduate student mentoring program. If you are interested in participating, please contact program coordinator Mark Long (mlong@keene.edu).

Online Bibliography Now Includes Abstracts of Dissertations

Imagine receiving regular, annotated notices of the books, essays, journal articles, films, artworks, TV shows, magazine articles, and newspaper articles related to literature and environment studies that ASLE members have been reading and viewing. It is possible with the ASLE Online Bibliography, which as of this writing contains 1,088 entries submitted by members.

The ASLE Bibliography depends upon your submissions to develop a bibliographical resource that reflects the interests, commitments, and critical perspectives of ASLE members. Anyone with access to the World Wide Web (whether at home, at work, at a public library, or wherever) can contribute entries and search the bibliography. Please join your fellow ASLE members in building this community resource! And as always, we welcome your suggestions for improving the bibliography.

This past summer, ASLE also began actively soliciting **abstracts of dissertations** in the field of literature and environment studies, broadly conceived. We welcome entries for dissertations in progress and completed. For more information on contributing a dissertation abstract, contact Tom Hillard (thillard@email.arizona.edu). To view the dissertation abstracts currently available in the bibliography, point your Web browser to the following address (don't forget the period after "Diss."): <http://www.biblioserver.com/asle/index.php?m=search&id=&ftype=data&q=Diss>.

Abstracts of presentations at the ASLE conference held at the University of Oregon June 21-25, 2005 are also available. To learn more about searching or contributing to the bibliography, point your Web browser to the ASLE Online Bibliography information website at:

<http://www.english.osu.edu/organizations/asle/>

or the bibliography search engine at:

<http://www.biblioserver.com/asle/>

The next time you read a good book or article, see a film, or visit an online site that might benefit ASLE members' and friends' teaching and research—or the next time you respond to a bibliographic question on the ASLE listserv—please consider contributing a bibliographic entry, accompanied by a brief abstract, to the bibliography. It is easy, and your contribution will be available to all via the Web within a day or two. *If every ASLE member contributed just one entry in 2007, the size of the online bibliography would double.*

The value of the bibliography to ASLE increases along with the number of entries it contains and the number of people whose reading in the field it reflects. Thanks!

—Lewis Ulman, ASLE Bibliographer
ulman.l@osu.edu



Interested in Literature and the Environment?

Join ASLE!

If you are not a current member of ASLE but would like to join, or you need to renew your membership, you can download the application form at <http://www.asle.umn/about/member.html> or email us at asle.us@verizon.net to have one sent. Current yearly membership rates are based on annual income and range from \$20-\$80 a year. ASLE members receive: 2 issues per year of the journal *ISLE*, 2 issues per year of the online newsletter *ASLE News*, the *ASLE Membership Directory*, access to collegial conversations and networking on the ASLE-sponsored listservs, graduate student mentoring, and lots of opportunities to meet new colleagues and friends at fun and engaging conferences and symposia! Membership forms should be sent to:

Amy McIntyre, Managing Director
ASLE
P.O. Box 502
Keene, NH 03431-0502

Welcome, OSLE!

ASLE Peer Institution Gets Start In India

The Organization for Studies in Literature and Environment India (OSLE India) formally incorporated at a recent organizational meeting. The group met regularly for the past two years as an informal body and now begins its first year as an official organization.

OSLE-India owes its origin to a postgraduate ecocritical course (now called 'ecoliterature'), which the Department of English, Madras Christian College, Chennai, has been offering for the past twenty years. With a view to strengthening this course, the department conducted an international conference on ecocriticism in collaboration with the Indian Association for Studies in Contemporary Literature (IASCL), and the World Association for Studies in Literature in English (WASLE) on the 20th and 21st of December, 2004, in Chennai. This conference clearly showed the growing interest and involvement in ecocriticism in the Indian Academy.

OSLE promotes ecocriticism in India by providing a platform for academic interaction between scholars from literature and other relevant disciplines, especially, between the humanities and sciences. The forum is a national body that will coordinate the ecocritical work in India through its regional coordinators from several parts of the country. Since the promotion of this current critical approach depends, to a very large extent, on

effective pedagogy, the forum will also address its pedagogic aspects. Besides a cognitive grasp of the subject, a feeling for it and also a strong conviction about its significance are necessary.

