



Works Cited

Department of English & Theatre

Theatre Program Promotes Production & Performance Skills

Volume 2, Issue 8

Fall 2011

"Theatre is so much more than actors in the footlights," says Rich Larsen, professor and director of the Academic Theatre Program in the Dept. of English & Theatre, "and prospective majors and their parents or guardians need to know that." There are many theatre-based employment possibilities in addition to acting and directing, he notes. "The skills we foster in our majors and minors can also be put to good use in other employment sectors. Yet it's surprising—no, it's challenging—to realize how few potential majors and their families are aware of this truth." As a consequence, he goes on to say, the program's educational mission begins long before students actually show up in the classroom.

Larsen is quick to point out there are no employment guarantees for anyone pursuing an interest in the arts. "Life comes with few guarantees of any kind," he observes, "but a good undergraduate theatre program can equip students with a rich variety of

real world skill sets." When a campus-visiting mom or dad asks what their son or daughter can do with a theatre major, he is inclined to answer, "What can't they do?"

"That may seem to put me out on the limb," he admits, "but our program offers students the chance to acquire abilities and awarenesses that can help to get them launched in the bill-paying world. Maybe in theatre. Maybe in

other fields such as law, management, sales & marketing, public relations, education, the always evolving world of applied technology, and so on."

"We're enhancing our instructional efforts in the production of theatre."

According to Larsen, the department's program continues to enrich all aspects of its curriculum. "We're enhancing our instructional efforts in the production of theatre," he says. This entails implementation of new and improved courses that develop skills in technical direction, playwriting, box office management, community outreach through new social media, and theatre development through fundraising and grant writing

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Congratulations!

Susan **Mendez**, assistant professor, received the university's Excellence in Integrating Diversity in Learning award for AY 2010-11. Vanessa M. **Relvas**, Psychology/Theatre Minor '12 received the Michael B. Bagdzinski Memorial Scholarship for 2012. Lecturer Teresa **Grettano** received a Diversity Initiatives grant from the Office of Equity and Diversity to fund a public lecture on November 17 by Moustafa Bayoumi, award-winning author of *How Does It Feel To Be A Problem? Being Young and Arab in America*.

(Continued on page 2)



Notes from the Chair

What if Robert Frost had grown up in an era of standardized tests?

Four Roads Not Taken

Five roads diverged in a yellow wood,
and sorry I could not travel each,
and be one traveler, long I stood,
and looked down one as far as I could,
and checked out the others, just as I should,
and pulled at the strings on my sweatshirt hood,
and told myself, *uh-oh—this doesn't look good;*
and *I don't have this problem when I'm at the beach.*

Each looked like the other, each equally fair—
and all too much alike for the likes of me.
I knew two were likely to lead nowhere,
and one was misleading (a clever snare!)
and if I could get down to a final pair,
a coin-flip would probably work from there,
but really, at that point I didn't much care,
for I'd run out of test-taking strategies.

All five that morning equally lay
in brilliant autumn colors dressed,
which wasn't helpful, I had to say,
as I wondered again if road *b* or *a* |
or *d*, *c*, or *e* was really the way
to where I was headed. Enough, OK?
There'd be no discernment on this day!
I closed my eyes, and I cursed. And guessed.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
from some still-dim futurity.
Five roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took a road more travelled by.
I could have chosen, but didn't try—
I'm not a very reflective guy—
I dispensed with the *if*, and ignored the *why*—
and that's why you've never heard of me.

— Jody DeRitter

Theatre Program

(Continued from page 1)

as well as a continuing commitment to the training of actors and directors.

“As a complex and collaborative art,” Larsen says, “successful theatre in the wider world, just as on the stage of our Royal Theatre, requires input from a great many people with a great many skills.” He mentions the familiar phrase “cast and crew” and points up the limiting potential of that binary notion.

“Ideally, we want our majors and minors to possess a complement of theatre-related skills that permit them to go forward in any number of directions. To the old notion of cast and crew we much prefer the idea of a theatre company, a group of versatile theatre-making young people who can do, if not everything, many things well.”

