



MFA in Writing & Literature • Stony Brook Southampton • Winter/Spring 2011

## On the Horizon: Accolades, New Work & Upcoming Events

---

### Roger Rosenblatt Does It Again

On the heels of his bestseller, *Making Toast*, Roger Rosenblatt's newest book, *Unless It Moves the Human Heart* has just been published by Ecco, a Harper Collins imprint, and is already in bookstores. Subtitled *The Craft and Art of Writing*, this book has special significance for Stony Brook Southampton's faculty and students since Roger's 2008 "Writing Everything" class is used as a narrative vehicle.



The cast of (real) characters is identified by first names only but will be immediately recognizable to members of our community. Written with the same humor and humanist generosity that endears Roger to his students and fellow faculty, *Unless It Moves the Human Heart* is an instructive reflection on and from his classes from which both writers and teachers will gain useful insights and will be a treasured memento for all who have been privileged to participate.

Roger prefaces this work with a tongue-in-cheek confession: "Before you read this book, I must confess a fraud. What I present as a word-for-word account of the conversations that went on in my writing classes...is fiction, top to bottom...nobody really said what I say he said in class. But the students are real," he adds, "...just as gifted, lovable and annoying as I have drawn them." This book is a valuable, memorable account of what it really means to be in a writing workshop.

---

### Kudos!

The annual "Stars of Stony Brook Gala" will honor Academy Award-winning actress, Dame **Julie Andrews** and her daughter, MFA faculty member, **Emma Walton Hamilton**, at Chelsea Pier's Pier Sixty on Monday, April 4, 2011. The two have collaborated on a number of *New York Times* bestselling books, including the *Julie Andrews' Collection of Poems, Songs and Lullabies*, and the *Dumpy the Dump Truck* series of picture books and board books.

In addition, Dame Andrews and Ms. Walton-Hamilton have been nominated for a Grammy Award in the "Best Spoken Word Album for Children" category for their audio version of *The Very Fairy Princess*.

Heartiest congratulations to them both!

---

## France Loves Hegi

by Martine Combaluzier

Ursula Hegi's 2007 *Stones from the River*, published by Galaade, has just received *Le prix des lecteurs du Livre de poche* in the distinguished literature category. In France, the book is known under the title of *Trudi la naine*. It was selected out of 8 novels that were picked each month by 150 readers as the potential winners in two categories: *Le Choix des libraires* and *Le coup de coeur*.

## Thinking About Your Thesis?

Then you need to come to an important information session offered by Dr. Carla Caglioti, on Wednesday, February 23rd at 7 p.m. in Southampton's Radio Lounge. All questions answered. Even some you didn't know you had. BTW—if you're not yet ready to sign up for your thesis credits, you'll nonetheless discover valuable information about planning your way up to that point! Don't miss this event!

---

## Florence. . .Fantastico!

by Christian McLean

They dusted off their passports, they sorted out their Euros and they repeated after Christian: “*Vorrei un cappuccino.*” Conference Time Italian-style. We had twenty-five students sign up for our inaugural Florence Writers Conference in Florence, South Carolina – wait, no – Florence, Italy! Workshops in the Novel and Creative Nonfiction were led by Ursula Hegi and Matthew Klam respectively, and were complemented by electives on Italo Calvino, contemporary Italian poetry, and the art of food writing.

With an architectural walking tour, a weekend jaunt to the Tuscan countryside and a trip to the Uffizi Gallery, the ten-day conference left those students dizzy (maybe it was the wine). “We tried to construct this conference as the educational opportunity of a lifetime—an exploration of both the historical and contemporary arts scene in Florence,” said Conference Director Christian McLean. You might have followed the conference on facebook. The posts were unbelievably fun.

So, there's no harm in thinking about Firenze for next January. And. . .we may have some other geographical surprises up our sleeve. Stay tuned!



Dr. Carla Caglioti overlooking the Arno. Il Ponte Vecchio is featured in the background.

## Spotlight

### Exciting Events in One MFA Student's Life

by Christine Pacson

Victor Giannini has recently been featured in numerous publications, including: the CARRIER PIGEON: Illustrated Fiction and Fine Art ([www.carrierpigeonmag.com](http://www.carrierpigeonmag.com)), where his stories appeared in each of the four issues in production, three of which are: "Ramses Sleeps for You:" (Issue 1), "Black Hole Pacifica" (Issue 2) and "The Shark Engine Enigma" (Issue 4), which was also included in the anthology, "Satirica" by Cowboy Logic Press. Last November 19th, he gave a reading on the Magazine's launch party in the Blackburn Gallery in Manhattan.

