

# ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHIES of Presenters

## The Norman Mailer Society

### 2009 Conference

**Camille Paglia**, the scholar and culture critic, is the University Professor of Humanities and Media Studies at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, where she has taught since 1984. She received her B.A. from the State University of New York at Binghamton in 1968 and her M.Phil. and Ph.D. degrees from Yale University in 1971 and 1974 respectively.

Her books are: *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson* (Yale University Press, 1990; Vintage Books, 1991, national bestseller); *Sex, Art, and American Culture* (Vintage Books, 1992, national bestseller); *Vamps & Tramps: New Essays* (Vintage Books, 1994, national bestseller); and *The Birds*, a study of Alfred Hitchcock published in 1998 by the British Film Institute in its Film Classics Series. Her fifth book, *Break, Blow, Burn: Camille Paglia Reads Forty-Three of the World's Best Poems*, was released by Pantheon Books in 2005 and became a national bestseller, as did its paperback edition published by Vintage Books in 2006. Her work is internationally known and has been widely translated. Her next book, a study of visual images that will be a companion book to *Break, Blow, Burn*, is under contract to Pantheon Books. Her third essay collection is also under contract to Pantheon.

Prof. Paglia is a columnist at Salon.com, of which she was a co-founding contributor, beginning with its debut issue in 1995. She has written numerous articles on art, literature, popular culture, feminism, politics, and religion for publications around the world. She has lectured and appeared on television and radio extensively in the United States and abroad.

#### **Allen Ahearn Abstract “Collecting Books by Norman Mailer”**

Norman Mailer was a man with a myth that surrounded him, and now, after his death, he has become somewhat of a legend—the tough guy who would take on anyone. Considering his importance in the canon of American literature, collecting first editions of his work seems like a reasonable investment for an admirer of his work (at least that is what we tell ourselves to rationalize buying first editions). I will therefore attempt to explain first edition collecting herein, outline the collectible Mailer books and how to identify them, and give an estimate of the retail prices in the market for fine copies of his books.

**Allen Ahearn** is a member of the Antiquarian Booksellers’ Association of America, and served for four years on the Board of Governors. He is a member of the Washington Area Booksellers’ Association (and was the first President.) He also served on the board of the Friends of the

Library at the University of Maryland and on the advisory board for the Gelman Library at the George Washington University. Graduated from the University of Maryland, with a major in English Literature and a minor in Mathematics, he obtained a Masters in Business Administration from George Washington University, worked as a Contracting Officer for the U.S. Navy in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). In 1976, he and his wife Patricia, opened a book store/art gallery in Bethesda under the name Quill & Brush. They are authors of *Book Collecting: A Comprehensive Guide*, published by Putnam's in 1989, revised and enlarged in 1995 and 2000; and *Collected Books: The Guide to Values*, published in 1991 and revised and enlarged in 1997 and 2002, used by most booksellers and appraisers.

**Sara Cohen Abstract: “Aquarius and Cancer: Re-reading Mailer’s “Cancerphobia”**

In *Illness as Metaphor*, Susan Sontag traces the metaphors that surround tuberculosis and cancer in order to generate an understanding of how and why these metaphors are problematic. For Sontag the most marked danger of illness metaphors, particularly those surrounding cancer, is the overlap in the vocabulary of war and disease in phrases/concepts like: the war against cancer, invasive cells, and the body's weakened defenses (64-5). Sontag posits that because we no longer have the religious or philosophical language to describe evil, dire situations force us to turn to cancer as the metaphor for ultimate evil. Thus, it is unsurprising that Sontag refers to Norman Mailer as a “cancerphobe,” reminding us that he “explained that had he not stabbed his [second] wife [...] he would have gotten cancer and been ‘dead in a few years himself’” (22)—unsurprising because Mailer (like Sontag's other cancerphobes) spent the bulk of his career looking for language with which to describe the epic battle between God and the Devil in a world without religious or philosophical language. However, while Mailer was certainly guilty of turning to cancer as a means of describing the evil involved in this battle, his use of the term is more nuanced than Sontag gives him credit for. With this paper, I will begin the task of contextualizing Mailer's cancerphobia by placing it in a constellation with his anxiety about technology (particularly as voiced in *Of a Fire on the Moon*) and his adherence to Reichian psychology.

**Sara Cohen** is a PhD candidate and Doctoral Dissertation Fellow in the English Department at the University of Minnesota. She is working on a dissertation entitled: “Medical Screening: Illness, Cyber-bodies, and Digitized Deaths in 21st Century Visual Culture,” which examines the intersections of medical and entertainment technologies over the last fifteen years, and looks at literary and filmic antecedents of this intersection.

**Bonnie Culver Abstracts: TEACHING MAILER and READER'S THEATRE**

1. TEACHER MAILER ROUNDTABLE: a round-table discussion of how best to teach Mailer in high school and college level courses. Open invitation to bring along a one-page summation of a lesson on Mailer and his work that will be shared with all participants and collected to be

copied and shared following the conference. Or just come and share your method. Participation open to all.

2. **READER'S THEATRE #6** Wilkes University MA/MFA students/faculty: Students and faculty read and perform a cutting of Mailer's work as per the conference theme: a night of reader's theatre to make Mailer come alive in a way he and his family enjoyed in private and public.

