



The Association  
for the Study of  
**Literature &  
Environment**



# ASLE News

Fall 2009

A Quarterly Publication of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment

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## ASLE Bookshelf

The following works were recently published by ASLE

## Fall is Election Time for ASLE Candidates

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. Once again, we have a fantastic slate of candidates whose statements are printed below.

As instituted in 2008, this year the election will primarily be an online voting process. To cast your vote, login at the ASLE website as a member with your email and password at <https://www.asle.org/site/members/login/>. Once you are logged in, you will see a link in the right hand column under the heading "2009 Election for Vice President and Executive Council" that says "Cast Your Vote." Click on this link and the slate of candidates will appear and you can make your selections. There is also a link to review the same candidate statements published below. The secure system will insure that each member can vote only once.

Online voting will begin immediately and will close at 11pm EST on December 1, 2009. If you would like a paper ballot sent to you, or have questions about online voting, please contact Amy McIntyre at [info@asle.org](mailto:info@asle.org) or 603-357-7411.

Read the statements from our candidates for vice president and executive council below, make your selections, and vote online or send your paper ballot--**postmarked by December 1, 2009**--to:

Karla Armbruster  
Webster University, English Dept.  
470 E. Lockwood Avenue  
St. Louis, MO 63119-3194



*Rhododendron maximum*, Rhododendron State Park, Fitzwilliam, NH. Photo by Bill Stroup.

## Candidates for Vice President

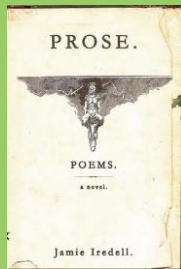
(vote for one)

### Ursula Heise, Stanford University

It's hard to imagine a more exciting request than to be asked to run for Vice President of ASLE. As our field is being recognized and integrated into the curricula, faculty searches and

members. If we've missed your publication, or if you have a newly published work you'd like to have included in the next ASLE News, please send bibliographic information to Catherine Meeks ([catherine-meeks@utc.edu](mailto:catherine-meeks@utc.edu)).

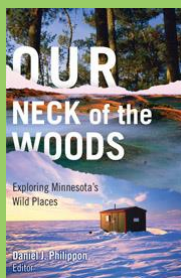
Fromm, Harold. *The Nature of Being Human: From Environmentalism to Consciousness*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009.



Iredell, Jamie. *Prose: Poems, a Novel*. St. Charles, IL: Orange Alert Press, 2009.

Johnson, Rochelle. *Passions for Nature: Nineteenth-Century America's Aesthetics of Alienation*. Athens: UGA Press, 2009

McFarland, Sarah E. and Ryan Hediger. *Animals and Agency: An Interdisciplinary Exploration*. Brill, 2009.



Philpott, Daniel J., ed. *Our Neck of the Woods: Exploring Minnesota's Wild Places*.

institutional profiles of literature departments around the US and overseas, we face new possibilities and challenges. Here are some of the initiatives I'd like to explore if elected:

- Given the somewhat uncertain future of literary studies, I'd like to think about how ecocriticism's interdisciplinary profile can help to reinvigorate the discipline, and how we can envision our own work in the larger context of Environmental Humanities, including environmental anthropology, history and philosophy.

- In a wider interdisciplinary context, I believe one central task remains: the interface with the natural sciences. I'd like to explore ways in which we can show natural scientists how the study of culture is relevant and important to their study of nature, and I'm eager to enhance ASLE's visibility to ecologists and biologists.

- Over the last few years, ecocriticism has expanded from its original North American focus to include comparative and postcolonial dimensions. Fostering different local, regional, national and transnational perspectives and connections remains an important challenge, along with the need to include in our work environmentalisms, in the plural, that are inflected by vastly different cultural assumptions and socio-economic contexts. Translating theories of transnationalism, globalization, human rights, and environmental justice into our organizational practice means, for me, continuing to seek out and engage with voices from around the world.

- There's been a lot of debate in the environmentalist movement recently about whether some of the thought and writing that the movement has relied on since the 1960s need to be reconceived. As experts on narrative and imagery, ASLE members are in a privileged position to clarify what's at stake in holding on to or letting go of particular stories and metaphors, and which ones might be most useful for the future. One of our most exciting tasks will be to envision the future of environmentalisms.

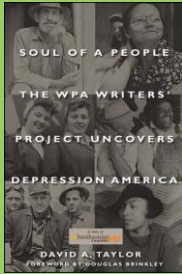
My interest in these issues comes from several sources. Growing up in Germany and studying Spanish, Latin American, French and Japanese literature have made me aware that we cannot take assumptions about nature, wildness, agriculture, animals, or the human body for granted across cultures, and that we need to know cultural differences both for their own sake and to make our activism effective. More informally, encounters with birds at home and in the wild have turned my conceptions of animals upside down, and led to a deep interest in animal cognition and communication (Critical Animal Studies remain a vibrant focus of interest). It was the combination of these interests that led me to ecocriticism and to ASLE in the late 1990s.