He is one of the lead writers for an essay in a book currently being proposed on the (a)Bonac Project by local photographer Tara Israel, which was recently featured in *The New York Times*. His story "Thank You, Death Robot" was featured in the Silverthought Press Anthology, which was also named after and inspired by his story. The anthology won the Silver Award for Best Science Fiction / Fantasy in the 2010 IPPY Awards. "Thank You, Death Robot" is also featured in another anthology, "Silverthought: Ignition," along with another of his stories, "The Monster of Sunset Park."

Recently, he signed autographs at the New York Comic-con, which had approximately 77,000 attendees this year. He is a regular contributing artist to *Space & Time* magazine, the longest running print magazine for science fiction, fantasy, poetry and art, since its launch 40 years ago. In addition, his underground skateboard graphic novel, "Skeightfast Dyephun," which he has also written and illustrated, is preparing for the release of its second volume. This, along with his skateboard designs, have been showcased in a number of skate magazines. His website, [www.doomage.com](http://www.doomage.com), contains constant updates of his projects and where to find them.

Currently, he is also an instructor at the Young American Writers Project (YAWP), here in Southampton.



## Major Pettigrew Featured in Amazon's Best Books of the Month

Helen Simonson's debut novel, *Major Pettigrew's Last Stand*, is one of the nine books featured by Amazon.com in its "Best Books of the Month" for March 2010. It tells the story of an English widower, Major Pettigrew, trying to prevent greedy relatives from selling a treasured family heirloom. Along the way, he finds an ally in Jasmina Ali, a widowed Pakistani shopkeeper. *The New York Times* likens it to "the polished work of Alexander McCall Smith" and *The New York Times Book Review* hails it as a "beautiful little love story which is told with skill and humor" with a happy ending deserving "all available prizes."



## YouTube...Does Something For Us (with apologies to Cole Porter)

Thanks to Magdalene Brandeis for capturing so many incredible moments last summer during the Writers Conferences as she videotaped speakers such as Christian McLean, Billy Collins, Daniel Menaker, Timothy Liu, Julie Sheehan, Elizabeth Strout, Andrew Solomon, Meg Wolitzer and many others. Check us out on YouTube!

Here's the link:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/mfawriting>

Once you've reached our new channel, click on the rectangular yellow button to subscribe to it.

Let's go viral. Do do that voodoo that you do so well. . .



## The Great War And Its Literature

This is a free four session introduction to the history of World War I (1914-1918) and some of the outstanding literature (including movies) associated with it, taught by Ana Daniel. The focus will be on why this was the war that changed everything and ushered in what we think of as modern times. The social and political conflicts that led to the war will be considered, as well as its impact on the rest of the 20th century.

Ana Daniel did her doctoral work at New York University under the direction of Tony Judt, a leading historian of modern Europe and author of *Postwar*. She has taught history at NYU and Southampton College.

Dates and times of the meetings of the course will be announced by e-mail early in the Spring term. To sign up contact Christian McLean, x25007 or christian.mclean@stonybrook.edu.



## A Writer's Summer 2011



We've got dates! Just because the sun sets at 4:30 doesn't mean our minds aren't on the summer. We've decided to shake things up this year to keep you on your toes – we're cheeky that way. Session I: (Children's Literature, Playwriting, Screenwriting) will be July 6-10. Here's the lineup.

### Session I: Playwriting Conference

Playwriting with Susan Smith Blackburn Award-winning playwright, actress and educator Leslie Ayvazian

Playwriting with Obie-award winning playwright Adam Bock

### Session I: Children's Literature Conference

"The Write Stuff: An Author and Publisher Shares Trade Secrets for Crafting Works of Nonfiction and Historical Fiction for Children and Young Adults" Newbery, Caldecott and Coretta Scott King honoree author Andrea Davis Pinkney

"All in the Telling: Writing the Middle Grade Novel" National Book Award, Tor Seidler

"Hearing Voices: Finding the Right Voice When Writing YA Fiction" National Book Award finalist and ALA Best Book of the Year Award-winning YA author Patricia McCormick

"How to Extract a Fable: Connecting with Meaningful Messages, Inner Wisdom and Personal Mission When Writing for Children" #1 NYTimes bestselling author/illustrator Peter H. Reynolds

"You Don't Have to Choose: Lessons Learned While Balancing Playful Picture Books with Rigorous Research" *New York Times* bestselling author Chris Barton

### Session I: Screenwriting

Building Stronger Scenes with Andrew Bienen

Structuring Your Screenplay with Christina Lazaridi

Finding Your Story with Frank Pugliese

Breaking The Back of Your Story with Paula Brancato

The Art & Craft of Film Adaptation with Stephen Molton

### Session II: (Writers Conference) will run from July 13-24.

Poetry...Billy Collins

Personal Essay...David Rakoff

Creative Nonfiction...Matthew Klam

Playwriting...Jon Robin Baitz

Poetry...Julie Sheehan

Poetry...Mark Doty

Musical Book...Marsha Norman

Fiction...Melissa Bank

Playwriting...Emily Mann

Memoir...Roger Rosenblatt

Novel...Meg Wolitzer



Check out our website [www.stonybrook.edu/writers](http://www.stonybrook.edu/writers) in February for details, applications and all the trimmings. Expect some new initiatives, talented new workshops leaders (Mark Doty anyone?) and the usual brilliance of Southampton in the summer.