In the past fifteen years, the Academic Theatre Program has seen its graduates find employment as scenic



designers, costume designers, stage managers, actors, directors, lighting and sound designers, and theatre managers. An impressive number of recent graduates are enrolled in top-flight grad programs. Some work in university theatre programs as professional staff. Others have applied the skills discovered and honed in the Scranton program to occupations and positions not directly related to theatre.

“We’ve had and have some terrific students,” Larsen says, “but credit must go to our faculty and professional staff. Michael O’Steen and Hank Willenbrink possess outstanding professional credentials and years of experience in making good theatre. Our recently hired Technical Director Edward Ross has enriched our ability to offer instruction in emerging technology-based aspects of theatre such as web design and theatre promotion and development through social media.” He cites Ross’s design experience on Broadway and his leadership in the launching of several theatre companies around the country. Additionally, Larsen says, the program routinely employs guest artists of national and regional reputation to work as directors and designers.

“It’s very satisfying to work with so many able colleagues,” Larsen concludes. “Now if we only had a fulltime costume designer.” 📖

Professor Lawhon Publishes A Novel

"I'm of that generation that read Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With The Wind* with avidity," says adjunct professor and long-time University community member Patrician Patton Lawhon, "and I spent much time in the South as a girl and young woman because both my father and my husband were career military officers. So perhaps it's not surprising I would write a novel that tells the story of Scarlett's mother."

Lawhon wrote a first draft of the novel in the summer of 1990 at her family's summer home on Lake Wallenpaupack, she explains, and many drafts ensued. "It's something of a mystery really, the novel, I mean. There's a story behind the story of Ellen's life. My novel explores the early life of Ellen Robillard and her brief but passionate love affair with Phillippe Christophe."

That romance figures importantly in explaining who Ellen is and why she is the woman she is, Lawhon says. Phillippe was the love of her life, Lawhon notes, but as readers of Mitchell's novel know, Ellen Robillard marries the much older Gerald O'Hara and settles into her life as wife and mother at

Tara, the celebrated O'Hara plantation in northern Georgia. Much of the novel is devoted to the challenges Ellen faces as she attends to the welfare of her family and the demands of managing a large plantation and its slave population.



"It seemed to me that Ellen's story, the full story, was every bit as engaging as Scarlett's story. So I've tried to write it."

Lawhon points out that our nation's Civil War, as it is commonly referred to by northerners, remained a powerful presence in the minds of people in the south in the mid-twentieth century when she was an undergraduate at the University of North Carolina at

Greensboro, then a women's college. Lawhon had friends whose grandmothers had vivid, often very painful memories of the war and its devastations.

"I remember there was this joke about the town of Concord in North Carolina. Florida-bound travelers from the north would stop their cars and ask, Is this town Concord? Hell, no, the townsfolk would respond, just outnumbered."

Lawhon's novel, *Ellen Robillard O'Hara*, is available at Amazon.com.

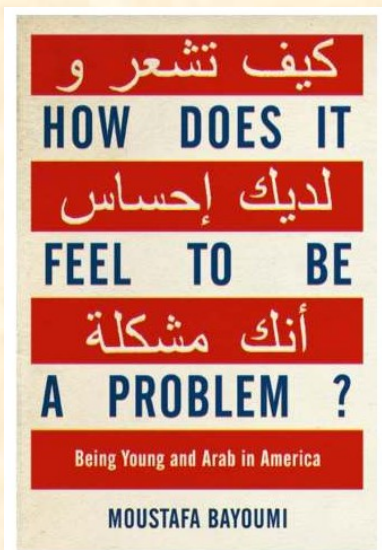
First Year Seminar Attracts Strong Response

Teresa Grettano, lecturer, has enjoyed positive response to her first year seminar, "Reading 9/11" (WRTG 184), from the university and NE Pennsylvania communities. The Office of Community Relations ran a story on



the course in its October newsletter. In response to the story, retired Army colonel Mark Volk, Scranton class of '77 and '81, and now executive vice-president at Lackawanna College, volunteered to meet with seminar participants in early November to discuss his experience at the Pentagon on 9/11, his work with national security, and his military service in the Middle East.