**Bonnie Culver** is Co-Founder and Director of the Wilkes University Creative Writing Low-Residency Program. Screenwriter, Playwright and, Novelist, Culver's plays have been produced from NY to LA by colleges, regional theatres, and equity companies. Marlee Matlin's Solo One Production Company optioned *RAINING RAINBOWS*, her fourth film. In 2004, her play *SNIPER* won the New Jersey Arts Council Perry Award for Excellence in the Production of an Original Play and completed a first class equity showcase at Center Stage, NYC, in 2005. In 2006, *SNIPER* was included in the Richard and Betty Burdick National Playwriting Reading series, an annual event that showcases "the best in American contemporary theatre." The screenplay version of *SNIPER* was a 1996 Sundance Film Development Program finalist. Currently, her film *IN PERFECT HARMONY*, slated to star Robert Wagner and Jill St. John, is in pre-production and she is working on a new play, *SILENT PARTNERS*, which is under consideration by actress Marlee Matlin. Dr. Culver is a member of the Dramatists Guild.

**Ross Klavan** has recently finished the screenplay for "The Colony" based on the book by John Bowers. His critically acclaimed original screenplay for the film "Tigerland" was nominated for the Independent Spirit Award. The film, based on Ross's novel of the same name, was directed by Joel Schumacher and released by 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox in 2000, starring Colin Farrell. He's also written the screenplay "Baghdad Blog" for InterMedia, "War Party" for Walden Media, "Abyssinia" for director Roger Donaldson and he adapted Tom Clancy's "Without Remorse" for Paramount. For television, he's written "Deathwork" to be directed by Robert Greenwald for TNT. Ross has also scripted "Within Range," for Miramax. A public and intense "conversation about writing" with Kurt Vonnegut and Lee Stringer was both televised and published in 1999 as "Like Shaking Hands With God" (Seven Stories Press.) As a performer, his voice has been heard in dozens of feature films including "Revolutionary Road," "Sometimes in April," "Casino," "In and Out," and "You Can Count On Me" as well as in numerous TV and radio commercials. He was a member of the Four Walls alternative art space in Williamsburg, Brooklyn and teaches screenwriting in the MA and MFA programs at Wilkes University. Ross lives in NYC with the painter Mary Jones.

**Juanita Rockwell** is a writer and director of projects at such theatres as Everyman and Theatre Project (Balto); The Ontological, Mabou Mines/Suite, Culture Project, The Flea and Blue Heron (NYC); City Theatre and Black Sheep Puppet Festival (Pittsburgh); Teatro Muncipão (São Paolo); RS9 (Budapest); and on NPR. Produced writing includes *The World is Round* (opera), *Upstream* (radio), *Waterwalk* (site-specific opera), *Cave in the Sky* (multimedia), *Lunar Pantoum* (dance-theatre), *What's a Little Death* and *Between Trains* (plays with songs) and *Packing/*

*Pecking* (10-minute play). Juanita founded Towson University's MFA in Experimental Theatre (where she still teaches, as well as teaching in the Wilkes University MA/MFA in Creative Writing), recently received Fulbright and Maryland State Arts Council Individual Artist Playwriting Awards, and is a member of Dramatists Guild and the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society.

**Ken Vose** is a Screenwriter – Playwright - Novelist – Non-Fiction Author and has written for television, film, and stage. His play, *PAPA: THE MAN, THE MYTH, THE LEGEND*, based on the life of Ernest Hemingway, and co-authored with Jordan Rhodes, is currently touring. His produced theatrical films include: *GREASED LIGHTNING* (Warner Bros.) and *THE WONDERS OF LIFE* (EDKO Enterprises). His television credits include: *SPIES*, *THUNDERCATS*, *SILVERHAWKS*, *PETER PAN AND THE PIRATES*, and *THE REAL ADVENTURERS OF JONNY QUEST*. As an author Vose has published *Makin' Tracks* (a Book-of-the-Month Club selection), *Greased Lightning*, *The Car: Past and Present*, *Blue Guitar*, *The Convertible*, *Inside Monster Garage*, *Monster Garage/Monster Nation*, *Monster Garage: How to Fabricate Damn Near Anything*, and the novels *Oversteer* and *Dead Pedal*. Vose spent more than twenty years in the film and television industry working as a film editor, writer, producer, and director of documentaries, corporate films, and commercials. His editing credits include *WORLD WAR ONE* (series CBS), and *TRIAL AT NUREMBERG* (Wolper Productions, Emmy nominee). Vose, who is a member of the faculty in the Master's of Art in Creative Writing program at Wilkes University, is currently writer/producer of the theatrical feature *PEREGRINA: A Revolutionary Love Story*, slated to be filmed in Mexico in 2010.

**Jim Warner** is the author of the poetry collection *Too Bad It's Poetry* (Paper Kite Press). His poems have appeared in *Word Riot*, *Drunken Boat*, *Cause and Effect*, *In The Arms of Words: Poetry for Disaster Relief* (Sherman-Asher), and various other journals. Jim Warner is currently the Assistant Director of Graduate Creative Writing Programs at Wilkes University and Associate Editor/Business Manager for Etruscan Press.

**Matthew S. Hinton** is a playwright, working towards his terminal degree at the Wilkes University Creative Writing MA/MFA Program. There, he serves as research assistant to Dr. J. Michael Lennon on the official Norman Mailer biography. His recent play is entitled *Quiet Cowboy*. He lives and teaches in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

**Laura Dunham Abstract: "Armies of the Night and the Transformation of Consciousness"**

This paper presents the significance of Mailer's *Armies of the Night* as a personal, political, and cultural expression of the transformation of consciousness represented by the 1967 March on Washington. It will include a retrospective of the chapter on "Armies" in my 1975 book, *Existential Battles: The Growth of Norman Mailer*, and what "Armies" contributes to our understanding of the current consciousness shift.