## Come Join Us In Our Spring Courses:

### Southampton

The Novel — *Ursula Hegi*

Thursdays, 2:20-5:10

Poem as Object — *TBA*

Saturdays, 10:00 - 4:00

Writing for Television — *Mitchell Kriegman*

Wednesday, 4:00-6:50

The Essay, the Magazine Article, and the Biography — *Neal Gabler*

Mondays, 5:20-8:10

Writing the Feature — *Andrew Botsford*

Tuesdays, 2:20-5:10

Travel as Literature — *Robert Ginna*

Tuesdays, 5:20-8:10

Reading & Writing the Popular Novel — *John Westermann*

Mondays, 2:20-5:10

Humor & Truth — *Jules Feiffer*

Wednesdays, 12:50-3:40

Practicum in Arts Administration — *Christian McLean*

Days and Times TBA

Practicum in Publishing & Editing — *Lou Ann Walker*

Days and Times TBA

Practicum in Teaching Writing — *TBA*

Thursday, 5:20-8:10

## Manhattan Intensives & Workshops

Playwriting — *William Burford*

Tuesdays 6:00-9:00 & Saturdays 10:00-1:00

Russian Novel and Contemporary Fiction — *Kaylie Jones*

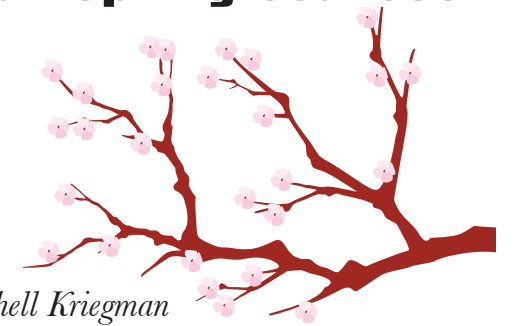
Wednesdays, 6:00-8:50

Writing Everything — *Roger Rosenblatt*

Saturdays, 11:00-5:00

Advanced Writing Workshop — *Lou Ann Walker*

Mondays, 5:20-8:10



## Writers Speak

Back by popular demand: The lecture series that launched a thousand. . .oh, never mind. Just come and listen and learn!

**February 9: The Inmates Run the Asylum**—a forum for MFA students who have ideas for activities, clubs and campus representation to pitch their projects and get organized. SRL

**February 16: Frederic Tuten**, novelist—*Self Portraits: Fiction* (short stories). SRL

**February 21: Roger Rosenblatt**, novelist and memoirist—reading from *Unless It Moves the Human Heart*. NYC

**March 2: Megan McAndrew**, author of the novel *Dreaming in French*. SRL

**March 23: Dinitia Smith**—*New York Times* journalist & author of *The Illusionist*. SRL

**March 30: Annette Handley Chandler**—Adaptation lecture—Duke Lecture Hall, Southampton

**April 11: TSR: The Southampton Review Launch** (By invitation). NYC

**April 13: L.B. Thompson**—poet & Whiting Award Winner. SRL

**May 2:** Editor & novelist **Daniel Menaker** & novelist **Meg Wolitzer**—reading from their work. NYC

**May 4:** MFA students & alumni in fiction, poetry & nonfiction. SRL

**May 7:** Manhattan Spring Script Reads, 10am - 5pm. NYC  
Scenes from scripts written in Spring courses of the MFA in Writing Literature Program will be read by seasoned actors.

**May 11:** MFA screenwriters & playwrights. SRL

**May 16:** Manhattan Student Writers Speak. NYC

As our first wave of Manhattan students prepare to exit their final thesis semesters, celebrate the term's and program's accomplishments and cheer on your classmates at our first ever Manhattan Writers Speak!

All events begin at 7 p.m.

SRL = Stony Brook Southampton Radio Lounge

NYC = Stony Brook Manhattan



Bill Henderson, editor of *The Pushcart Prize*, Julie Sheehan, David Lehman *Best American Poetry Series* editor during a memorable Fall 2010 Writers Speak talk.







