



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



ASLE News

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ASLE Bookshelf

The following works were recently published by ASLE members. If we've missed

President's Column: What Did It All Mean?

by Dan Philippon

With the biennial ASLE conference now over and all 600-plus of us back in our respective home places, I thought it might be worth stepping back to ask "what did it all mean?" Not every ASLE member was able to attend our June 2009 gathering in Victoria, BC, of course, but enough of us were able to do so that this question seemed worth considering. Upon further reflection, however, I found this to be a very difficult question to answer--and the reason for this difficulty to be in some ways an answer to the question itself.

The difficulty comes, needless to say, from the addition of a perceiving subject: "what did it mean *to whom?*" My perspective on the conference was certainly different from that of most attendees for many reasons, not the least of which was that I attended almost every session--a first even for me! And your perspective was different from everyone else's for similar reasons: we all perceive things only from our own point of view, to state the truly obvious.

Yet isn't this what our work is all about? Looking back on our gathering, I am reminded that what I value most about ASLE is that it provides *perspective* on our rapidly changing world. Here's what climate change means to Amy Seidl, what aboriginal identity means to Jeannette Armstrong, what journeying means to Karsten Heuer, what publishing means to Andrew Revkin, what place means to Ruth Ozeki, and so on. I want to know these first-person perspectives, precisely because they differ from my own. And to experience them *in person*--with all the richness and subtlety of expression such an encounter involves--is a rare treat indeed.

I value these perspectives because they make me a better person (or at least I hope so): a better scholar and teacher, to be sure, but more importantly a better fellow traveler. They are at the root of our morality: if I can glimpse, even for a moment, what it's like to be you, I'm that much more likely to speak and act with kindness, compassion, respect, patience, generosity, and even love. And that I fail so often to do these things is why I crave these perspectives all the more.

What ASLE adds to this, I think, is encapsulated in the title of Thomas Nagel's classic article about the subjectivity of consciousness: "What is it Like to Be a Bat?" (1974). How is our knowing--and the knowing of other creatures--tied to our biological embodiment? And given this knowledge, what should our stories look like? And how should we act?

This, I see more clearly now, is what ASLE's Executive Council was after when we set out to create more space for conversation, dialogue, and discussion in the conference program, and what we meant when we said, following Bill McKibben, that we wanted to "make it count" if we



Conference Chairs Dan Philippon and Richard Pickard. Photo by Janine DeBaise.

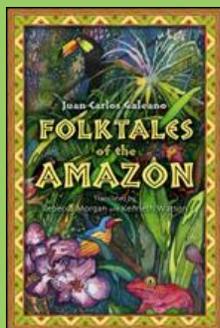
your publication, or if you have a newly published work you'd like to have included in the next ASLE News, please send bibliographic information to Catherine Meeks (catherine-meeks@utc.edu).

Bogard, Paul, ed. *Let There Be Night: Testimony on Behalf of the Dark*. University of Nevada Press, 2008.

Dodd, Elizabeth. *In the Mind's Eye: Essays Across the Animate World*. University of Nebraska Press, 2009. (ASLE 2009 Book Award Winner!)

Felstiner, John. *Can Poetry Save the Earth? A Field Guide to Nature Poems*. Yale University Press, 2009.

Galeano, Juan Carlos. *Folktales of the Amazon*. Translation by Rebecca Morgan and Kenneth Watson. Libraries Unlimited, 2009.



Kirsch, Sharon. *What Species of Creatures: Animal Relations from the New World*. Vancouver: New Star Books, 2008

Moore, Bryan L. *Ecology and Literature: Ecocentric Personification from Antiquity*

were going to travel to a conference in a time of climate crisis. This is what we tried to achieve when we structured almost all of our plenary sessions as paired exchanges and when we emphasized the international aspect of our first meeting in Canada. And this is surely what we intended when we made "increasing the disciplinary and demographic diversity of our membership" a major goal of ASLE's strategic plan. If we are to create a more just and sustainable world for humans and other creatures, we are going to need multiple perspectives, multiple ways of knowing, multiple points of view--in short, multiple *stories*.