I currently teach in the Department of English at Stanford University and direct the graduate Program in Modern Thought & Literature. I'm also affiliated with the undergraduate Program in Science, Technology, and Society, the Interdisciplinary Program in Environment and Resources, and the Woods Institute for the Environment. In these settings, I've worked to establish connections between humanist research and environmentalist perspectives, have created eco-focused classes, and raised funds for initiatives and fellowships in Environmental Humanities. I've also worked for the inclusion of environmentalist viewpoints in other professional contexts such as the American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA), the Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present (ASAP), the Society for Literature, Science and the Arts (SLSA) and the PMLA Advisory Board. It'd be a great pleasure and an exciting challenge to continue this work in ASLE at the institutional core of environmental literary studies.

### Laura Dassow Walls, University of South Carolina

Ecocriticism in its various forms has always been at the center of my career, and today I believe we are on the leading edge of the most exciting moment since the founding of environmental literature over 200 years ago. First, ecocriticism is now in a deepening conversation with philosophy, environmental history, and science studies, opening new ways to make nature "matter" in literature. We are forging new theories, new conceptual grounds, new genres and ways of writing for and about an endangered world. Second, today "nature" matters more than ever. The present reality of climate change shatters centuries of Western metaphysical dualism: where can we now draw the line separating humans from nature? Worse, if our most daily, mundane actions contribute to ending life as we know it, how then shall we live? What must we do? How do we teach, write, think, in this emergent world? Apocalyptic thinking has returned as a driving force in our politics, literature, and culture. We in ASLE are on the front lines of this future, and we--the writers, artists, and teachers, the ones

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.



Taylor, David A. *Soul of a People: The WPA Writers' Project Uncovers Depression America*. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley and Sons, 2009. A companion documentary with the same title appeared on the *Smithsonian* in September.

## ASLE Seeks Graduate Student Liaison

We are currently seeking a new Graduate Student Liaison (GSL) for a two-year term. GSLs perform a vital service within ASLE by representing the interests and concerns of graduate students at meetings of the Executive Council, and they work closely with ASLE's Graduate Mentoring Program Coordinator in shared pursuit of this goal. During the second-year of the GSLs two-year term, the GSL also has voting rights within the Executive Council. For a full description of GSL rights and responsibilities, see the website at

<http://www.asle.org/site/about/policies/liasons/>.

who have been paying attention all along to sky and land and water--must think creatively about meeting the wilder world ahead of us. We are the ones who know how to communicate love and urgency, whether in polemics or poetry, sober analyses or ecstatic song. The time for elegies is passing. The time now is for instilling resilience, for making sure that humans remain part of the dance of the cosmos.

My life has been lived on the cusp of this change. I was born in an Alaskan fishing village, grew up on the once-wooded outskirts of Seattle, and worked as a wildlife and botanical illustrator while earning my graduate degrees in English at the University of Washington in Seattle, then at Indiana University in Bloomington. (How I would love to help bring ASLE to my alma mater for our 2011 conference!) After teaching for twelve years at Lafayette College, I joined the faculty of the University of South Carolina, where I have fought to create a place for the environmental humanities. My books have focused on Thoreau (*Seeing New Worlds*), Emerson (*Emerson's Life in Science: The Culture of Truth*), and Alexander von Humboldt (*The Passage to Cosmos*), in whom I have traced a deep tradition that braids together nature, poetry, and ethics, a legacy passed to us from poets and scientists who rewrote the dualism of science and literature into a complex weave of ecological thought. I believe this is a paradigm shift so tremendous that it is still in the making, and I am working to connect literature and science studies into a new vision for ecocriticism. I tell my students that in this unprecedented age, the "anthropocene," environmental thinking needs every one of them, for all our inherited knowledge must be renovated and renewed in its light. I pledge to work to help realize ASLE's exciting new strategic plan, and to reach out to our allies in environmental history and philosophy, historical ecology, science studies, literary and cultural studies and critical theory. We need to enhance student participation, bolster efforts on campuses across the nation to found and sustain the environmental humanities, and join our voices to those of our colleagues across the planet, of all races and nations. In the global debates of our time, it is we who must be voices for the local, to insist that the local becomes a *cause for thinking* the global, and thus articulate the multiple and divergent worlds that compose the cosmos, the world we all hold in common.

## Candidates for Executive Council

(vote for no more than two)

### Greta Gaard, University of Wisconsin-River Falls

When my partner and I camped in the foothills outside of Fort Collins in 1992, I felt delicious excitement in combining nights under the open sky with days at a professional conference--wearing the same set of clothing. *This is it!*, I thought; the eco-kids are finally drawing a new map.

So I was happily surprised to be nominated to run for the Executive Council, since my standpoint works at the margins--as an ecofeminist, a bisexual, a direct action eco-activist in professorial drag. Although I co-founded the Diversity Caucus in 1999 at Kalamazoo, organized conference panels and edited books, I never contemplated serving in the leadership of an academic organization. Until now.