**Laura Adams Dunham** an early Mailer scholar, published in 1974 *Will the Real Norman Mailer Please Stand Up?*, a compilation of essays, and *Norman Mailer: A Comprehensive Bibliography*. In 1976, she published Norman Mailer's *Aesthetics of Growth*. In recent years, Laura, a retired minister, has explored spiritual and metaphysical realms from many perspectives. Laura is an organizer of "Power of One 10.10.10: Celebrate Oneness...Transform the World" on the Mall in Washington, D.C. Her new book is *Spiritual Wisdom for a Planet in Peril: The Path to 2012 and Beyond*. She lives in Chapel Hill, NC and may be reached at lgad@mindspring.com.

**James Fleming Abstract: “The Byronic Hero Reborn: Mailer’s Reformulation of Byronic Heroism in ‘The White Negro,’ *An American Dream* and *Armies of the Night*”**

Throughout much of his writing, Norman Mailer demonstrates a pronounced interest in the concept of heroism, particularly in terms of the concept of the hero as intellectual, social deviant and outcast. While this interest has not gone unnoticed by Mailer’s critics, many of whom have been particularly fascinated by Mailer’s notion of existential heroism and of the hero as psychopath, the connection between Mailer’s brands of heroism and Byronic heroism has gone relatively unexplored. The figure of the Byronic hero—who, generally, is marked by his intellectualism, defiance of moral codes and norms, and impulse toward self-destruction—is one of the most prominent literary archetypes of the 19th century whose legacy and influence carried well into 20th century literature. My central claim in this paper is that the archetype of the Byronic hero had a pronounced influence on Mailer’s conception of heroism over the course of his career. However, acting as what Harold Bloom would term a “strong poet,” I will argue that Mailer did not simply pay tribute to the archetype of the Byronic hero but instead reinvented such by transforming it into a self-aware, proto-postmodern archetype representative of various aspects of the modern condition. Through close readings of “The White Negro,” *An American Dream* and *Armies of the Night* I will explore the connections between Byronic heroism and Mailer’s conceptions of heroism, with a particular concentration on the ways in which Mailer adopted and adapted the guise of the Byronic hero for the purposes of revelation and concealment, both for his fictional characters and for himself.

**James Fleming** is a Kirkland Ph.D. Fellow in English at the University of Florida. His critical and creative writings have appeared in a variety of journals and magazines. He is currently writing a dissertation exploring the influence of Hamlet's soliloquies on English Romantic poetry.

**Alan Green Abstract: “Shades of Film Noir: *Tough Guy's Don't Dance* and *L.A. Confidential*.”**

Released ten years apart, *Tough Guy's Don't Dance* (1987) and *L.A. Confidential* (1997) share similar thematic concerns. Arguably, these films can be firmly placed in the "neo-noir" cannon of films, yet each director revises traditional noir conceits by way of parody. In both films, the audience must come to terms with visual images across the screen while being pulled along the way by directors on a mission; these two films are simultaneously inside and outside the genre of

noir. Each film serves as a complimentary book end where Femme Fatales and Three Time Losers find new life on the screen.

**Alan Green** is a Ph.D. student at the University of South Florida. He has recently presented several papers including his paper “Representation, Earthiness, and Political Commentary in *The Naked and the Dead*” at The Norman Mailer Conference, 2007, the 2008 Southeast Philosophy Conference in Carrolton, Georgia and the 2009 National Popular Culture & American Culture Associations Conference in New Orleans.

**Alex Hicks Abstract: “*Harlot's Ghost: Bildungsroman Picaresque*”**

*Harlot's Ghost* is the Bildungsroman and Picaresque of the education of Harry Hubbard. Despite a lack of conventional closure, it provides enough phases of the chronological education of Hubbard toward a fuller manhood to constitute a considerable achievement in the literature of coming of age; and it experiences enough social locations in the instructive, if often adventurous lateral tours of a picaresque to qualify as a major contribution to this genre. True, the consolidation of character that we take as closure in the genres at issue is fully realized neither in psychological terms nor in the terms set up by the Omega portion of "Harlot." Nonetheless, the book is set up in a series of substantially self-contained narratives, each with a socially instructive developmental resolution of some self-sufficiency. In what I have termed the "Mailerian Narrative" (*Mailer Review*, 3) the cumulation of a series of these gives the book more closure than many a Mailer novel. Further they allow a wealth satisfying narrative, portraiture and socio-political /historical instruction to warrant Pritchard's 1992 (*Hudson Review*) evocation of Chaucer. I include the Pritchard review, my favorite and not, I think, that widely known.

**Alexander Hicks** is Winship Distinguished Research Professor of Sociology, Emory University, and author or co-editor of books including *Social Democracy* and *Welfare Capitalism*, as well as of numerous papers in leading social science journals. He mimicked Mailer's "Time Machine" format for a ninth grade 'short autobiography' assignment and he has an article in *The Mailer Review*, 3.

**Matthew S. Hinton Abstract: “Advertisements for Others: The Blurbs of Norman Mailer”**

There are several ways for authors to promote the work of another: they may mention their contemporary on talk show interviews, write an essay or review of the book, and even offer their opinion on an open forum such as Amazon. No method of kudos, however, comes as honorable, time-tested, or tactile as the blurb. In fifty years, Norman Mailer composed more than a hundred blurbs for fellow writers – ranging from Baldwin’s seminal work *Giovanni’s Room*, to a cookbook; from a look at avant-garde film, to Kaylie Jones’ *Quite the Other Way*.