I also see more clearly now that, just as asking "what did it all mean" makes little sense without also asking "to whom," speaking of ASLE in the abstract likewise misses a central insight: there is no "ASLE" without its members, no "us" without you. So before summer turns to fall and the glow of our biennial gathering begins to fade even further, let me make one final appeal: please take a moment to think about your own relationship to ASLE and then act in three specific ways:

1. **let us know your perspective on the conference**, if you attended, by completing an online evaluation (check your email for a message from Amy McIntyre) blog;
2. **consider what ASLE means to you and make a donation to ASLE's development campaign**, in whatever amount seems fitting (check your surface mail for a letter from John Tallmadge)
3. **volunteer to serve ASLE in some way**, by running for vice president or executive council, hosting an off-year symposium, or assisting an ASLE coordinator or liaison (see <http://www.asle.org/site/about/getinvolved/> for more information).

Your perspective will enrich us all.

ASLE Awards Celebrate Excellence in Scholarship & Creative Writing

By Kathryn Miles and Tom Lynch

The recent biennial conference marked the second presentation of the ASLE Awards for outstanding scholarly and creative writing by ASLE members. First given in 2007, these awards recognize outstanding achievement in four categories: best creative work delivered at the conference by a graduate student; best scholarly essay presented at the conference by a graduate student; best book-length creative work; and best scholarly monograph. Each category was judged by a committee of scholars and writers based on entries submitted prior to the conference.



Creative Paper Award Winner Emily Carr

The winner of the award for Best Graduate Student Creative Paper was Emily Carr (University of Calgary) for her poetic work, "eve / in exile." W. Mark Giles (University of Calgary) received an honorable mention in this category. Judges included Scott Knickerbocker (College of Idaho), Harriet Tarlo (Bath Spa University), and Mark Tredinnick (University of Sydney).

Andrew Husband (Sam Houston State University) received the award for Best Scholarly Essay by a Graduate Student for "Postcolonial 'Greenery': Surreal Garden Imagery in Nuruddin Farah's *Maps*." Essays by Paul Huebener (McMaster University), Virginia Kennedy (Cornell University), and Tristan Siple (University of Oregon) received honorable mentions. Judges for this category were Joni Adamson (Arizona State University), Serenella Iovino (University of Torino, Italy), and Richard Kerridge (Bath Spa University, UK).

Both Husband and Carr will have their work featured in a future issue of *ISLE*.

to the *Twenty-first Century*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Outka, Paul. *Race and Nature from Transcendentalism to the Harlem Renaissance* (Part of Palgrave's "Signs of Race" series). New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. (ASLE 2009 Book Award Winner!)

Runciman, Lex. *Starting from Anywhere*. Ireland: Salmon Poetry, 2009. (Poems)

Sallenger, Abby. *Island in a Storm: a Rising Sea, a Vanishing Coast, and a Nineteenth Century Disaster that Warns of a Warmer World*. Public Affairs, 2009.

Sturgeon, Noël. *Environmentalism in Popular Culture: Gender, Race, Sexuality, and the Politics of Nature*. University of Arizona Press, 2009.

Swander, Mary. *The Girls of the Roof*. Turning Point/WordTech Press, 2009. (Poems)

Tweit, Susan J. *Walking Nature Home: A Life's Journey*. University of Texas Press, 2009.

Underhill, Linda. *The Way of the Woods: Journeys Through American Forests*. Oregon State University Press, 2009.

Weltzien, O. Alan. *A Father and an Island: Reflections on Loss*. Lewiston, ID: Lewis-Clark Press, 2008.

----- *The Norman Maclean Reader*. University of Chicago Press, 2008

The 2009 ASLE Book Award for Ecocriticism was awarded to Paul Outka for his 2008 book, *Race and Nature from Transcendentalism to the Harlem Renaissance*. The judges felt this study makes a tremendously important contribution to ecocriticism through the sophisticated way that it addresses the intersection of race and nature and attends to both African American and white American writers. Outka's book begins with a discussion of the racialized nature of the sublime, connects transcendentalism, abolition, and the pastoral, moves chronologically through slavery, reconstruction, "Strange Fruit," and white flight. The judges concluded the book makes good use of literary theory with a strong historical context, and that Outka's *Race and Nature*, as Gretchen Legler wrote, "has the potential to change ecocritical scholarship, and perhaps even American environmental thinking, for the better," allowing us to "begin to embrace the true complexity of the American landscape." Ursula Heise (Stanford University) received an honorable mention in this category for her book, *Sense of Place, Sense of Planet*. Judges were George Hart (California State University, Long Beach), Patrick Murphy (University of Central Florida), and Sara Spurgeon (Texas Tech University).