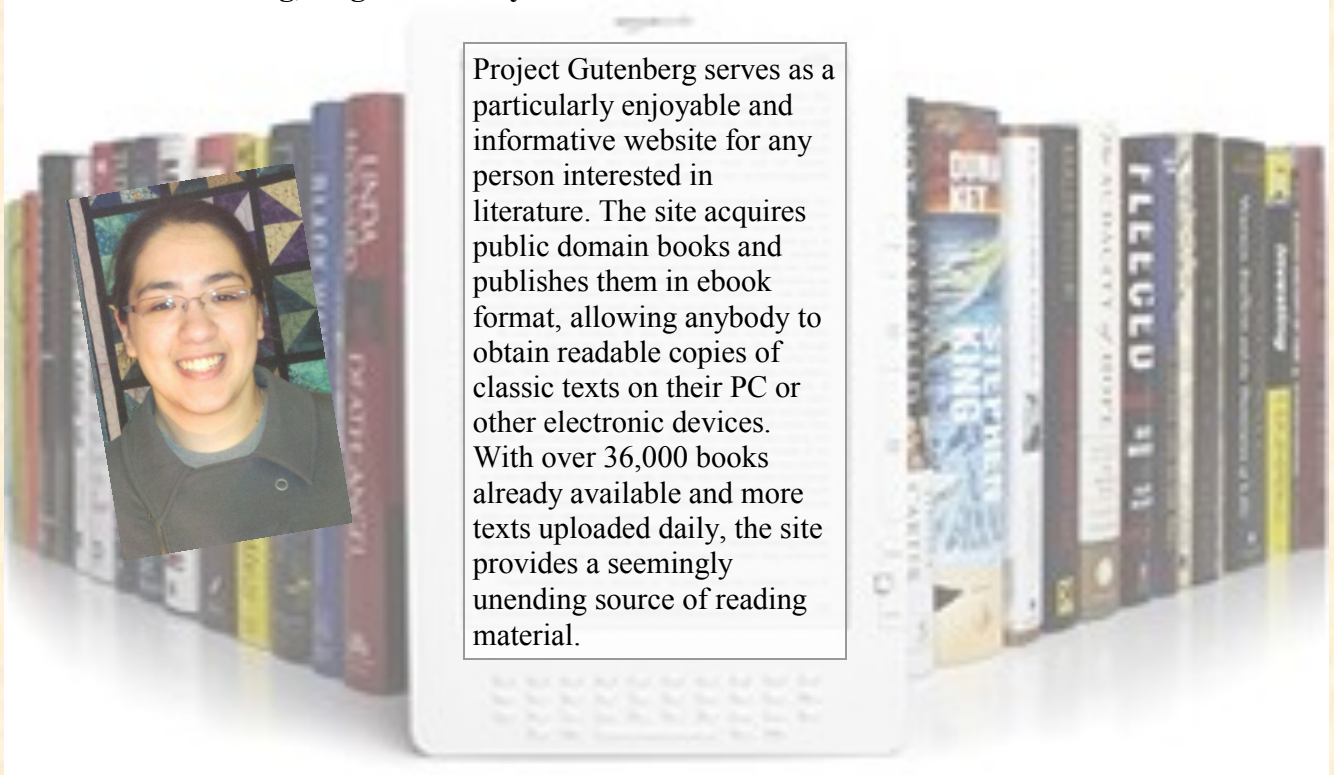
The Office of Equity and Diversity awarded Grettano a grant to fund a public lecture by Moustafa Bayoumi, author of a principle text used in Grettano's course. (See **Congratulations!**, p. 1) The Education for Justice program also awarded Grettano a grant to take approximately 50 students to the 9/11 Memorial and Museum and the WTC Tribute Center on November 12. Father Rick Malloy, vice president for University Ministries, gave a recent talk to seminar participants about Reconciliation after 9/11



Works Cited Asks:

Have you a Favorite Website or Blog?