“Advertisements for Others” examines what Mailer was reading, and how it may have influenced his own writing and life. These blurbs reflect a sense of honesty, inform the potential reader of works that Mailer believed transcended typical readership and typical, but important, topics. The depth and breadth to which he has attached his “stamp of approval” reflects his own sensibilities

of art, craft, and sociology insomuch that a look at his blurbs is indeed a look inside his life. While composing “The White Negro,” he studied Jiu-Jitsu; as Jose Torres became the Light Heavyweight boxing champ of the world, Mailer’s copy of *Naked Lunch* sat, dog-eared, at home; and when he met Norris Church, he was finishing Slatzer’s look at the life (and curious death) of Marilyn Monroe. Fascinating authors read fascinating books, and are influenced and informed by them - Norman Mailer is no exception.

**Matthew S. Hinton** is a playwright, working towards his terminal degree at the Wilkes University Creative Writing MA/MFA Program. There, he serves as research assistant to Dr. J. Michael Lennon on the official Norman Mailer biography. His recent play is entitled *Quiet Cowboy*. He lives and teaches in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

**Maureen Hooker Abstract: “Norman Mailer’s Theory That Impotent Emotion Causes Cancer and Schizophrenia Provides Protection Against It, Examined”**

Norman Mailer believed that triggers and switches activate malignancy, and was convinced that schizophrenics are protected from cancer by their mental illness. His ideas regarding the role of stress, the dangerous consequences of anger unexpressed, and the existence of switches that activate “the rot,” were discussed long before they could be scientifically proven. The man who built his own orgone accumulator was an explorer of new thoughts, an intellectual adventurer who based his theories on his own intuition added to popular scientific speculation and discovery. When he wasn’t writing, or researching, or experiencing something to write about, he was a deep thinker.

Although scientists long had ideas of cellular structure and function they could not prove because they were unable to observe submicroscopic compositions (viruses, for example). Time and advances in technology have now greatly expanded what is verifiable, and serious research has proven much that Mailer believed. The human cell, with the infinite complexity of its ultramicroscopic components, has yielded its secrets to scientists who now envision cancer vaccines made of cells from a victim’s own cancer. The cutting edge of research today is attempting to ‘target’ the disease and use the cell’s own ‘dimmer switch’ to turn down its instructions to ‘multiply, invade, occupy, and overcome all resistance.’

**Maureen Hooker** was raised in Newport, RI by an anxious mother who worked, read books, played scrabble, knitted more than Madame LaFarge, and did a crossword puzzle every day. Her father was a lobster fisherman extraordinaire who occasionally experienced sobriety. A year in nurse’s training at Worcester City Hospital left her with bed pan burnout which resulted in her transfer to University of Florida in Gainesville and then, URI. In 1965 she married Jim Hooker, and followed him from coast to coast with their three children during his naval career. When their family was transferred to Northern Virginia, Maureen began a long and successful career in real estate. Cancer interrupted her life in 2002, and motivated her to finish her education. She graduated from George Mason University in 2006 and studied Shakespeare at Cambridge University through a Global Exchange program. In 2008 she received her MA in Creative

Writing from Wilkes University in Wilkes Barre, Pa, where she will earn her MFA in June 2009. She is presently finishing her first novel, and interning as a research assistant.

**Donald L. Kaufmann Abstract: “Courtly Norman: The Legacy Derby”**

The legacy of Norman Mailer is yet to be determined, in spite of his prominence in the world of letters, culture, and the public eye for more than sixty years. Mailer’s dozens of books, numerous essays, voluminous other writings, and ubiquitous presence in the national media for decades all come together to create a profile of a very complex artist and public intellectual. My presentation will explore and suggest the evolving reputation of Norman Mailer in the coming years.

**Donald L. Kaufmann** is Professor of English at the University of South Florida, where he has taught American literature and creative writing since coming to USF from the University of Alaska in 1965. He is the author of *Norman Mailer: The Countdown: The First Twenty Years* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), one of the first two books to appear on the work of Norman Mailer. He has also published essays on Mailer, Updike, Bellow, Hemingway, and other twentieth-century American writers. Professor Kaufmann holds one of the largest Mailer collections of books, stories, essays, memorabilia, and ephemerals.

**Michael Lennon, Deborah Martinson, Bob Begiebing, Marina Rosenthal: “Roundtable Discussion: *Advertisements for Myself*”**

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of ADVERTISEMENTS FOR MYSELF, several Society members will discuss the Mailer's watershed collection in which he established his characteristic voice--edgy, acerbic, critical and self-referenced. The discussion will focus on the "advertisements" that stitch the collection together as well as several of the major pieces in the collection, including "The White Negro," "The Time of Her Time," "The Man Who Studied Yoga," The *VILLAGE VOICE* columns and "Quick and Expensive Comments on the Talent in the Room." Chaired by J. Michael Lennon

**Robert J. Begiebing**, author of over twenty articles and six books, directs the Low-Residency MFA at Southern NH University, where he has won three awards for excellence in teaching. His books include two on Norman Mailer and a trilogy of novels. His novel *Rebecca Wentworth's Distraction* won the Langum Prize for historical fiction in 2003. His fiction writing has been supported by grants from the Lila-Wallace Foundation and the New Hampshire Council for the Arts.