Paul Outka and Awards Coordinator Tom Lynch at the ASLE Banquet in Victoria

"The world offers innumerable bridges from the inner to the outer realms, avenues of transcendence or narrow passages from one mode of being to another." So says Elizabeth Dodd at the end of *In the Mind's Eye: Essays across the Animate World*, the recipient of this year's award for Best Book of Creative Writing. *In the Mind's Eye* is a collection of such bridges, avenues, and narrow passages, though it's strange to use the word "narrow" in association with work of such dazzling breadth. Whether studying cave paintings in southern France, hiking out to petroglyphs in the American Southwest, paddling among old growth cypress trees in North Carolina, or gathering mushrooms in the woods along the Kansas River, Dodd enriches first-hand accounts of her journeys with researched information from a wide range of scholarly sources and delights the reader with sudden leaps of her artful imagination. What animates all of these essays is the author's keen interest in actual places and in the images humans--our contemporaries, our early ancestors, and those in between--have used to convey their experiences of these places. Dodd's voice, assured and assuring, never wavers. She tells her stories and unfolds her elegant ideas in prose that is supple, learned, sometimes lyrical, sometimes witty, and always entirely apt.

Three writers received honorable mentions for their books. They include Jennifer Atkinson (George Mason University) for *Drift Ice*, Barbara Hurd (Frostburg State University) for *Walking the Wrack Line: On Tidal Shifts and What Remains*, and John Price (University of Nebraska, Omaha) for *Man Killed by Pheasant*. Judges for this category were Ann Fisher-Wirth (University of Mississippi), Gretchen Legler (University of Maine, Farmington), and Andrew Wingfield (George Mason University).

Reinvigorating ASLE's Diversity Caucus

Ten years after the Caucus for Diversity was first developed at the 1999 ASLE conference in Kalamazoo, Michigan, a group of nearly forty people gathered late Friday evening, June 5, in a classroom at the University of Victoria. Three days prior, at the meeting of ASLE's Executive Council, Diversity Caucus co-coordinator Priscilla Ybarra voiced her concerns about the relatively "unstructured" nature of her position within ASLE, raising provocative questions about how "diversity" is defined and when--if ever--diversity goals can be considered fully accomplished. As a result of her comments, the Executive Council decided to create a sub-committee for diversity, with the intention of better defining ASLE's goals related to diversity--many of which are captured in Goal 2 of ASLE's recently adopted Strategic Plan to "increase the disciplinary and demographic diversity of [ASLE's] membership."

The Diversity Caucus meeting was moderated by Annie Merrill Ingram, a member of the ad hoc committee that met at Kalamazoo and drafted a "statement of purpose" for increasing diversity within ASLE, which led ultimately to the creation of the Caucus. Ingram was thus able to provide a brief history of the group and a framework for the group's discussion of its future role within the organization. As the moderator of the Caucus for Diversity listserv, Ingram noted

White, Sharon. *Vanished Gardens, Finding Nature in Philadelphia*. University of Georgia Press, 2008.

ASLE Seeks Symposia Proposals

ASLE still has monies available to help fund off-year small regional symposia in 2010. If you would like to apply for a grant, historically between \$1000 and \$2000, please consult our proposal guidelines at <http://www.asle.org/site/conferences/proposal-guidelines/> to help you craft your application. Send proposals to ASLE president Dan Philippon (danp@umn.edu) as soon as possible for review.

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 this section of 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.") Please send responses either in the body of an e-mail or as an attachment to Catherine

that in the past several years the listserv has been "very quiet," and this led to one area of focus for increasing the group's activities.

Ingram linked the Caucus's past--including an off-year symposium on diversity organized by Joni Adamson--to the group's future, in the form of three primary goals identified by the subcommittee for diversity:

1. To shift from the current listserv to a more interactive, functional blog;
2. To better define the diversity coordinator position, including specific roles and duties;
3. To propose a change to the ASLE bylaws so that the diversity coordinator is an elected member of the Executive Council.

A lively discussion followed, including many ideas about possible ways to encourage diversity of many "kinds" within ASLE, and the importance of recognizing the different strategies demanded by each category. Several members of ASLE's successful Graduate Student Working Group offered their ideas about using that group's organizational model as a means to increase the activities and presence of the Caucus for Diversity.