ASLE faces an exciting future: issues of climate justice, food and water democracy, ecological culture-building and sustainability have never been more urgent. ASLE's international branches are already communicating ecocritical values across the boundaries of discipline, culture, nation, and wealth. Our studies of literature, composition, rhetoric and culture can be energized by these alliances, and our scholarship has the real potential to influence the future of sustainability.

My work is part of this process: it includes *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature* (1993), *Ecofeminist Literary Criticism* (1998), *Ecological Politics: Ecofeminists and the Greens* (1998) and *The Nature of Home* (2007). My courses on EcoComposition and Environmental Justice, like my presentations on World Food Day and World Agribusiness, participate in "culture-jamming," raising critical debate about environmental beliefs and behaviors. Through teaching a graduate seminar on Ecofeminist Literary Criticism at Tamkang University in Taiwan, and

If you would like to be considered for a GSL position, please submit a formal letter of application to current president Dan Philippon at [danp@umn.edu](mailto:danp@umn.edu) by November 1 for a term beginning in January, 2009. Please include a statement of interest that describes your specific interests in serving ASLE, the length and nature of your involvement in the organization, a description of your professional interests (particularly as they connect to literature and environment), and the names and contact information of three faculty references.

## Ways to Donate to ASLE

Though our self-imposed October 1 deadline for submitting pledges to the ASLE Strategic Plan fundraising campaign has officially passed, we will of course still happily accept your donations!

Remember that a donation to ASLE is tax deductible, and that your pledge card contains options to spread out any contribution over months or years, so that the financial impact on your budget can easily be minimized. If you have made a verbal pledge but not yet sent in your pledge card, please do so soon so we can count your pledge officially in our efforts. A full report of donors and dollars raised will

participating in ecocritical conferences at Tsinghua University in Beijing and Hacettepe University in Turkey, I am part of ASLE's movement toward international ecocritical exchange.

I am committed to helping ASLE continue to develop in ways that enact our shared commitment to sustainability, justice, intellectual and ecological health.

### Richard Hunt, Potomac State College

Once upon a time, I graduated from the University of Nevada-Reno's Literature and the Environment Program in May 2000 and set out on what has become an unorthodox career path; after stops in several other places, I now teach at Potomac State College, a two-year division of West Virginia University. Throughout my peripatetic career, my consistent academic home has been ASLE, which I joined in the summer of 1993. I have been involved in all of our conferences since the first one, presenting papers both scholarly and creative, and playing music late into the night.

I am particularly interested in two new areas of interest that have arisen as both the conference and the organization have grown. First, from within ASLE, it's sometimes easy to imagine that we will always be able to teach our passions, to offer those dream courses we hear about in conference sessions. My own experience suggests otherwise, though. Indeed, in the current economic era programs seem more likely to disappear than to emerge. I would like to have a part in ASLE's response to such shrinkage.

Second, I want to enhance the opportunities for undergrads to participate in ASLE. Like many of us, I teach in a school without graduate programs. The shape of my career has led me to teach mostly composition, with a few general lit courses thrown in. This spring, I will present my college's initial course in Environmental Lit. Over the years, I have seen several bright undergrads develop a strong interest in environmental literature--one even presented a fine paper in Eugene. I would like to see ASLE include more such promising young scholars into our overall conversation.

I am honored to be considered for a position that will allow me to give something back to a group that has long given so much to me.

### Paul Outka, Florida State University

ASLE has been central to my scholarly identity and teaching for almost a decade. In addition to publishing an essay on Whitman in *ISLE* in 2005, I have given papers at the 2003 ASLE convention in Boston, the 2003 MLA as part of an ASLE-sponsored panel, and the 2007 American Literature Association as part of the "Ecocriticism on the Edge" panel. In Victoria, I gave a paper and chaired the "African Americans and Ecocriticism" panel, and was profoundly honored to be awarded ASLE's 2009 ecocriticism prize for my book, *Race and Nature from Transcendentalism to the Harlem Renaissance*. The book focuses on the intersections between racial self-construction and natural experience in American literature and culture. I have also designed and taught courses on American literary environmentalism at two small public liberal arts colleges--New College of Florida and the University of Maine at Farmington--and at the graduate level at Florida State, a large public research university where I currently serve as an Assistant Professor.

My diverse teaching experience and scholarly focus on race and the environment would, I hope, be helpful in bridging the many communities that comprise ASLE, as well as reaching out to new ones. If I am fortunate enough to be elected to the EC I would concentrate on expanding ASLE's outreach in three ways: first, by working to further include African American and other long-marginalized voices in the discussion and in the membership; second, by increasing the long-term centrality of ecocritical perspectives in contemporary academic discourse by attracting more professors from graduate institutions and more graduate students from a wider variety of programs; and, third, by seeking ways ASLE might become a more effective public advocate for environmental concerns. It would be an honor and privilege to work toward these goals on the Executive Council.

### Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands, York University

As far as formal literary studies go, I remain something of an outsider despite 15 years of working in environmental humanities in an interdisciplinary Faculty of Environmental Studies. My graduate training was in social/political theory, and my trek toward ecocriticism took me on



appear in the Winter 2010 issue of ASLE News.

Many ASLE members publish books of creative and scholarly work, fiction and nonfiction. Some ASLE members (including Tom Lynch, see this issue's [Member News](#) section) have recently come forward with an innovative way to give to ASLE: donate the royalties from your titles to us! Please contact Amy McIntyre, [info@asle.org](mailto:info@asle.org), for more information on how to set up such an arrangement with your publisher.

## Members Write

ASLE News wants to include your voices! We invite members to write 100-200 words in response to a word, phrase, or question that we will print in each issue of ASLE News. Selected responses will then be published in the next issue. (Readers of *The Sun* magazine will recognize this feature as similar to their always fascinating "Readers Write.") Be sure to read [Jamie Barber's take on "Migration"](#) published in this issue!

For the Winter 2010 *Members Write*, respond to the following word:

**"Heal"**

Please send responses either in the body of an e-mail or as an attachment to Catherine

a hilly route through environmental philosophy, history, and ecocultural studies before depositing me at ASLE in Boston in 2003. I am committed to "the study of the relationship between literature and the environment," as Cheryl Glotfelty so generously put it, but much as I love texts themselves, there is enough social theorist in me to want to probe the *relationship* part: What does *literature* offer environmental studies? How do specific literary and critical works/acts reflect, negotiate, and/or disrupt their (capitalist) eco-cultural contexts? How do we speak, as a *body* of scholars, writers, and activists, about these relationships? These are the questions, then, that I offer as the basis of my service to this vital organization.

ASLE has abundantly welcomed my and other "outsiders" questions (as has ALECC, of which I am also a member), which is why I consider it such an important scholarly and professional home. Indeed, as an interdisciplinary--and, as a result of many people's hard work, increasingly international and demographically/ecopolitically multiple--organization, ASLE faces a challenge. The diversity of our commitments to ecocriticism (what Buell has wonderfully called our "concourse of discrepant practices") demands, I think, a *collective* conversation about what it is that we are doing, how, and why. If outreach and inclusiveness are key trajectories for ASLE (which they must be), then how can we use our multiple social, national, (inter-) disciplinary, institutional/political locations to deepen through conversation, as well as broaden through diversification, our ecocritical projects? I look forward to negotiating such questions toward Bloomington in 2011 and beyond.

### Julianne Warren, New York University

ASLE is the prime organization that brings together people from many fields who are engaged in probing and stimulating understandings of art and nature. If our efforts are to be truly helpful, it is critical that our narratives reflect our most substantiated ecological understandings as well as our highest ideals. As a member of the Executive Council I would bring to the service of ASLE my training as an ecologist. I also would bring my experience as author of an intellectual biography of the conservation thinker Aldo Leopold, most known for his writings on human moral and ecological relationships with the rest of nature. Additionally, I have helped plan cross-boundary symposia and meetings, hoping to aid in making the most of the work of institutions with some shared core interests, including ASLE, the Ecological Society of America, the Society for Conservation Biology, and the American Society for Environmental History. I would like to continue promoting joint efforts. Finally, as a faculty member of New York University and an outdoor enthusiast, I also would offer a viewpoint that stresses urban, rural, and wilderness interconnectedness. It would be an honor to serve on the Executive Council.

### Karl Zuelke, College of Mount St. Joseph

I began my undergraduate career as a biology major and ran into trouble when faced with studying things like statistical genetics, those byzantine biochemical pathways, and all that Latin nomenclature. I suppose I was expecting something more like collecting butterflies (one of my nerdy boyhood passions). I switched to English and thrived, but I couldn't leave the love of nature behind, readopting the biology major as well as keeping English and ultimately understanding how fascinating life science is in all its facets. I've been exploring the overlap between nature and literature ever since, discovering literary nature writing while earning an MFA at Indiana University, finally completing a dissertation on nature and science writing at the University of Cincinnati. Now I direct the writing center and teach writing and literature at the College of Mount St. Joseph, in Cincinnati. I presented my first conference paper at the 1997 ASLE conference in Missoula. I knew right away I had discovered something special when I met such a gathering of like-minded people. Most of the ASLE folks I've come to know express that same feeling, that we are *really* onto something here. Since Missoula, ASLE has had a growing effect on my personal and professional life. It informs the opinions I share with my friends and colleagues, the material I present to my students, the directions my scholarly and creative work take, and my commitment to environmental justice.

So I would cherish the opportunity to serve everyone associated with ASLE by becoming a member of the Executive Council. As might be suspected from my background, I hold interdisciplinary perspectives in high esteem, and I fully expect that an interdisciplinary approach to literature and environment studies will continue. I'm ready to add my voice to ASLE's chorus of guiding spirits.

Meeks at [catherine-meeks@utc.edu](mailto:catherine-meeks@utc.edu).