**Michael Lennon** is Norman Mailer’s archivist, editor and authorized biographer. He has written several books about Mailer (with Donna Pedro Lennon) *Norman Mailer: Works and Days* (2000), *Critical Essays on Norman Mailer* (1986), *Conversations with Norman Mailer*, (1988), *The Spooky Art: Some Thoughts on Writing* (2003). Lennon has numerous essays in journals and

magazines, his work appearing in *New Yorker*, *Paris Review*, *Playboy*, *Provincetown Arts*, *New York*, *Modern Fiction Studies*, *New England Review*, *Narrative*, and *Journal of Modern Literature*, among others. His latest book was co-authored with Mailer: *On God: An Uncommon Conversation* (2007). Lennon is Emeritus Vice President for Academic Affairs and Emeritus Professor of English at Wilkes University where he continues to teach in the MFA program. He is President of the Norman Mailer Society.

**Deborah Martinson**'s interest in Mailer comes from his power as a writer and his bold sexual/political identity. A biographer, she published *Lillian Hellman: A Life with Foxes and Scoundrels* (2005), *In the Presence of Audience: The Self in Diaries and Fiction* (2003) and is currently working on a biography of Virginia Durr. She reviewed four Mailer biographies for the *Norman Mailer Review III*. Martinson is Associate Professor of English Writing at Occidental College in Los Angeles.

**Marina Rosenthal** is an undergraduate psychology and literature double major at Occidental College. She began her reading of Mailer with *Executioner's Song* and *Harlot's Ghost*, and is investigating Mailer's use of voice. She is interested in criminal psychology and recently interned at the San Francisco Police Department in the Juvenile Department. She assisted program chair Deborah Martinson in planning the Norman Mailer Conference 2009.

#### **Bill Lowenburg Abstract: "Hooking Off the Jab: Norman Mailer and Boxing"**

Though his writing about boxing comprised a relatively small percentage of Norman Mailer's vast body of work, boxing remains one of the subjects most often linked to his identity and reputation. His essay "Ten Thousand Words a Minute," on the first Liston-Patterson match, and his book *The Fight*, chronicling the epic Ali-Foreman match in Zaire, are considered some of the best writing on the sport. Mailer was an enthusiastic boxer himself, introduced to the sport by the prizefighting father of his second wife, Adele Morales. He later became close friends with light heavyweight champion Jose Torres. Torres happened to be an aspiring writer, and one summer in an exchange of writing-for-boxing tutelage, the two friends shared their experience in their respective fields. Mailer continued to box until age fifty-eight, for a time meeting regularly with a group of friends in New York City's Gramercy Gym. He often used boxing as a metaphor for writing and the life of the writer, comparing the terror of the writer facing a blank page to that of a boxer facing his opponent across the ring. Mailer's concept of the existential hero, who seeks out risks, even life-threatening ones, in order to make life meaningful, was personified by boxers, especially Muhammad Ali. "Hooking Off the Jab" explores Mailer's relationship with boxing, describing his adventures, misadventures, and accomplishments connected with the sport.

**Bill Lowenburg** is Michael Lennon's research assistant on the authorized biography of Norman Mailer. Working as a sparring partner and trainer for professional and amateur boxers, Bill studied boxing for six years with Earnie Butler, Larry Holmes's mentor. Bill is a high school librarian, former history teacher, and teaches photography on the graduate level. He is the author

of *Crash Burn Love: Demolition Derby* and currently working on his second book, *Larry Fink: The Intuitive Eye*.

**Gerald Lucas Abstract: "Mailer and the South: Reflected Politics and Religion"**

Lucas plans to present a paper that focuses on part two to the film he showed last year in his presentation "Mailer vs. the Southern Baptists: The State of the Religious South in the New Century." His new presentation also deals with traditional views from the religious and political South-- bounced off Mailer's positions on aspects of the same subjects. Lucas will focus particularly on Mailer's later work, including *The Gospel According to the Son* and *On God*. Lucas's presentation attempts to come to terms with seemingly disparate perceptions on the place of religion in America.

**Gerald R. Lucas** is an Associate Professor of English at Macon State College. His interests and teaching include contemporary fiction, new media studies, and technological literacy. He has published on subjects ranging from teaching world literatures online to speculative fiction.

**Jason Mosser Abstract: "Mailer and Thompson on the Campaign Trail, 1972"**

Both Norman Mailer's *St. George and the Godfather* and Hunter S. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing: on the Campaign Trail, '72* deal with the Nixon-McGovern presidential race. Thompson's book achieved much greater popularity due its serial publication in *Rolling Stone* and its authors' notorious persona, Dr. Gonzo. While both were reviewed, however, neither book has received much critical attention. Through self-consciously literary styles and narrative techniques, both narratives dramatize an inherently dramatic, real-life event, the 1972 presidential campaign. Historically, the texts' dramatis personae, especially Nixon and McGovern, are roughly consistent. The difference in treatment depends entirely on the differences in these writers' backgrounds, both of whom aligned themselves with the anti-war Democrat McGovern yet occupied marginal positions among the dominant political ideologies of their day: Thompson, a Southerner, an admitted political neophyte yet a trained journalist, was an autodidact; Mailer, a native New Yorker, was a Harvard-educated, left-wing intellectual; Thompson was a doomed liberal idealist who, partly through his association to the Hell's Angels, never fully identified with the anti-Vietnam War left, while Mailer, a "Left Conservative," opposed the war but also represented an older, WWII generation. Invidious comparisons may be unfair, but even though Thompson's book is longer than Mailer's and covers the entire campaign in more straightforwardly journalistic chapters while Mailer focuses exclusively on the respective parties' conventions, Mailer, having written about politics since "Superman Comes to the Supermarket," brings to his narrative a depth of historical background and intuitive insight that is largely missing from Thompson's book.