While exciting new ideas--from reaching out to K-12 and community college teachers, to having plenary sessions at conferences signed for the hearing impaired, to having panels for international affiliates in their native languages--were many, past ASLE president Ann Fisher-Wirth also reminded those present, many of whom were first-time ASLE conference attendees, of the strides that have already been made. "Just looking around this room, the difference from the early ASLE days is amazing," she noted. Which does not, she was quick to add, mean that the work for increasing diversity is finished; rather, the future for the Caucus for Diversity is rich with possibility.



If you would like to get involved with the Caucus for Diversity, you can find information at: <http://www.asle.org/site/about/affiliates/>.

ASLE Online Bibliography Needs Member Input

by H. Lewis Ulman

The ASLE Executive Council and the coordinator of the ASLE Online Bibliography (yours truly) are evaluating the current format, and we seek advice from the ASLE membership as we consider the future of the project.

If you are a new member or haven't visited the ASLE Online Bibliography in awhile, we invite you to (re)visit it at <http://www.biblioserver.com/asle/> and (re)familiarize yourself with the bibliography, which as of June 24, 2009 contained 1,330 bibliographic entries (many annotated) for scholarly and creative works in various media related to the study of relationships between the environment and cultural representations of nonhuman nature.

While available data suggests that members regularly consult the bibliography, new entries now trickle in very slowly. We have no standing team of bibliographers; the bibliography grows only when members contribute to it via the Web site. Given the recent rollout of a new ASLE Web site at <http://www.asle.org/> that consolidates and updates a number of other member services, it seems time to consider incorporating the bibliography into the new Web site, thus integrating it more effectively with our other member services and, perhaps, reinvigorating the project.

Last year, the Executive Council reviewed results from the recent survey of ASLE members, which indicated that nearly two-thirds of our members consult the bibliography occasionally. And almost 200 members responded to a question that asked what would make them more likely to contribute to the bibliography in the future. Answers included having more time; understanding the process better; receiving reminders; and believing that others would benefit from their contributions.

Meeks at catherine-meeks@utc.edu.

For the inaugural Members Write, respond to the following word: "Migration."

ASLE Seeks Nominations

Candidates are being sought to run for ASLE Executive Council (EC) and Vice President (VP), for terms beginning January 2010. EC members serve a 3-year term, as does the VP: one year as VP, one year as President, and one as Immediate Past President. If you or another member you know would like to run for an ASLE office, please contact 2009 President Dan Philippon (danp@umn.edu) by August 1, 2009.

ASLE PhD

Lauren LaFauci successfully defended her dissertation, "Peculiar Nature: Slavery, Environment, and Nationalism in the Antebellum South" in the English Department at the University of Michigan this May. Her chair was fellow ASLE member Susan Scott Parrish from the English Department and the Program in the Environment. On her committee were June Howard (English, American Culture, and Women's Studies), Kerry Larson (English), and

I have revised the information and instructions on the site, and I can assure members that at least several hundred people would use and appreciate their contributions. We have held workshops and made announcements at conferences, put prominent notes in ASLE News, and sent reminders to the ASLE listserv, and each time we have seen short-term spikes in contributions. However, we wonder whether integrating the bibliography with the new Web site may provide the most effective "reminder" about the bibliography and allow us to restructure the bibliography to take advantage of new technology and proven practices.

Consider that the most active site for exchange of bibliographic information among ASLE members has long been the ASLE listserv. In an interactive environment, members ask for recommendations about books and articles that might be relevant to their research and teaching, collect responses posted to the listserv, and repost compiled lists. Of course, those lists typically consist only of titles and authors (and sometimes annotations), and they are not "structured"; i.e., they are not searchable or sortable in the listserv archives by author, title, and so on. In short, the listserv supports a steady stream of bibliographic information that seems to meet the immediate needs of participants, but the information is relatively difficult to extract and search at a later date or combine with other bibliographic information.

For all of these reasons, I am working with ASLE Managing Director Amy McIntyre and the Executive Council to explore the feasibility and desirability of moving the ASLE Online Bibliography to the ASLE Web site, perhaps in a more interactive, Wiki-based format.

Please send any concerns or suggestions to me at ulman.1@osu.edu. Thanks!