## ASLE PhD

**Sarah Wald** received her PhD in American Civilization from Brown University. The Brown Graduate School awarded her dissertation, "The Nature of Citizenship: Race, Citizenship and Nature in Representations of Californian Agricultural Labor," the Joukowsky Family Foundation Outstanding Dissertation Award. Ralph E. Rodriguez and Arlene R. Keizer directed the dissertation. Karl Jacoby and Matthew Garcia served as readers.

## Carbon Offset Contributions Made by 2009 Conference Participants and Matched by ASLE

For the second time in ASLE history, attendees at ASLE's Biennial Conference had the opportunity to donate money for carbon offsets to help reduce the environmental impact of carbon emissions involved with travel to and from the conference. Those who came from near or far to Victoria, British Columbia, this past June donated a total of \$1,602; matching funds from ASLE raised the total to \$3,204. This marks a nearly \$1,000 total increase from the first year of this program, launched at the 7th Biennial Conference in Spartanburg, South Carolina, in 2007.



As in 2007, the funds have been given to the non-profit organization Atmosfair in Bonn, Germany. With Atmosfair, travelers calculate the greenhouse gas emissions associated with their travel or other activities, and their donations are then used to "save" those emissions through projects involving solar, hydropower, biomass, and energy efficiency.

Atmosfair is involved in projects all over the world, from small hydropower in Honduras to wastewater treatment in Thailand. Visit [www.atmosfair.de](http://www.atmosfair.de) for more information; if your German is rusty, you'll want to click on the British flag in the lower left-hand corner to read the text in English.

As *ASLE News* explained in Fall 2007 after the Spartanburg conference, while ASLE's leadership decided to continue offering the option of carbon offsets, they do not consider this a "quick fix" for all of the problems associated with long-distance travel. Since 2007, instances of "greenwashing" have become even more frequent--leaving all of us more wary of where our money goes--and the need to address the root causes of large scale environmental problems has become even more dire. ASLE

continues to look for ways to operate sustainably, and welcomes your suggestions for doing so.

## Interview with an Independent Writer

by Catherine Meeks

This new feature is launched with the intention of highlighting, in a more personal way, many of the phenomenal members of ASLE working as independent writers. If you'd like to suggest a member--yourself or someone else--for this feature, please contact [catherine-meeks@utc.edu](mailto:catherine-meeks@utc.edu).

**Elizabeth Van Zandt** is a freelance writer living in Indio, California. She received an MFA in English/Creative Writing from San Francisco State University in 1976. She is a retired national park ranger/interpreter and volunteers as a naturalist at several government agencies in the area. She has published a book of poetry, *Persephone Rising*, and has had work in several journals, most recently in *Todd Point Review*.

### **Q. How did the natural world become important to you?**

A. I've always preferred being outdoors, so the natural world has always been important to me on some level. But it wasn't until I began spending time at Pinnacles National Monument near Hollister, California, that I really became conscious of the natural world as more than a backdrop to other activities. It was at this time that nature began to enter my poetry as symbol and metaphor and subject matter, and I literally fell in love with the earth, with rocks, soil, flowers, oak trees, the wind. The Pinnacles is still a mystical place for me, where it all began.

**Q. What landscapes do you consider most important to your work?**

A. The landscape where I feel most connected is one with lots of open space and sky and with hills or a mountain range somewhere in the picture to give it perspective. I lived in Washington, DC, and worked at the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historic Park at Great Falls, Maryland, for a year and a half in the late 1980s. There were forests everywhere. When the first spring rolled around, I felt claustrophobic in the middle of all that green. Luckily, I was able to return to California before the second spring. My imagery and inspiration comes mainly from landscapes where I feel at home: California, the desert, in the mesas and canyons of the Southwest.

**Q. What three authors have most influenced your work?**

A. The poets James Dickey and W. B. Yeats and the novelist Thomas Hardy. One of the main reasons I was attracted to their writings while pursuing my MFA is that they all use imagery and symbolism from the natural world. At that time I was writing poetry, and I was heavily influenced by Dickey's style and content; I was seduced by Yeats' imagery and language. I liked Thomas Hardy because the natural world in his novels was almost a character in its own right. Now I am writing mainly non-fiction and the natural world is often a main character for me.

**Q. What is the best thing anyone ever taught you?**

A. Two things: good grammar and a love of words. My English teacher in my senior year of high school, Mrs. Fuller, drilled grammar into us on a daily basis, then plied us with lists of new and unusual words every Friday. She often used pages from the *Reader's Digest* Word Power, where we had to pick the meanings, and made it like a game; I came out of that class with almost perfect grammar and a huge vocabulary for a high school senior. I still think of Mrs. Fuller with gratitude. She made me crazy about the English language.

**Q. What are you working on now?**

A. I have been taking time to edit and polish and send out some work to magazines and journals, including a piece I read from at the ASLE conference in June titled *Islands in a Sea of Sand*. I'm also reading about and mulling over Jacqueline Cochran, a pilot of the same vintage as Amelia Earhart. I recently discovered that the land on which I live was once part of a ranch she owned and loved here in Indio, so I feel a connection. I'd like to explore that connection.