**Dr. Jason Mosser**, graduate of West Virginia University and the University of Georgia, is an Associate Professor of English at Georgia Gwinnett College in the Atlanta suburbs. He has written extensively about literary journalism. His book, *Participatory New Journalism: Style*,

*Persona, and Protest*, will appear later this year; his next project is a book on Hunter S. Thompson.

**Erik Nakjavani Abstract: “Existentialist Ethics: Norman Mailer’s Challenge to Jean-Paul Sartre”**

Norman Mailer scholarship assigns well-deserved space to the problematic of his existentialist inclinations. Within that space, Jean-Paul Sartre’s philosophical influence on Mailer occupies a significant place. This is justifiable, because Mailer simultaneously finds Sartrean existentialism at once highly energizing and worthy of rigorous challenge. As an atheist philosopher, Sartre primarily based his ethics on his concept of individual freedom of choice and its responsibility as a theoretical *discovery*. He expanded on his ethics to include the concepts of “bad-faith” (*la mauvasie-foi*) as inauthenticity versus “good-faith” (*la bonne-foi*) as authenticity. However, for Sartre, this ethical necessity did not manifestly distinguish between good and evil beyond the desired human solidarity. For Mailer, who was fundamentally a religious writer with a complex metaphysics, human freedom was not so much a *discovery* but rather a “*revelation*” in the Biblical sense. Mailer generally situated himself within the kerygmatic tradition of Abrahamic religions of the Middle East, in which “revelation” demands a choice between good and evil, the Devil and the Good Lord. Mailer eventually found Sartre’s philosophy lacking in the consequential matter of coming to grips with evil. Therefore, the purpose of my presentation will be to make clear the distinction between the Sartrean existentialist concept of individual freedom and responsibility as a theoretical discovery and Mailer’s notion of freedom as a kerygmatic revelation within the tradition of Abrahamic religions.

**Erik Nakjavani** is professor Emeritus of Humanities at the University of Pittsburgh. Although he has specialized in Hemingway scholarship, he has had a long-standing interest in the interdisciplinary relationship between psychoanalysis, philosophy, literature, and the arts. His latest publications include “Hemingway on War and Peace” (*North Dakota Quarterly*, 2001), “The Prose of Life: Lived Experience in the Fiction of Hemingway, Sartre, and Beauvoir” (*North Dakota Quarterly*, 2003), “The Poetics of Lacan’s Theorization” (*Clinical Studies: International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, (2001). His essay “Alchemy, Memory, and Archetypes: Reading Hemingway’s *Under Kilimanjaro* as an African Fairy Tale” will appear in *Ernest Hemingway and the Geography of Memory* in October, 2009.

**Victor Peppard Abstract: “Norman Mailer’s Portrait of the Soviet Union in *Harlot’s Ghost* and *Oswald’s Tale*”**

Norman Mailer’s portrait of the Soviet Union in *Harlot’s Ghost* emerges only indirectly through his depiction of the Soviet diplomats in Uruguay and the CIA’s engagement with its number one enemy until the last pages of the novel. At that point, Harry Hubbard goes to Moscow in search of Harlot and is outraged that a country in such shabby shape should be considered a worthy superpower rival. Mailer’s picture of the Soviet Union in *Harlot’s Ghost* breaks off with the end of the novel, but resumes in *Oswald’s Tale*, where his great interest in the country leads him to an

extensive treatment of it that goes well beyond what we need to know about Oswald. This prompts a number of questions: what is the source of Mailer's fascination, does his portrait of the USSR ring true, and does *Oswald's Tale* provide a surrogate conclusion to *Harlot's Ghost*?

**Victor Peppard** is Professor of Russian and Chair of World Languages at the University of South Florida, Tampa. His main scholarly interests are in 20th century Russian literature, and he has published on the history of Russian and Soviet sport. He is also the author of a handful of short stories.

**Michael Shuman Abstract: "Two Castles, One Forest: Norman Mailer and Mikhail Bulgakov"**

Both Norman Mailer and Mikhail Bulgakov employed fiction to comment upon the nature of good and evil, and to explore how these two elemental forces are manifested in times of social and political turmoil. For Mailer, World War II and the turbulent 60's provides a context for analyzing the moral compass of cultural upheaval, while for Bulgakov, Soviet life in the 30's offers material for commentary so insightful that many of his most important works were suppressed until long after his death. In Mailer's *The Castle and the Forest* and Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, each author chose his final work of fiction to examine the nature of good and evil in both political and metaphysical manifestations, offering in effect a psychoanalytic evaluation of Western culture's most immoral and notorious figures. While Mailer and Bulgakov matured as writers in two very different cultures, each exposes a common political landscape where the acts of morally-disfigured characters have nothing less than occult significance.

**Michael L. Shuman** received his Ph.D. in literature from University of South Florida, where he serves as Assistant Director of First-Year Composition. Dr. Shuman is Associate Editor of *the Mailer Review*.

**Lawrence Schiller, Mark Olshaker and Gus Russo's Conversation: "OSWALD'S TALE REVISITED"**

**Lawrence Schiller**, as a photojournalist, worked for *Life* magazine, *Paris Match*, *The Sunday Times*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Stern*, and *The Saturday Evening Post*. He published his first book, *LSD*, in 1966 and has since published eleven books, including his work with W. Eugene Smith on *Minamata* and Norman Mailer on *Marilyn*. He collaborated with Albert Goldman on *Ladies and Gentleman*, *Lenny Bruce* and with Norman Mailer on *The Executioner's Song* and *Oswald's Tale*. His own books that became national bestsellers and made the *New York Times* Bestseller list include *American Tragedy*, *Perfect Murder*, *Perfect Town*, *Cape May Court House*, and *Into the Mirror*. He has directed seven motion pictures and miniseries for television; *The Executioner's Song* and *Peter the Great* won five Emmys. *American Tragedy*, *Perfect Murder*, *Perfect Town* and *Into the Mirror* were made into television mini-series for CBS. Schiller produced and directed each of the motion pictures. In 2008, after the death of the writer Norman Mailer, he was named Senior Advisor to the Norman Mailer Estate and is the Managing Director of the

Norman Mailer Writers Colony, in Provincetown, MA, which he created with Norris Mailer. Schiller was a close friend of Mailer and collaborator on five of his works.