Finding Time on Island Time

by Catherine Meeks

The first comment made by most ASLE conference attendees, as they arrived on the campus of the University of Victoria, went something like this: "Can you believe those rabbits?" It is safe to say that most of us could not, and throughout the week of June 3-6th folks could be seen in various postures photographing rabbits--rabbits in groups, or individual rabbits lounging, cat-like-around the campus. Even during a week packed with stimulating sessions and exciting outings, most managed to find time for wandering the campus and the surrounding area, fulfilling the desire "to create an intellectual and creative space where things can happen that would not happen otherwise," as President Dan Philippon explained in his article in the Spring 2009 *ASLE News*. This goal itself came in response to Bill McKibben's charge at the 2007 ASLE Conference in Spartanburg, SC for individuals to carefully consider the purpose of travel to conferences (and anywhere else) in a time of climate crisis.

Certainly neither the Executive Council nor Bill McKibben had in mind a feral rabbit population when critically examining motives for travel. Nor, perhaps, did environment reporter for the New York Times Andrew Revkin, the plenary speaker on Saturday, though he featured the furry creatures on his "Dot Earth" blog on June 8th (<http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/06/08/rabbits-gone-wild-on-canadian-campus/>) under the title "Rabbits Gone Wild on Canadian Campus." What Revkin's article and the informal rabbit-watching that took place throughout the conference both point to, however, is that the people gathered to discuss "Island Time: The Fate of Place in a Wired, Warming World" were consistently reminded of the physical place in which they found themselves, the fact that that reminder came in the form of a most "unnatural" animal notwithstanding.

Indeed, this year's "Island Time" conference offered increased opportunities for individuals and groups to spend time with one another in a setting conducive to exchanging ideas and building relationships. Early breakfasts and evening receptions provided informal arenas for conversation, and several spots on and off campus offered places to stroll. The new concurrent session format of the "paper-jam" featuring five or more speakers increased the



Feral rabbits, University of Victoria.
Photo by H. Lewis Ulman.

Alexandra Minna Stern (American Culture, Center for the History of Medicine, and UM School of Medicine).

Michaelann Nelson graduated this May with a PhD in English from University of New Mexico. Her dissertation is titled "Voices of Glen Canyon: The Influence of Place on Imagination and Activism". Her committee members Michelle Kells, Gary Harrison, Greg Martin, and Vera Norwood.

In August of 2008, **Suzanne Roberts** successfully defended her dissertation, "The EcoGothic: Pastoral Ideologies in the Gendered Gothic Landscape," to earn a PhD in English at the University of Nevada-Reno. Her chair was Ann Ronald, and her committee members were Michael Branch, Elizabeth Raymond, Nelson Rojas, and Donald E. Hardy. The dissertation uses pastoral ideologies and contemporary ecofeminist theory to explore the connections between women and nature in the Gothic works of Ann Radcliffe, the Brontës, and Emily Dickinson.

On April 13, 2009, **James Iredell** defended his dissertation, "Our Lady of Refuge," in fulfillment of the Ph.D requirements for his degree in Creative Writing (fiction). The book is a cycle of stories, some of which have appeared in the literary magazines *The Chattahoochee Review*, *Zone 3*, *Weber: The Contemporary West*, *The Ampersand*

chances for individuals from a wide variety of interests to meet and ask one another questions. And Friday afternoon's field trips provided even more much-needed time to experience the place (and enjoy the company). Since many of conference sessions and plenary speakers focused on the importance of conversations, dialogues, and partnerships across disciplines and borders, the informal time provided in which to explore such partnerships seemed especially relevant. In this way, those who attended the 8th Biennial ASLE Conference found that they could indeed "make it count"-even if there was little hope of counting the rabbits.



ASLE Conference Kayaking Field Trip, Victoria, BC.
Photo by Nigel Rothfels.

ASLE Names Three New Honorary Members

The ASLE Executive Council has voted to award honorary memberships to three outstanding contemporary writers and scholars in 2009. These three individuals--Cheryll Glotfelty, John Tallmadge and Ruth Ozeki--were chosen for this honor because of their contributions to literature and environmental studies, which have significantly enriched those familiar with their work. Their lifetime memberships are a small but sincere token of ASLE's gratitude to them.

Each new inductee was honored at the banquet during the recent ASLE biennial conference in Victoria, BC. They will also receive a lifetime subscription to our publications and all other member benefits. Glotfelty, Tallmadge and Ozeki join 16 honorary members who have received this honor in the past. ASLE congratulates them on their exemplary careers as artists, advocates, and environmental role models.