To meet these ends, the forum will encourage creative engagement with ecological concerns. Accordingly, artistic representations of ecocritical issues and concepts will also be promoted from time to time. Though the forum will take up all aspects of ecocriticism for discussion and appreciation, it will pay special attention to contextual and relevant ecological concerns. Periodic conferences, workshops, and special lectures will bring the scholars together to realize the objectives of the forum. The forum will also offer consultancy, guidance and resources especially to the researchers in the field. The chief organ of the forum will be a newsletter.

The first international conference of OSLE-India (organized along with Loyola College at Chennai) was held in September of this year. The theme of the conference was 'Ecology and Culture: Interdisciplinary Approaches'. About 75 papers were presented in three parallel sessions.

— *Nirmal Selvamony*



Daybreak along Lake Michigan shore, D. H. Day Rustic Campground, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Michigan. Photo by Lewis Ulman.

Notes from Pondicherry: ASLE-India Reports on Its First International Conference

The International Conference on Nature and Human Nature: Land, Landscape and Cultural Constructions of the Environment was held at Pondicherry University from the 21st to 23rd September, 2006.

This Conference (the first International Conference of ASLE India) was jointly hosted by the Department of English at Pondicherry. It sought to foreground and close-examine the intimate relations and biological ties existing between Literature and the Environment; thus, the major concern of the Conference was the living connection between nature and the human being.

The Conference initiated a lot of interest in this relevant and emerging field of ecological criticism among academics and environmental activists alike, and the active participation of delegates from all over India, as well as from the USA, Taiwan and Australia, made it lively and intellectually stimulating. On the whole over seventy papers were presented in fourteen workshop sessions over three days. Keynote presenters included Manoj Das, renowned Indian writer and Scott Slovic, professor at the University of Nevada at Reno. Workshop papers ranged from theoretical issues to specific reading of texts and discourses drawn from a variety of fields—tribal, folk, mainstream and marginal. The papers also represented a wealth of disciplines spanning the sciences, the humanities, and the social sciences. This diversity ushered in broad and multiple frameworks of understanding, thus underscoring the need for a recognition of difference and plurality of vision and perception.

A General Body Meeting of ASLE-India was held in the afternoon of the second day and many new members were admitted. The existing executive committee was also enlarged by co-opting newer members unanimously selected. With a view to enlarging the sphere of activities of the association, smaller regional bodies were also identified in the four zones—North, East, West and South— and representatives were also nominated for the same.

ASLE-India is intended as a national forum for the collective understanding of the intimate relations and biological ties existing between literature, art, culture and the Environment.

We recognize the global dimensions of ecological and environmental concerns, and at the same time are equally sensitive to the local and the regional. Literary and artistic productions by virtue of what they are reflect the deeper cultural preoccupations of a people, and the ecological constitutes a holistic perception. Eco-aesthetics and environmental aesthetics could lead us towards a collective understanding of human and non-human-nature interface. To that end, ASLE-India works towards a national awareness of these issues, recognizing fully well the diversities, differences and dissimilarities often inherent in such broader concerns.

ASLE-India hopes also to work in tandem with other similar organizations and collectives.

— *Dr. Murali Sivaramakrishnan*



Trumpeter Swan (Ólor buccinátor), Seney National Wildlife Refuge, Michigan. Photo by Lewis Ulman.

Notes from the ASLE-UK Biennial Conference

Discordant Harmonies: Ecocriticism in the 21st Century

Hosted by Rupert Hildyard and the University of Lincoln, 8-10 September 2006, and attended by 53 delegates from 11 different countries, this conference generated lively debate driven by an increasing sense of the urgency of ecological crisis. Plenaries from Karla Armbruster (Vice-President, ASLE US) and John Simons (University of Lincoln), focussing respectively on Graham Swift's postmodern novel *Waterland* and the swans that live on the Brayford Pool beside the university. Both raised questions about the signification of English nature in the conference's local landscape of water-drained land. (The alienation inherent in Fenland industrial agriculture was revealed by a Canon of the Diocese of Lincoln, buying ecocritical books at a break, revealing that he had dealt with three farm suicides in the last two weeks.) Ursula Heise (USA) gave a brilliant overview of the tensions between different conceptions of the local and the global in a plenary drawing from her forthcoming book *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet*. Dana Phillips (USA) unpacked the layers of a place, beginning from a haiku hidden on a boulder in the Gunpowder River in Maryland, seen only by fishermen who stood at a particular point in an idyllic river that was actually a controlled habitat between two power dams. The audience discussed the elements and ethics to be foregrounded in the intersection of this text and this place, together with the most viable frameworks for such a discussion.