Round Island Passage Light, Straits of Mackinac, MI. Photo by Bill Stroup.

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## Update from the Southern Hemisphere: ASLE-ANZ

by CA Cranston, President, ASLE-ANZ

The Southern Hemisphere recently lost one of its elders, the genial Geoff Park, a founding ASLE-ANZ member and author of the groundbreaking *Nga Uruora: The Groves of Life: History and Ecology in a New Zealand Landscape*. New Zealand Vice-President Charles Dawson's tribute to Geoff can be read in the July issue of *ANewZletter* on the ASLE-ANZ website. Charles is the only incumbent officer for 2009-2011. Newly elected officers include President CA Cranston, Vice-President (Australia) Deborah Bird Rose, Newsletter Editor and Communication Representative Chris Coughran (whose article "Green Scripts in Gravity's Rainbow" appeared in the Spring 2009 issue of *ISLE*), and Treasurer/Secretary Barbara Holloway, known for her handiwork with a chainsaw. Barbara replaces Iris Ralph who absconded to Tamkang University, Taiwan, and recently joined ASLE-Taiwan.

Riding on the tails of its members' successes, ASLE-ANZ was thrilled to hear that Tom Griffiths was co-winner of the 2008 Prime Minister's \$100,000 Prize for Australian History for *Silencing the Silence: Voyaging to Antarctica*. Traveling in an opposite direction, poet and

publisher Susan Hawthorn (*Earth's Breath*) is currently in Tamil Nadu on an Australia-India Council grant. *Boom and Bust: Bird Stories for a Dry Country* was published in March by CSIRO, and co-edited by Libby Robin. In addition to these achievements, the Australian Humanities Review (an online publication) has a number of articles by members, and there's a special section on 'Naturecultures' with contributions by yet another active member, Emily Potter. As a community, ASLE-ANZ has launched the *Green Grammar Dictionary* as a wiki site. The site is a compilation of environmental definitions and extracts from New Zealand and Australian writers, artists, scientists, and wedding planners. It is hoped that the development of a site dedicated to Southern Hemisphere speak will encourage a departure from the reliance on Northern sources which inevitably act as ecological and cultural filters in the way the South is interpreted.

In the matter of tributes and conferences, the biannual Watermark Literary Muster was well attended by ASLE-ANZ members, who gathered together to commemorate and celebrate the life of Eric Rolls through the whorls and burls of the topic 'Wood'. The new Executive officers are planning a conference for 2010 broadly around the theme of Air, more specifically Sound, and more particularly Music. Time and place has not yet been decided; check the December *ANewZletter* on our ASLE-ANZ site (<http://www.asle-anz.asn.au/>) for details.

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## Newly Formed ASLE-Taiwan Quickly Making its Mark

by Peter Huang

As you may have read in *ASLE News* last Fall, ASLE-Taiwan became a new affiliate of ASLE in September of 2008. Since then, the group has been busy! In March 2009, ASLE-Taiwan became officially established with the election of the group's first officers. Professor Lin Yaofu was elected the first president, and Ted Yang was invited to serve as secretary general of the organization.



Forest Elder, East Sooke Park, BC.  
Photo by H. Lewis Ulman.

Three officers of ASLE-Taiwan--Hsinya Huang, Serena Chou, and Peter Huang--attended the ASLE Conference in Victoria, British Columbia, in June. Serena Chou and Hsinya Huang gave papers, and Peter Huang announced the establishment of ASLE-Taiwan at the international reception on the evening of June 3rd and participated in the roundtable discussion "Returning Home: An Emerging Land-based, Ecofeminist Environmental Ethics in Taiwan" on June 6.

On July 15-16, the English Department of Tamkang University held a workshop--ASLE-Taiwan's first academic activity--on the future direction of ecocriticism. The first day of the workshop saw the gathering of local scholars with specialties and interests in eco-philosophy and aesthetics. They presented papers, such as "Eco-Poetics: Heidegger's Poetics and Eco-philosophy," and organized a panel in the afternoon. The next day, Scott Slovic offered a new vision for the future direction of ecocriticism in his keynote speech "The Third Wave of Ecocriticism." Other highlights from the two-day event included Liu Ke-Siang, a renowned Taiwanese nature writer, giving a talk on an organic farm in Taiwan; Ken Noda and Shin Yamashiro from Japan presenting papers; Greta Gaard speaking about new directions for ecofeminism; and Chia-ju Chang, who currently teaches

in New York, giving a paper on a Zen ecoanalysis of cinema. Simon Estok also spoke about consumption and ecocriticism. The workshop successfully concluded with a reading of Yang Ming-tu's inspiring eco-poetry. The day after the workshop, Liu Ke-Siang led a field trip to Ta Tun Old Creek, enabling all to feel a strong sense of local place.