## Prizes, Productions & Publications: Alumni and Student Accomplishments:

**Barbara Bellman's** play, "The Wine Cellar," had a staged reading in Washington, D.C.

**Jennifer Greenstein's** essay, "M.V.P.: Most Vacuous Praise," was published in *The New York Times*.

**Patrick Hanrahan's** story, "The Waterford Connection," is featured in *A Pint and a Haircut: True Irish Stories*, which was launched on October 15th, 2010 in Ireland. The stories were put together as a fundraiser for Haiti under the auspices of the international charity Concern.

**Claudine Jalajas** published an essay, "Buzz & Woody," in the anthology *From the Heart*. All proceeds go to childrens' hospitals. <http://writeforcharity.wordpress.com>

**Mindy Kronenberg** published *Images of America: Miller Place* with Arcadia Publishers.

**Dorothy Marcic's** musical, *Respect: A Musical Journey of Women*, will play this winter in Phoenix, Baltimore, and Coral Springs, Florida.

**Bob Morris** recently published an essay in the *Lives* column of *The New York Times Magazine*. He also writes a weekly humor column for *The New York Observer*, and has published essays in *Town & Country*, and reported pieces in *Elle* and *Architectural Digest*.

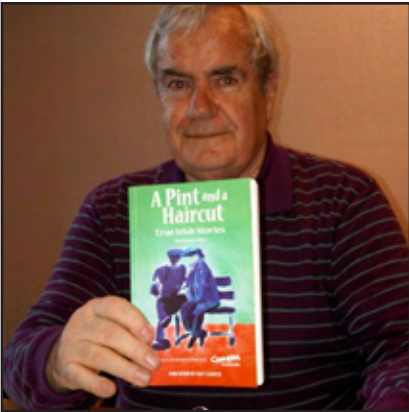
**Tammy Nuzzo-Morgan** has two books of poetry, *Chasing Clouds* and *Life's a Beach*, coming out in the U.K.

**Eileen Obser's** essay "Prisoner of War" was published in *The East Hampton Star*. The essay is part of a collection she's writing. She will be a guest lecturer at the Puerto Vallarta Writer's Conference in Mexico this coming February.

**Joanne Pateman's** essay "Cullenberry" was accepted by *The East Hampton Star*.

**Phebe Szatmari** was selected to be one of six poets to study with Paul Muldoon, Poetry Editor of *The New Yorker*. She was also featured on [poetryvlog.com](http://poetryvlog.com) and the Sayville Patch's website.

**Michelle Whittaker** received a *Pushcart Prize's* Special Mention for "Wolf," originally published in *The Long Island Quarterly*. Her poem "The Goddamn Fire" was accepted for the forthcoming issue of *Drunken Boat*.



---

## YAWP

The Young American Writers Project, an important initiative of the MFA in Writing & Literature Program, brings teaching artists into area schools to work with middle and high school students in the areas of: Playwriting, Poetry, Fiction and Personal Essay. Many of these teaching artists are MFA students and graduates of the program. Come join us for the March 26th performance! By the way, on March 6th, we're having a special Teaching Artists and Prospective Schools get-together. This event is a great opportunity for students who want to be involved in the YAWP process. This Spring's Teaching Practicum, which will be meeting on Thursdays from 5:20 - 8:10, is a perfect introduction to working with young students.

# MFA in Writing & Literature

STONY BROOK  
SOUTHAMPTON

239 Montauk Highway  
Southampton, NY 11968  
631.632.5030  
www.stonybrook.edu/mfa

## Upcoming Events

### Writers Speak

Join us on Wednesday Evenings in Southampton (on Mondays in Manhattan) at 7 p.m. during Spring semester for this illuminating, entertaining series of talks by leading writers.

## The MFA Program in Writing & Literature

**Robert Reeves**  
*Director*

**Carla Caglioti**  
*Associate Director*

**Adrienne Unger**  
*Administrative Coordinator*

**Alan Alda**  
**Jon Robin Baitz**  
**Melissa Bank**  
**Magdalene Brandeis**  
**William Burford**  
**Will Chandler**  
**Billy Collins**  
**Jules Feiffer**  
**Neal Gabler**  
**Robert Emmett Ginna**  
**Stephen Hamilton**  
**Annette Handley Chandler**  
**Ursula Hegi**

**Kaylie Jones**  
**Matthew Klam**  
**Mitchell Kriegman**  
**Christian McLean**  
**Marsha Norman**  
**David Rakoff**  
**Roger Rosenblatt**  
**Julie Sheehan**  
**Lou Ann Walker**  
**Emma Walton Hamilton**  
**John Westermann**  
**Meg Wolitzer**