On the opening afternoon of the conference Greg Garrard (Chair, ASLE UK) invited delegates to turn their attention to the apparently neglected field of pedagogy, as did two panels of papers. Greg sent conference members away into groups where a tutor led discussion of a text in order to discover whether it was possible to find common elements, or even principles, of



*Dunes trail, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Michigan.
Photo by Lewis Ulman.*

ecocritical teaching methods. A plenary feedback from groups suggested that there might be an ecocritical pedagogical methodology and participants were asked to return a questionnaire for Greg's nationally funded research project in Education for Sustainable Development.

Two panels on contemporary, mostly British, fiction balanced the more familiar ecocritical emphasis on poetry and nature writing, and suggested that the current vitality of the British novel deserves the attention of ecocritics. Martin Ryle notably identified consciousness of the 'contradictory co-existence, within overdeveloped societies, of widespread 'green' sympathies alongside ecocidal ways of life' as the litmus test of environmentally aware contemporary writing - and of ecocriticism - in his paper on Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* and Ali's *The Accidental*.

Papers on Humans and Animals were another strong presence at the conference and produced lively debate inside and outside the panels, bringing together critics from the environmentalist tradition with those from the field of animal studies - groups that, as one speaker pointed out, often, in Britain at least, seem curiously divorced from each other despite their obvious common and deeply felt concerns. Canadian writing, ecocritical theory, the body, film and television, visual culture, *Silent Spring*, Ted Hughes and urban ecocriticism were all also well represented.

The conference closed with the now traditional plenary address from Richard Kerridge who began by noting the almost 'jaunty' tone of current warnings about the extremity of our environmental crisis by writers like Fred Pierce, (*The Last Generation*) and George Monbiot (*Heat*). Against this tone he recorded his own sense of nausea as the father of two young children who would experience the consequences of our failure to respond adequately to global warming. Richard commended a possible way forward for ecocriticism by engaging with its new positioning as a current mode of biosemiotics in Wendy Wheeler's recent book *The Whole Creature*, introduced in her paper earlier in the conference. Nature, through ecocriticism, might be providing us with the tools to confront our increasingly hard choices. Richard's concluding critique of Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Hungry Tide* countered a fictional happy ending with the knowledge that the fiction's location on the coast of SE India would disappear under rising sea levels. Those of us who, at the end of the conference, walked out of Lincoln along the banks of the Foss (a Roman waterway) to a waterside pub, were left to reconsider our lifestyles and professional practices in the apparent timelessness and tranquillity of an English late summer evening.

— Terry Gifford

ASLE Bookshelf

The following works were recently published by ASLE members. If we've missed your publication, please send bibliographic information to Kathryn Miles at kmiles@unity.edu.

Burke, Michael. *The Same River Twice: A Boatman's Journey Home*. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 2006.

Bryson, Scott. *The West Side of Any Mountain: Place, Space, and Eco-poetry*. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 2005.

Gersdorf, Catrin and Sylvia Mayer, eds. *Nature in Literary and Cultural Studies: Transatlantic Conversations on Ecocriticism*. Amsterdam: Rodopi P, 2006.

Gould, Rebecca Kneale. *At Home in Nature: Modern Home-steading and Spiritual Practice in America*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2005.



Gray, Timothy. *Gary Snyder and the Pacific Rim: Creating Countercultural Community*. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 2006.

Mansfield, Howard, ed. *Where the Mountain Stands Alone: Stories of Place in the Monadnock Region*. Lebanon, NH: UP New England, 2006.

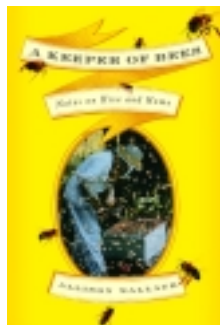
Mayer, Sylvia and Wilson, Graham (Eds). *Ecodidactic Perspectives on English Language, Literatures and Cultures*. Trier: WVT, 2006.

Oates, David. *City Limits: Walking Portland's Boundary*. Corvallis: Oregon State UP, 2006.

Simo, Melanie. *Literature of Place: Dwelling on the Land before Earth Day 1970*. Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 2005.