**Mark Olshaker**, an Emmy Award-winning filmmaker, New York Times best-selling non-fiction author and critically acclaimed novelist, began his career as a journalist, working for the Washington Bureau of The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *Newsday*, *The Washington Times*, *New Times* and *Washingtonian*. He has worked closely with many of the nation's leading experts in the fields of law enforcement and criminal justice, medicine and law. He has written and produced documentary films from history to architecture, science and medicine, and theater and drama. He won the 1994 Emmy as writer of the Outstanding Animated Program series based on David McCauley's *Castle*, *Cathedral*, *Pyramid*, *Mill* and *Roman City*. His film *Mind of a Serial Killer* was an Emmy-nominated PBS film. He has written seven books with former FBI Special Agent and criminal profiling pioneer John Douglas: *Mindhunter*; *The Cases that Haunt Us*, *Journey Into Darkness*, *Obsession*, *Broken Wings*, *Man Down*, and *The Anatomy of Motive*. His books *Unnatural Causes* and *Virus Hunter* (with C.J. Peters,) and the PBS programs, *What's Killing the Children?* *Bioterror: Dealing With a New Reality*, and *Avoiding Armageddon*," exhibit his expertise in pandemic information. Olshaker is currently a consultant to the U.S. Justice Department Office for Victims of Crime. He is Chairman of the Cosmos Club Foundation and serves on the boards of the Shakespeare Guild of America and the Norman Mailer Society.

**Gus G. Russo**, veteran investigative author and organized crime expert, researches and writes nonfiction focused on the Mafia and the John F. Kennedy assassination. He was part of a research team working on the 1993 *Frontline* Lee Harvey Oswald documentary, "Who Was Lee Harvey Oswald?" for PBS. Russo also wrote the book, *Live By the Sword: The Secret War Against Castro and the Death of JFK*, that was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize and was highly regarded by anti-conspiracy theorist media when it came out. Dan Rather chose Russo to represent the critics of the Warren Report in his 1993 television special, WHO SHOT JFK? Russo was also employed as an investigative reporter for ABC News and worked with Peter Jennings on the television production of DANGEROUS WORLD, THE KENNEDY YEARS. In 1998 Russo published *Live By The Sword: The Secret War against Castro and the Death of JFK*. Russo also wrote *The Outfit: The Role of Chicago's Underworld in the Shaping of Modern America* (2003). His most recent book (2006) tells the story of the *Supermob*--a cadre of men who, over the course of decades, secretly influenced nearly every aspect of American society. Russo has worked as an investigative reporter for PBS's *Frontline* and ABC News.

**Phillip Sipiora Abstract: "Ethos and Ethics: Rhetorical Force in *The Armies of the Night*"**

Norman Mailer's "Washington novel" has been considered a literary tour de force since its publication in 1968. In today's parlance, it would be considered a work of creative nonfiction, an

articulation of historical events with a highly imaginative prose style. The expositor/narrator refers to his primary character—Norman Mailer—in the third person. The novel as history begins with an authentic newspaper account. There is ample quoted dialogue of participants in the historic march on Washington. What has not been much discussed is the rhetorical force of the work, particularly the relationship between the ethos of the narrator/expositor and the driving ethical imperative informing the event and the book. By ethos I refer to quality of character. By ethics I refer quality of morality. My presentation will attempt to show how the narrator/expositor welds together the ethics of the movement (war protest) with the ethos of the principal participant, Norman Mailer. More specifically, *The Armies of the Night* reveals the use of classical rhetorical techniques (phronesis and arête) that serve to enhance and promote the moral qualities of the account through the prism of quality of character.

**Phillip Sipiora** is Professor of English and Film Studies at the University of South Florida. He is the author or editor of three books and three dozen scholarly essays. He has lectured nationally and internationally on twentieth-century literature and film and is the Editor of *The Mailer Review*.

**Mary Stockwell Abstract: “Of a Fire on the Moon: The Many Intersections of the Space Race”**

*Of a Fire on the Moon* remains one of Norman Mailer’s most beautifully written and most underrated works. Published in 1970, this book allowed Mailer to dissect the moon landing in July 1969 from three different angles – his own perspective on his personal life, his observations of the culture of NASA and the personalities of the Apollo astronauts, and his reflections on the nature of modern technology. These themes make it an “intersection” of major currents in American ideology, culture, and history at the end of the decade of the 1960s. As a personal memoir, it reflects the new journalism which admits that reporters are participants in the stories they cover. Mailer describes his own troubled personal life as if he is writing a memoir. As a work that combines elements of history and biography, it gives a stunning portrait of the institutionalized space race with NASA appearing as a conglomerate and with its star astronauts trained to acquiesce to the emotionless spectacle of this historic event. As a work written at the end of a decade that began with President John Kennedy’s challenge for the American nation to land a man on the moon and bring him safely home, it shows us just how far we had fallen in meeting this romantic challenge. *Of a Fire on the Moon* concludes with the troubling and still unanswered question of whether American individualism will have any place in a future ruled by a technology that by its very nature is faceless.