Cheryll Glotfelty comments on what this honor means to her: "Thank you so much, ASLE, for the honorary lifetime membership. Now I can concentrate on making big donations to ASLE rather than on remembering to renew my membership. I came away from the Victoria ASLE conference with new books on my must-read list, great teaching tips, new friendships made and old ones renewed, and provocative ideas to mull over. The genius and good works of the ASLE membership is amazing, and I believe in ASLE's "ripple out" ability to make a positive difference in the world. In ASLE we are jointly committed to this larger calling--and we have fun while doing it!"

John Tallmadge's reaction to being named was this: "An award like this, so humbling and unexpected, certainly makes one reflect. Two decades ago ecocriticism was still the road less traveled. It didn't even have a name. You could get fired for studying or practicing nature writing, not to mention taking students into the wilderness. I remember Cheryll Glotfelty's first letter, which reached me in intellectual Siberia while I was serving time as a dean. She had identified more than two dozen kindred spirits and wanted our support in her quest to become the first professor of literature and environment. I thought, "She's dreaming!" but then, "Why not?" Soon thereafter Mike Branch and Scott Slovic began organizing panels, and landmark books started to appear: *The Norton Book of Nature Writing*, *The Environmental Imagination*, *The Ecocriticism Reader*. ASLE was founded and held its first conference; then I became president and organized its second. I had thought my scholarly career was over, but it was really just beginning. Years later, I look back with wonder on the growth of our field, our vibrant community of thinkers and writers, our record of innovation in teaching, our sustained commitment to environmental inquiry and progressive cultural change, and our rich tradition of balancing professional life with plain old fun. For me the road less traveled has certainly made all the difference. All my best opportunities have come through ASLE. I feel deeply grateful for this award, but really, it should be going to all of you."

Ruth Ozeki was moved to write this about the honor: "I was deeply moved to receive the honorary membership to ASLE. Every year, during the school year, I get dozens, sometimes hundreds, of emails from college and university students who are reading my novels in their various classes, and who describe how my fictions have changed them. They no longer think the same way about food, about the environment, about their lives and the real world they live in, and they are inspired and determined to make changes. Of course, nothing makes me happier than to hear stories like these, and at the same time, I know I can only take a little of

Review, and GSU Review. The chair of Iredell's committee was Sheri Joseph, Ph.D, and committee members were John Holman, Ph.D, and Josh Russell.

the credit. Most of the credit belongs to the educators and professors, many of whom are members of ASLE, who year after year are inspiring their students, teaching work like mine, and keeping the stories and issues alive and in circulation. So as a literary author and an environmentalist, I feel the deepest gratitude to ASLE and to its membership.

But the honorary membership means a lot to me for another reason, too. I've somehow stumbled willy nilly into this so-called career of mine, and most of what I know about being a writer and filmmaker I've learned on the job, rather than in the academy. As the daughter of two academics, I have the highest regard for institutions of learning, but while I spend a good amount of time giving talks at colleges and universities, I've never had a sustained and formal institutional affiliation. This makes it difficult for me to participate in the kind of on-going dialogue that members of an academic community enjoy, and this is something I often regret. I was astonished at the wealth and diversity of ideas and interests represented at the ASLE conference this year. It was so inspiring, and reading the offerings, I felt like a kid in a candy store. So for this reason, too, membership to ASLE is a precious gift, and I very much look forward to meeting the members and participating in this rich and vital interdisciplinary dialogue that ASLE represents in the upcoming years."

Update from ASLE-UK

by Greg Garrard, chair of ASLE-UK, Senior Teaching Fellow, Bath Spa University

This year saw the redesign and relaunch of our journal *Green Letters*, now with the expanded title *Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism*. The journal was conceived to reflect the growth of ecocritical research in the UK and provide a quality showcase for it, and we think our newly relaunched journal does just that. Previously published at Thames Valley University, the journal has been moved to Bath Spa University, where the Publishing Lab--part of a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning--is well-equipped to serve the journal's needs. The project was taken on by a Student Fellow, Beth Cutter, who did a wonderful job of coming up with a vibrant, attractive new design, and the first new edition - *Green Letters* 10 - came out in June (just in time for the ASLE conference in Victoria!). *Green Letters* 11, on Early and Pre-Modern Ecocriticism, will be out soon, and we have plans for special editions for the next couple of years. Our next ambition is to increase the number of university libraries that subscribe to *Green Letters*; with that in mind, we welcome inquiries from ASLE members wishing to receive a sample copy.