Rose Marie C. Wong, English/History/Honors '12—



Susan Mendez, assistant professor—feministryangosling.tumblr.com. I'm what some people call a technophobe or techno-neophyte. I do shop online, use email, and read news articles on the web, but don't spend a lot of time with sites or blogs. However I'm a big fan of feminist theory, and a friend sent me a link to this amusing site. It creates feminist flashcards by referencing feminist theorists, their books and theories, and placing remarks in the mouth, so to speak, of actor Ryan Gosling whose photos are prominently displayed. Every card begins with "his" greeting--"Hey Girl"--and goes on to say some funny stuff. Check it out. The site is both smart and humorous—like many feminists.

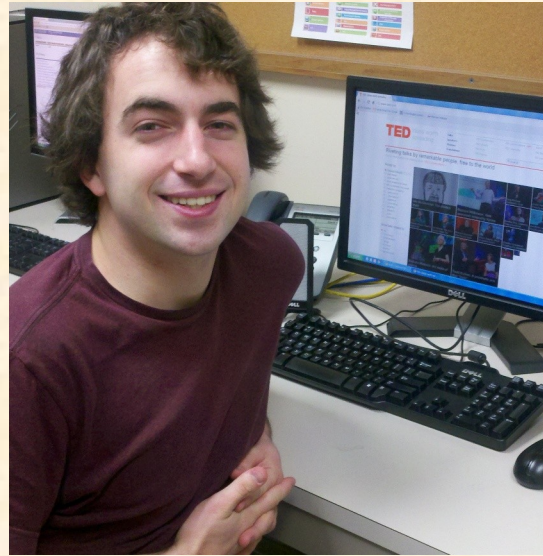
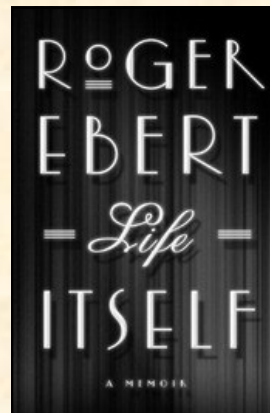
Hey girl.

My eyes are up here.



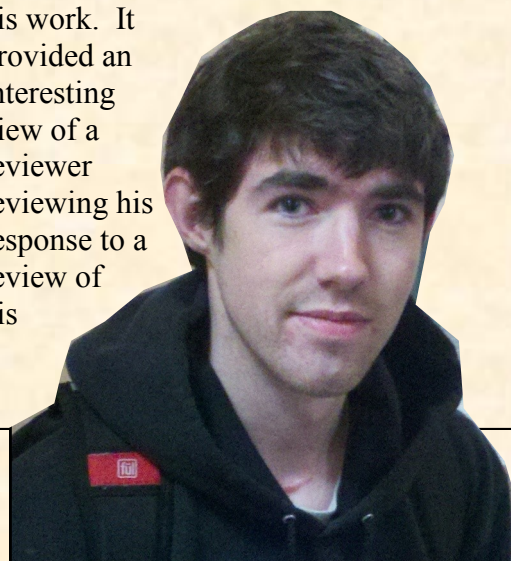
Ryan Pipan, English/Honors '11—www.ted.com.

I don't blog, nor do I frequent any, however I do use Google Reader to subscribe to updates from selected websites. These include The New York Times, Google News, Word of the Day, and my favorite, TED. TED, which stand for "Technology, Entertainment, Design", posts videos daily on the aforementioned topics that run anywhere from a couple of minutes to a half hour. TED talks offer a quick and easy way to stay up-to-date with innovations in the arts and sciences.