Spring, Barbara. *Sophia's Lost and Found: Poems of Above and Below*. Frederick, MD: PublishAmerica, 2006.

Waage, Fred. *The Crucial Role of the Environment in the Writings of George Stewart (1895-1980): A Life of America's Literary Ecologist*. Lewistown, NY: Edwin Mellen P, 2006.



Wallace, Allison. *A Keeper of Bees: Notes on Hive and Home*. NY: Random House, 2006.

Wilson, Thomas M. *The Recurrent Green Universe of John Fowles*. NY: Rodopi P, 2006.



Sustaining Members

Bruce Allen
Michael P. Branch
Katherine (Kate) R. Chandler
Laird Christensen
J. Gerard Dollar
Ellen Goldey
Ursula K. Heise
Richard Hunt
John Knott
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With your support, ASLE publishes a biannual journal (ISLE), a newsletter, and a membership directory, sponsors regular symposia, and hosts a conference every other year.

Much of this work is accomplished through your membership contributions and the members who volunteer their time to serve the organization.

Your contributions support ASLE's operating costs. If you consider the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment to be one of your primary intellectual and creative homes, please consider joining your friends and colleagues listed here by giving at the Sustaining (\$100+) or Patron (\$150+) level.

ASLE-Affiliated Organizations

ASLE is affiliated with a number of other professional organizations, and as such regularly organizes panels at the annual conferences and meetings of these groups. These organizations and their ASLE liaison contacts are listed below, as well as specific information on upcoming panels if known.

American Literature Association (ALA)

ASLE sponsors a panel at each annual meeting of the ALA. For more information, contact Rochelle Johnson, Albertson College of Idaho (rjohnson@albertson.edu).

American Studies Association (ASA), The Environment and Culture Caucus (ECC)

Each ASA conference includes a meeting of the ECC. For more information, contact: Joni Adamson (jadamson@u.arizona.edu) or Adam Sweeting (sweeting@bsu.edu).

Conference on College and Composition & Communication (CCCC/4Cs) “Ecomposition Special Interest Group”

The annual CCCC also includes meetings for the Ecomposition Special Interest Group. For more information, contact Anthony Lioi (lioi@mit.edu).

Midwest Modern Language Association (M/MLA)

ASLE is an affiliated organization of the M/MLA and, as such, hosts one panel each year at the M/MLA meeting. For more information, contact Tom Dean (thomas-k-dean@uiowa.edu).

Modern Language Association (MLA)

ASLE is an affiliated organization of the MLA and, as such, hosts two panels each year at the MLA meeting. For more information, contact Sarah McFarland (sarah.mcfarland@earthlink.net).

Northeast Modern Language Association (NEMLA)

ASLE is an affiliated organization of NEMLA and, as such, hosts at least one panel each year at the NEMLA meeting. For more information, contact Mark Long (mlong@keene.edu).

Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association (PAMLA)

ASLE is an affiliated organization of PAMLA and, as such, hosts a session titled “Literary Natures” at the annual meetings of PAMLA. For more information, visit the PAMLA website (<http://www.pamla.org/>).

Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association (RMMLA)

ASLE is an affiliated organization of RMMLA and, as such, hosts one panel each year at the RMMLA meeting. For more information, contact Rochelle Johnson (rjohnson@albertson.edu).

Society of Early Americanists (SEA)

ASLE is an affiliated organization of SEA and, as such, hosts one panel at the biennial SEA meetings. For more information, contact Michael Ziser (mgziser@ucdavis.edu).

Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts (SLSA)

Frequently, the SLSA conference features literary-environmental panels. For more information, contact Stacy Alaimo (ALAIMO@UTA.EDU).

Society for the Study of American Women Writers (SSAWW)

With the Society of Early Americanists (SEA), ASLE will co-sponsor two sessions at the biennial meeting of the Society for the Study of American Women Writers (SSAWW), which will be held in Philadelphia from November 8-11, 2006. Presenters include Lisa Logan (University of Central Florida), Annie Merrill Ingram (Davidson College), Spencer Schaffner (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign), Lisa May Giles (Brandies University), Corinne Kopicik (Georgia State University), and Susan Hall (Cornell University). For more information, contact the panel chair: Rochelle Johnson, Albertson College of Idaho (rjohnson@albertson.edu) or Zabelle Stodola (zkstodola@ulr.edu).