**Dr. Mary Stockwell** is a Professor of History and Chair of the Department of History, Political Science, and Geography at Lourdes College. Her most recent publication is a biography of our 28th president entitled *Woodrow Wilson: The Last Romantic* which is part of a series called *First Men: America’s Presidents*.

**Marc Triplett Abstract: “Mailer and the Political Ego”**

Norman Mailer's interaction with American politicians will be missed. We all like to know how a person who has or seeks power reacts to us. In 2004, regrettably, Americans seemed to elect George W. Bush to a second presidential term because they'd more like to have a beer with him than with John Kerry. Unlike the process of the average American's gut check, the reaction of major political figures to Norman Mailer and his reaction to them brought those who paid attention to a better understanding of both. Robert Kennedy's seemingly brittle responses to Mailer's challenging questions contrasted with Gene McCarthy's good-humored retorts. Clues to their motivations as public figures could be found in Mailer interviews. What are we to make of Bob Dole's bemusement at his ill-fated presidential race against Bill Clinton? Did Bill Clinton have a set of principles - even one for which he would sacrifice? Throughout his career, particularly in the 1960's through the 1990's, Norman Mailer sought to get into the psyche of the strange beast known as the American presidential candidate. He often succeeded in dissecting egos and getting past the superficial messages that national political figures rely on to get them through the grueling campaigns. Mailer examined ego in politicians and in his reaction to them in ways that revealed important strengths and flaws of the American character. This paper will provide examples and discuss Mailer's own motivations that were at work when he sparred with political leaders of his time.

**Marc Triplett** is Secretary of the Executive Board of the Norman Mailer Society and a life member. He is a lawyer in private practice and resides in Bellefontaine, Ohio.

**Raymond M. Vince Abstract: "Spooks, Identity, and Betrayal in a Dark Time: Mailer's *Harlot's Ghost* (1991) and le Carré's *A Perfect Spy* (1986)."**

*Harlot's Ghost* (1991) is a substantial examination of American culture and ideology during the Cold War. At over 1150 pages, Mailer's epic on the CIA is substantial in other ways also. With perceptive genius, he chronicles the Bay of Pigs, the Cuban missile crisis, the assassination of Kennedy, and a myriad other events. But Mailer excels in his acute portrayal of the "peculiar sanity" of the American spy. The book has many fascinating themes: betrayals ideological and sexual, the haunting of sons by their fathers, the shadowy ironies of the intelligence world, the art of chivalry American style, the fragmentation of identity "in a dark time" (Roethke). Some critics have castigated Mailer for the novel's formless character, but Rampton argues for its "plexed artistry," for the work being a "richly orchestrated" mystery. In any case, who decreed that a CIA account should be simple or coherent?

*Harlot's Ghost* can be usefully compared to John le Carré's *A Perfect Spy* (1986), published five years previously. Both works explore difficult father-son relationships, the many moral and metaphysical dilemmas of the Cold War era, the schizophrenia of double agents, and an elusive search for plot and meaning in life. Above all, both novels are to an astonishing degree self-reflexive - probing the boundaries of author, text, and interpretation. Ultimately, both authors evoke disturbing questions of human identity that may well - in a postmodern context - prove insoluble.

**Raymond Vince** has taught at the Universities of Tampa and South Florida. Interests include Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Mailer, Heroism in War, medieval literature, and the Spy Novel. He has published on Mailer, Fitzgerald, William Morris, and Alienation. His first book, *Heroism, War, and Narrative*, was published by VDM of Germany. An Advisory Editor of the Mailer Review, with previous careers as scientist and priest, Ray holds a Ph.D. in English from USF and four degrees in Theology, English, and Logic & Scientific Method from the Universities of London and Bristol in England.

**Katharine Westaway Abstract: “A Weekend in Washington: Mailer Takes His Message to the Streets”**

On a weekend in October of 1967, tens of thousands of demonstrators amassed in Washington, D.C., to protest the war in Vietnam, culminating in the March on the Pentagon. The occasion inspired Norman Mailer the novelist as well as Mailer the journalist, and so he experimented with a new genre, the nonfiction novel. In *The Armies of the Night* (1968), he enlarged the March on the Pentagon’s meaning, working as a nonfiction novelist to make it more than a four-day set of tremors in the nation’s capital. I assert that *Armies* was concerned with a sweeping view of American culture vis-a-vis the March, for this was a “literary project . . . radically committed to a rendering of the American reality.” The conflict Mailer captured at the Justice Department and on the Pentagon green epitomized the volatility of the U.S. at that moment, the rips within the social fabric during the escalation of the Vietnam War. Mailer knew the cost of this contention, writing that the “the two halves of America were not coming together, and when they failed to touch, all of history might be lost in the divide.” Through Mailer’s dramatic imagery we are placed amid the crowds of marchers and within the story of the anti-war movement. *Armies* represented a departure in style for Mailer, but we see in this nonfiction novel a unique capacity to effect change and to shape the readers’ understanding of what it meant to protest the War in Vietnam.

**Katharine Westaway** has taught Essay and Rhetoric and 20th Century American literature for seven years. She currently is a doctoral candidate at the University of Florida; her dissertation focuses on American literature and social justice. She has an interest in media studies and an M.A. from Northeastern University’s School of Journalism. Recently, she has worked at MIT compiling Noam Chomsky’s archives. She was an artist-in-residence at the Weymouth Center for the Arts and Humanities and is a published poet.