**Kevin Rimel, English '12—blogs.suntimes.com/ebert/**

One blog I visit occasionally is maintained by film critic Roger Ebert. In addition to providing commentary on films, Ebert posts entries about his writing process and experiences as a professional

writer. A recent post went into detail about the writing and revising of his newly published memoir and the joy he feels when reading a positive review of his work. It provided an interesting view of a reviewer reviewing his response to a review of his

**Alexandria****Stephen Whittaker, professor — www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/POxy.**

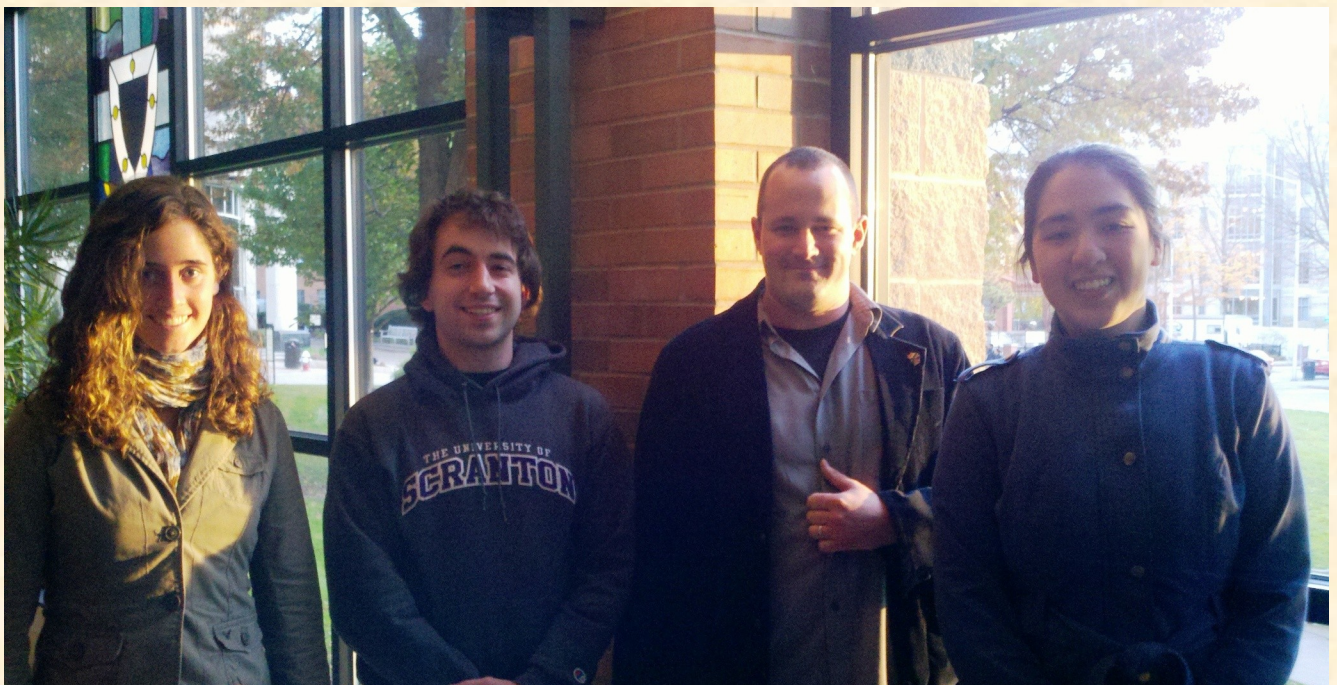
James Joyce liked to think of culture as an archaeological midden, a dump whose contents persist even in decay. He was also fond of the concepts of the palimpsest, which is a manuscript that has been repeatedly written over by later scribes, and pentimenti, in which bits of an older painting can be seen below the surface of a newer. There is an ancient manuscript dump in Egypt, named after a backwater district along the Nile, named after a sharp-nosed fish whose habitat that long dry backwater used to border. Archaeologists from Oxford have been documenting the excavation of the site. I'm a big fan of the Oxyrhynchus site. The site has itself taken on the character of a midden.