Later that month, ASLE-Taiwan's second academic activity was held at National Sun Yat-sen University in Kaohsiung on July 24. Lin Yi-jen from Providence University gave a talk on "Place, Indigenous Peoples, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge." Both Greta Gaard (University of Wisconsin River Falls) and Rob Wilson (UC Santa Cruz) spoke at the workshop, which was organized by Serena Chou.



Peter Huang and Hsinya Huang were invited to attend the International Conference on Ecological Literature and Environmental Education held at Peking University, China, August 14-21. From this work, a kind of Asian forum is being envisioned, and we are exploring the possibility of closer cooperation between ASLE-Japan, ASLE-Korea, China, India and ourselves. We look forward to strengthening such cooperation with scholars from neighboring Asian countries.

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## ASLE-Japan: Crossing Borders, Fall 2008 to Fall 2009

by Shoko Miura, PR, ASLE-Japan

In the wake of the dramatic events of the Joint Symposium we held with ASLE-Korea in Kanazawa in August 2007, ASLE-Japan continues to pursue studies in environmental writing and environmental justice in East Asia. What follows are some of our recent efforts to explore environmental issues both within and beyond national borders.

The 2008 ASLE-Japan Conference, held from October 12 to 14 in Oita, started with the East-Asian Panel on Environmental Literature. The panelists from Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Japan shared their views and readings of environmental literature in different locations. At the 2009 annual conference, held from August 29 to 31 in Kiyosato, Professor Haruo Shirane of Columbia University illustrated how the idea of "nature" has been enjoyed in Japanese culture with examples of traditional products and seasonal events in his keynote speech, "Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons: Secondary Nature, Social Difference, and the Illusion of

Harmony." At a workshop, "Bringing Environmental Justice to the Ainu," Mr. Osamu Hasegawa shared his personal and collective struggles as a member of the Ainu, the indigenous people of north Japan.



*Arbutus menziesii*, East Sooke Park, BC.  
Photo by H. Lewis Ulman.

Also this past year, we began making a list of works of Japanese nature writing and have been working closely with ASLE-Korea to make possible an ASLE Korea-Japan Joint Symposium in Korea in the near future. In addition, some of our members are making individual efforts to introduce Japanese environmental literature outside Japan, such as Bruce Allen who translated Ishimure Michiko's *Lake of Heaven* (Lexington Books, 2008) into English.

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## Society of Early Americanists in Bermuda and Beyond

by Thomas Hallock, University of South Florida St. Petersburg

The Society of Early Americanists (SEA) held its sixth biennial conference in March 2009, on the culturally rich and stunningly beautiful island of Bermuda. A number of sessions and papers focused on environmental themes, indicating continued interest amongst early Americanists in the natural world.

Thomas Hallock (U. South Florida St. Petersburg) chaired an ASLE sponsored session, "Storm Stories: Literature and Environment in Early America." Reiner Smolinski (Georgia State University) led off with "Tempests in a Teapot? Divine Judgments, Catastrophes, and Nature in Scientific Discourse," drawing attention to a figure that our environmental tradition too often overlooks - Cotton Mather. Lisa Logan (University of Central Florida) followed with "Under the Radar, Bending the Map: Early Women's Diary Writing and Ecocritical Studies," raising the astute point that narratives of disaster focus upon exceptional moments of contact with the natural world, while women's diaries often mark the mundane, resulting in their occasional neglect. Anne Baker (North Carolina State University) rounded out the panel with "Tempestuous Passages: Storms in the Fiction of Susanna Rowson," a careful and skillfully crafted analysis that explored points of interface between metaphoric constructs and our physical surroundings.

The future promises renewed collaboration between the SEA and ASLE. In May 2010, the SEA will be sponsoring an off-year symposium, "Early American Borderlands," in St. Augustine, Florida, May 13-16, 2010. For more about the Society, including other upcoming conferences, go to [www.societyofearlyamericanists.org](http://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org).

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## Members Write: "Migration"

by Jamie Barber, Instructor, English Department, Penn State University

*(Note: this is the Inaugural entry in the new Members Write feature of ASLE News. For more information on submitting to this feature, see this issue's "[Members Write](#)" article in the left column.)*

Tonight, as the distant lightning flashes an echo to the fireflies, I sit on the sloping lawn of my new apartment complex in Highland Park, New Jersey, and watch my new neighbors migrate home from the park. None of them are of Anglo-descent and as I listen to them speak, I imagine their regular migrations to places they used to call home. I have just returned from my summer migration to Utah--my birth place--to take my young son to visit his grandparents and cousins. Though I've lived in Oregon and Pennsylvania since living in Utah, the place still makes me ache, and I'm doing my best to find central New Jersey's own special wildness instead of comparing its crowded highways to Utah's wide expanses of quiet. But I'm feeling unsettled in this "home" that has been mine for less than two weeks--the home that many outsiders see as nothing but the commute route for New York City employees. But today a man stopped me in the park, told me about the community gardens, told me about the "spit fire" mayor, explained that I lived on the "south side." Perhaps for some this place is nothing more than a migration corridor--but I'm looking forward to understanding the perspective of those who see it as home.