In addition, our 2008 conference in Edinburgh was, by general acclaim, the best ASLE-UK conference yet. Kate Rigby did a terrific opening plenary, and we had a wonderful variety of papers that showed off the diversity of UK and European ecocriticism. We had a videoconference presentation from Tim Morton in California - amid brush fires - that was very well received, and indicated how we might reduce the carbon emissions from conferences. Organizer Tom Bristow kept the show on the road with amazing *sang froid*, and the event gave us all renewed encouragement in our work.

Lastly, we're excited to announce that we've agreed with the European Association for the Study of Literature, Culture and the Environment (EASLCE) that we'll hold our first joint conference in Bath in 2010. It promises to be the biggest ecocriticism conference yet held in Europe. Look for more details as they arrive!

ASLE at the ALA

by Rochelle Johnson

The most recent American Literature Association Meeting (ALA) was held in Boston, May 21-24, 2009. At the ALA, ASLE held a roundtable session called "American Literature and the Environmental Humanities: Charting Directions," chaired by **Rochelle Johnson** (The College of Idaho). Panelists shared their individual perspectives on what the study of American literature might contribute to the "environmental humanities," an area of study still undergoing definition. **Mark C. Long** (Keene State College) gave a presentation titled "The Elusiveness of the Interdiscipline: American Literature, Disciplinarity, and the Environmental Humanities," in which he shared his experiences and challenges in helping to design an innovative English curriculum with environmental emphasis at Keene State College. **Patrick Nugent** (Brooklyn

College) spoke on "Away from Mount Katahdin: Teaching Environmental Humanities in an Urban Setting," emphasizing the possibility of teaching environmental justice issues through literature. And **Kristen Case** (CUNY Graduate Center)--whose talk was called "Seeking Sheltered Places: Thoreau's Last Project and the Environmental Humanities"--spoke about her research on Thoreau's late natural history projects and their implications for how we might re-visit literary study as we define the environmental humanities. Following the presenters' remarks, the audience engaged in a lively discussion, and the next sessions' participants had to kick us out of the room.



Nodding Trillium (Trillium cernuum), Clifton Gorge, Ohio. Photo by H. Lewis Ulman.

ASLE-Japan and ASLE-Korea Joint Symposium

by Simon Estok

Following the success of the 2007 ASLE-Korea/ASLE-Japan Joint Symposium on Literature and Environment held in Kanazawa (see *ASLE News* 19.2, Fall 2007, for details), a second Joint Symposium is scheduled for 2009.

The Second International Joint-Symposium on "Ecology, Consumption, and Otherness" will be held on October 31-November 2, 2009 at Sungkyunkwan University in Seoul, Korea. This Joint-Symposium, organized by both ASLE-Korea and ASLE-Japan, is designed to provide an interdisciplinary, intercultural, and Asian perspective forum for ecocritical readers to engage in rigorous and collaborative conversation around, this time, one of the most important and timely environmental concerns:

"What and how do we eat and what is the nature of the relationship between our dietary and environmental sustainability?"

For our Joint-Symposium, we invite proposals from scholars and graduate students that address many aspects of our thematic concern above; however, we also would like to welcome paper proposals on other environment-related topics, and proposals from all academic disciplines are welcomed as well. Please see the Call for Proposals at <http://www.asle.org/site/papers/asle-conferences/> for more details. Send the paper proposals, final papers, and any other correspondence to: Kim Won-Chung or Simon C. Estok at aslekorea@empal.com.

ASLE Member News

On Earth Day this year, **Owen Grumbling** of the University of New England in Biddeford, Maine received a Lifetime Achievement Award for Service to the Environment from the Environmental Protection Agency. As the EPA explains, the merit awards have been given since 1970 to "honor individuals and groups who have shown particular ingenuity and commitment in their efforts to preserve the region's environment." The press release for this year's awards describes Grumbling's work: "Owen Grumbling has a passion for conservation that has come through during his years of work for the town. He has chaired the town of Wells Conservation Commission since 1982, and has inspired and educated countless students and community members so that they appreciate and work to protect their surroundings. Owen created the town conservation committee to champion creation of the Wells Estuarine Research Reserve at Laudholm Farm to protect the coastal habitat. Under his leadership, the town created a land bank for land conservation and yearly set aside funds to buy undeveloped property. The town also started getting gifts of land from families who wanted to preserve the town's rural character. Owen wrote a town ordinance governing the definition and use of town conservation lands and giving citizens authority over this land. Owen strongly believes land conservation is most effective when people in a town take responsibility for their own living space. Today, the town has two designated Wildlife Commons - large shared spaces - each