**Oxyrhynchus****NILE
DELTA****Fayum**




A fab photo of the cast and crew of The University Players' recent production of *The Clean House*, by Sarah Ruhl, directed by Jose Zayas. Principal actors were Vanessa Relvas, Sarah Neitz, Catherine Fischer, Camille Reinecke, and Joe McGurl. 📖

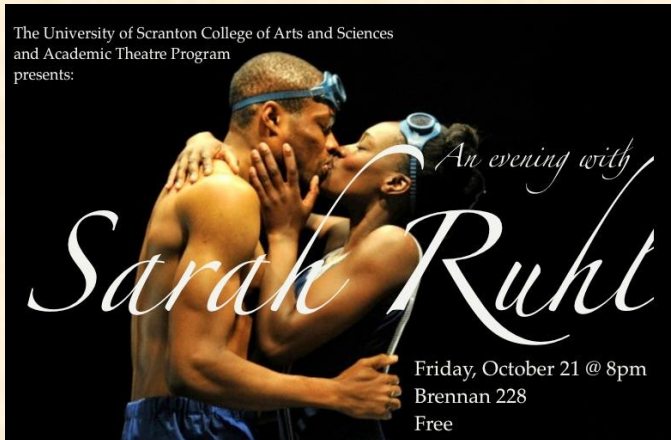
A Quartet of Honorable Seniors



Pictured are the four senior English majors in the University Honors program: Alexis **Sullivan**, Ryan **Pipan**, Michael **Farley**, and Rose Marie **Wong**. Farley's thesis title is "Versions of War: Reflections on Combat in Three Genres," Pipan writes on "The Archer-Shee Boy: Historical and Shakespearean Antecedents of Terence Rattigan's *The Winslow Boy* and his Descendents in Films by David Mamet and Kenneth Branagh," Sullivan examines "'The Dead' in James Joyce and John Huston," and Wong mines "The Golden Age of Science Fiction: America's Reaction to Nuclear Power." 📖

Dept. & the U Savor Time with Distinguished Dramatist

Playwright Sarah Ruhl, author of the recent University Players production of *The Clean House*, graced the department and the campus-wide community with her presence on Friday, October 21, thanks to funding from the office of CAS Dean Brian Conniff. Recipient of a MacArthur “genius grant” and Tony and Pulitzer prize nominee, Ruhl met in the late afternoon with an appreciative group of students and faculty for an informal Q & A about the challenges and rewards of a writing career. Her candor, good humor, and sage counsel were enthusiastically received. Our chapter of Sigma Tau Delta hosted a reception in her honor. The presentation, “An Evening with Sarah Ruhl,” was well-received by a large university audience. Hank Willenbrink, assistant professor, was responsible for contacting Ruhl and arranging her visit to Scranton. He reports that Ruhl was favorably impressed with her glimpses of the play in rehearsal and the stage set under construction. “She appreciated the quality on display in the production under way,” he says. “and voiced an interest in returning to spend time with the department.” 



Readings, Recent & Upcoming

On **Wednesday, November 16**, the University Reading Series welcomed to campus Josh Harmon, a writer-in-residence and professor at Vassar College. Harmon met with students in Joe Kraus' creative nonfiction workshop in the afternoon and gave a free public reading of his work to an enthusiastic gathering of students and faculty in the evening.

On **Thursday, December 8**, a reading of work by contributors to the Fall issue of *Esprit*, the university's review of arts and letters, will begin at 8 pm in Room 405 of the DeNaples Center. Recipients of the Berrier Poetry Award, the Bettier Prose Award, and the *Esprit* Art & Photography Award will be announced by faculty moderator Stephen Whittaker. The event will be hosted by editor-in-chief Ryan Pipan.

CLOSE READING



Katie **Roholt**, English/Theology/Honors '11, was voted Outstanding English Major by the English faculty in the Spring. Katie is pursuing a JD and an MBA in a three year joint program at UPenn's law school and Wharton

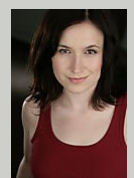
School of Finance. Brianna **Noll**, English/Honors '05, is pursuing her Ph.D. at University of Illinois Chicago and T.A.-ing for a Medieval & Renaissance course. She has new poems in *Salamander* and hopes to teach an undergraduate poetry writing workshop in the Spring. Alison **Swety**, English/Philosophy '09, is an editor for an academic journals publisher in Philadelphia. She's applying to MFA in fiction programs for Fall 2012. Faculty Specialist Beth



Sindaco, Esq., presented a paper, “Problem-Based Learning: Pedagogical Panacea or Pit of Vipers?” as the annual meetings of the Assn. for Business Communication in Montreal in October.