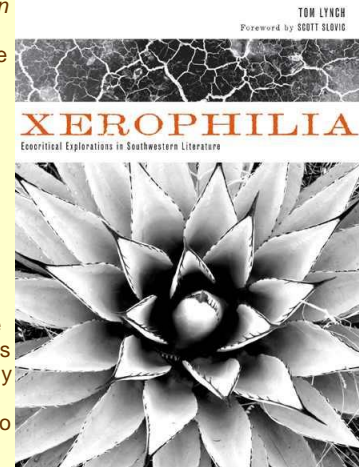


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## ASLE Member News

**Janet Fiskio** has accepted a tenure-track position in Environmental Studies at Oberlin College. Her courses will include a seminar in environmental justice literature; sustainable agriculture; and ethics, equity, and narratives of climate change.

Tom Lynch's book *Xerophilia: Ecocritical Explorations in Southwestern Literature* has won the 2009 Thomas J. Lyon award from the Western Literature Association. The award goes to the previous year's best work on the literature and culture of the American West. *Xerophilia* is a biregionally oriented ecocritical study of multicultural literature of the arid regions of the American West, and contains a foreward by Scott Slovic. In the book, Lynch analyzes works in a variety of genres by writers such as Leslie Marmon Silko, Terry Tempest Williams, Edward Abbey, Ray Gonzales, Charles Bowden, Susan Tweit, Gary Paul Nabhan, Ann Zwinger, and Janice Emily Bowers, to reveal how southwestern writers, in their powerful role as community storytellers, contribute to the evolution of a sustainable bioregional culture that enables inhabitants to live imaginatively, intellectually, and morally in the arid bioregions of the American Southwest. All proceeds from the sale of *Xerophilia* are being donated to ASLE. For more information about *Xerophilia*, see [www.ttup.ttu.edu/BookPages/9780896726383.html](http://www.ttup.ttu.edu/BookPages/9780896726383.html)



Sarah Jaquette Ray completed her dissertation, titled "The Ecological Other: Indians, Invalids, and Immigrants in U.S. Environmental Thought and Literature," in July 2009, just in time to pack up and move to Juneau, Alaska, where she has begun her post as tenure-track Assistant Professor of English at the University of Alaska Southeast. She will teach writing, environmental literature, and geography.

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## ASLE News Notes

### Help Us Update the ASLE Syllabi Database

Many of you in the past have generously submitted your Literature and Environment-related syllabi to the ASLE syllabus database (see <http://www.asle.org/site/resources/syllabi/>). But this resource is in desperate need of being updated!

The Graduate Student Working Group made updating the syllabus database one of its off-year projects and will facilitate new submissions. If you have any syllabi that you'd be willing to post on the ASLE syllabus database, please submit one of two ways: Add your syllabus directly online by following the link to the database above and clicking on "Add Syllabi"; or you can send it to GSL Sarah Jaquette Ray ([siray@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:siray@uas.alaska.edu)) who will compile it for posting to the database.

The field of Literature and Environment is changing quickly, and each time you put a course together, you are doing invaluable work defining the field. Indeed, the ASLE Syllabi Database serves as a crucial resource for ASLE members, but also beyond ASLE. It is the syllabus "go-to" link for other schools, environmental websources, journals, and groups. It thus serves as an important representation of ASLE to many external sources, as well as a resource for our teaching.

If you have any questions, please contact Sarah Jaquette Ray ([siray@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:siray@uas.alaska.edu)).

### ASLE Member News

Whether you got a new job, won an award, or did something interesting, enlightening, or exciting, we want to know what you're up to! If you have some news to share with other ASLE members, and it doesn't "fit" into the Bookshelf, PhD, or Emeritus categories, please contact Catherine Meeks ([catherine-meeks@utc.edu](mailto:catherine-meeks@utc.edu)) with the Subject heading "Member News."

### ASLE Emeritus

ASLE News honors those ASLE members retired or retiring from teaching. If you would like to acknowledge someone in this new feature--or if you yourself will be retiring during the coming academic year--please contact please contact Catherine Meeks ([catherine-meeks@utc.edu](mailto:catherine-meeks@utc.edu)). We will include a brief account of scholarly interests, the institutions of employment and years taught in the next newsletter.

### ASLE PhDs

Have you or one of your students recently defended a dissertation? If so, ASLE News wants to know. Each issue, we include announcements commemorating those members who have recently completed their doctoral work. If you would like to be included in this feature, please contact Catherine Meeks ([catherine-meeks@utc.edu](mailto:catherine-meeks@utc.edu)) with the dissertation title, degree-granting institution, and committee members.

### ASLE Website Member Tools

Here are a few of the things you can do once you login at <https://www.asle.org/site/members/login/>:

Renew Your Membership

View Current and Past Issues of *ISLE* Journal Online

Search the Membership Directory

Update your Directory Entry

Vote in ASLE Officer Elections (through December 1, 2009)

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