about 600 acres. The town's Land Bank has grown to nearly a million dollars. In addition to this land conservation work, Owen served for 12 years on the board of the National Resources Council of Maine, an environmental advocacy group. For more than 30 years he has taught university students the value of conservation. His anthology of nature writing from 1990 remains in print today. Throughout Maine he is highly regarded and admired for his long-standing efforts to promote conservation."

Independent scholar **Jill Carpenter** of Sewanee, Tennessee, had her essay "Black Spring" selected by editor Rich Hayes of the Union of Concerned Scientists/Penguin Classics Book Partnership for inclusion in the forthcoming Penguin Classics anthology *Thoreau's Legacy: American Stories about Global Warming*. As the Sewanee newspaper reported about Carpenter's achievement, she is one of 67 authors and artists whose work was selected from among 1,000 submissions by established and aspiring writers and photographers. Barbara Kingsolver sets the book's tone in her foreword: "We must radically reconsider the power relationship between humans and our habitat." Elda Rotor, editorial director at Penguin Classics, says this about the book: "I have great respect for the work of the Union of Concerned Scientists, and we hope their voices will be heard, particularly as Congress debates legislation to reduce the pollution that contributes to global warming." Carpenter has worked as a college biology instructor, used bookstore owner, science writer and editor. In Sewanee she helped found the Dead Plants Society, a group of women who meet weekly to draw and share natural history observations. She and her husband, Ronn, are also active participants the Sewanee community's acoustic jam sessions. UCS and Penguin Classics will offer the anthology for free online as an interactive book at www.ucsusa.org/americanstories and as a forthcoming eBook. A limited edition hardcover coffee-table book also will be available for purchase. The online interactive book will allow the anthology to be shared with friends through e-mails and on social media sites.

ASLE News Notes

Update to the Graduate Handbook

Thanks to the good work of the Graduate Student Working Group (especially Jean Sokolowski) and Graduate Mentoring Coordinator Mark Long, a section of the ASLE Graduate Student Handbook has been updated. The listing of graduate programs in literature and the environment and related fields (<http://www.asle.org/site/publications/graduate-handbook/programs/>)

contains new entries on each program, and more international programs. If your school has a program or emphasis in one of these areas of study, we are still accepting new entries and are especially keen to hear from even more international programs. Please consult the current listings to see the format and type of content to be included. Send your entries to Mark Long, mlong@keene.edu, and they will be posted after review.

International Affiliates' Attendance at ASLE Conferences

The ASLE officers met for their annual business meeting in Victoria, BC prior to the conference, and in one order of business voted to amend the requirements for participation in future ASLE biennial conferences. Beginning with the 2011 conference, membership in any affiliated international ASLE group will be honored as fulfilling the membership requirement for attendance. This means that anyone who is a member of a international ASLE organization will not also need to join the US branch of ASLE to attend.

ASLE Member News

In this issue of ASLE News, we are launching a new feature, ASLE Member News. Our hope is that this feature will allow us to provide even more information about what ASLE members are up to that does not "fit" into the Bookshelf, PhD, or Emeritus categories. If you have some news to share with other ASLE members, please contact Catherine Meeks (catherine-meeks@utc.edu).

Correction to "ISLE Finds New Home at OUP"

In the Spring 2009 Issue of ASLE News, we told you about the exciting new partnership between ISLE and Oxford University Press. Amidst our excitement, we inadvertently stated that the journal was previously published "with the assistance of the University of Nevada

Press," which is incorrect; University of Nevada Press only publishes books (many, as you know, written by and of interest to ASLE members). ASLE News apologizes for the confusion!

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). 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) with the dissertation title, degree-granting institution, and committee members.



ASLE Member Area of the Website

Just a reminder about all the things you can do once you login at <https://www.asle.org/site/members/login/>:

- Renew Your Membership
- View ISLE Online
- Search Membership Directory
- Update your Directory Entry

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