The paper derives from her experience teaching the new Business Communication course.

Kate **Brennan**, English/Theatre '03, is acting in Sarah Ruhl's *Dead Man's Cell Phone* at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia. Janelle **Caso**, Theatre '10, is Production Stage Manager for the Goodwin Theatre in Philadelphia.



(Continued on page 8)

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Pride
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Passion
PASSION
Promise
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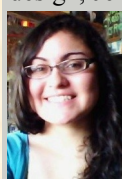
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CLOSE READING (Continued from page 7)

Matt **Silva**, Theatre/Communications '07, pursues at MFA in Directing at Florida State University after several years as an award-winning director in Philadelphia. Jason **Brubaker**, Theatre Minor '07, works at the Off-Broadway Irish Repertory Theatre. Samantha **Morales**, Theatre/History '11, under her stage name Samantha Berenger, is acting in *Normal Mind* at the Bridge Theatre in midtown Manhattan. Meanwhile Eileen **Patterson**, English/Philosophy '08, performs in *Central Avenue Breakdown*, a new musical that is part of the New York Musical Theatre Festival 2011. Jeff **Trainor**, English/Theatre '06, recently closed in a production of *Sophocles: Seven Sicknesses* with the Hypocrites Theatre Company at the Chopin Theatre in Chicago. Associate professor Michael **O'Steen** directed and choreographed the musical *The Drowsy Chaperone* for Theatre By The Sea, the Actors Equity company in Warwick, R.I., in August. Michael also directed the recent University Players production of *Wait Until Dark*. Rich **Larsen**, professor, did the scenic and lighting design, Je **Tellier** designed the costumes, our Technical Director Edward **Ross**



did the sound design, and Sam **Dzirko**, English '12, was production stage manager. Len **Gougeon**, professor, has an essay, "Emerson, Self-Reliance, and the Politics of Democracy" in *A Political Companion to Ralph Waldo Emerson* (UKentucky Press 2011), in the introduction to which the editors note that since the 1990s "we now study a very different Emerson from the 1880s through the 1980s" due to Len's *Virtue's Hero* (1990), "universally regarded as the book that initiated this new era in Emerson scholarship." Art **Posocco**, Philosophy/Writing Minor '06, works as an Office Applications Specialist at the Epidemiology Center of Boston University. Says Art, "It's an administrative job, but I luckily get to use a surprising amount of the publishing and design skills I developed while on the *Esprit* staff." Marc **Graci**, English '05, MS Secondary Ed. '07, teaches at La Paz Middle School in Salinas, CA, and thanks Dr. Fraustino "for broadening my horizons." Aleks **Zywicki**, English '10, teaches at Bayonne High School in New Jersey. Susan **Mendez**, assistant professor, has an essay, "Senora Nina, o Senorita: the story of Puerto Rico as Nation, Commonwealth, or Ethno-nation through women in Judith Ortiz-Cofer's *The Meaning of Consuelo*" in *Confluencia: Revista Hispanica de Cultura y Literatura* (Fall 2011). Gemma **Williams**, English '10, and Chelsea **Cannon**, Theatre '11, are applying to grad programs in Library Science. Jenna **Gilligan**, English '10, works as a publicity assistant with Da Capo Press while completing her Masters in Publishing & Writing at Emerson College in Boston. Joe **Kraus**, associate professor, gave the 2011 Horwitz Family Lecture at Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies in Chicago in June. His talk was called "An Accidental Anarchist: How I Got Drawn into the Lazarus Averbuch Affair." Joe also lectured on "Framing Roth" for the Schemel Forum's University for a Day program in September. John Meredith **Hill**, professor, has a poem, "Weathering," featured in the current exhibit of poems and paintings on the theme of windows at the Butternut Gallery in Montrose, PA. Jay's poem will appear in a chapbook published by the gallery in November. Joe **Koivisto**, English '09, has left his position as a technical writer for the Hershey Corporation and become an instructional design consultant for the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue. He will write training materials and design training courses for use by more than 2,000 employees and agents statewide. 



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