

# Department of Popular Culture Newsletter

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2

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## **From the Editors**

Welcome to Volume 2, Number 2! We had so many “stop the presses” moments leading up to this issue that we were worried it wouldn’t come out this year, and we actually had to push back some things to the next issue because this one got so long! For a small department, we’ve got a whole lot going on—from a reception at the French Parliament, to a conference in India, to a summer abroad in France and Burkina Faso, to a generous and unexpected gift from two alumnae (and much more), these pages tell the story of a dynamic scholarly community that’s only begun to show what it can accomplish. Read all about it! In this issue we also bid a fond farewell to our longtime Administrative Secretary, Bernice Aguilar, who is retiring this month. We’ll miss you, Bernice! Thanks for everything!

## **Bernice Aguilar Retires After 17 Years as POPC Secretary**

What a long, engrossing trip it’s been. After 17 years of service to the Department of Popular Culture, Bernice Aguilar’s last day is December 17, 2010. She first began working for POPC on, “no fooling,” April 1st in 1993, when Chris Geist was chair. This was also the year Angela Nelson first came to teach with POPC and now-instructor Dan Shoemaker began his MA work with the department. While Bernice says

she will miss the people at the department, she looks forward to an active retirement and plans to travel. Among other things, she intends to drive cross-country with her mother to Arizona, join her three brothers on a mule-train down the south rim of the Grand Canyon, plus visit a little town in Southeast Colorado named Aguilar. She also hopes to finish a four-year degree program, not unlike the generations of BGSU students she has seen passing through our Montgomery-Ward-catalogue house/office across the street from campus.

She told us, “I’ve had good, varied, and interesting clerical roles and duties on campus.” After graduating with an Associate’s Degree in Secretarial Science, Bernice’s first job was the somewhat antiquated occupation of switchboard operator

## **Eileen O’Neill and Karen Stoddard Give \$110,000 to the Department of Popular Culture!**

By Menghan Liu

It was a complete surprise for the Popular Culture Department and Bowling Green State University.

Eileen O’Neill, chosen as one of BGSU’s 100 Most Prominent Alumni for BGSU’s centennial celebration last spring, returned to campus on September 21. She discussed her career and how her time at BGSU has helped her, gave a POPC Col-



**O’Neill’s visit to Dr. Becca Cragin’s graduate television seminar. Photos by Jeremy Wallach.**

loquium presentation titled “From Freddie and Frieda to the Cake Boss,” had lunch with faculty, and attended part of a graduate class. But she did not only come to BGSU to talk. She and her partner, Karen Stoddard (also a POPC graduate), also gave the department a \$100,000 gift to establish the Stoddard and O’Neill Endowment for Studies in Popular Culture, as well as another \$10,000 that can be used immediately to assist students and faculty.

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**O'Neill-Stoddard Gift, continued** Her gift was a huge surprise to everyone. Before the planned lecture, the POPC faculty had lunch with O'Neill and talked about the POPC program and the changes it had undergone in the years since O'Neill graduated. At 2 p.m., Popular



Ted Freeseaman stands next to the oversized novelty check symbolizing the O'Neill-Stoddard Gift to the Department. Photos by Jeremy Wallach.

Culture graduate students met O'Neill at the Union to discuss internships and careers. Ted Freeseaman, a second-year graduate student, recalled the discussion as being "very instructive." He said O'Neill "did not play down internships," and taught the students "how to break into a different world."

O'Neill also visited Dr. Becca Cragin's TV Comedy class that afternoon, where she shared her myriad experiences in the broadcasting industry. Dr. Cragin reports that she talked to students about "the tension that she feels between the need to make shows profitable and the hope to make shows socially valuable, helpful and educational." Kendall Binder, a second-year Popular Culture graduate student in that class, said that everyone had enthusiastic questions about O'Neill's experience with TLC and "we even heard an 'inside scoop' on some of the reality shows TLC produces. It was encouraging to see someone gain success from a Masters of Arts in Popular Culture, specifically seeing a powerful female supersede the patriarchal boundaries of corporate television," Binder said.

At 3:30 p.m., when Dr. Marilyn Motz, Popular Culture Chair, came to O'Neill's talk, she was asked by the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences to sit in the front row, which she said later she did not realize was a special arrangement. The lecture given by O'Neill was inspirational. "I get the feeling that as many times I've been asked to answer the question, 'What do you do with a popular culture degree?'—seeing her success...I got this super-good story to tell...like, here's what one person does," Freeseaman said.

O'Neill waited until almost the end of her lecture to announce the gift. Dr. Motz was invited on stage to accept it. She said it was very generous and believed it

**Bernice Aguilar Retires, continued** for an Ohio community college. She worked her way up from humble switchboard operator to the dual role of receptionist and secretary in the three-person staff of the president's office at said community college, after which she joined the office of the College of Arts and Sciences at BGSU, eventually becoming secretary to the college dean. Bernice believes that the learning and the use of shorthand has been an integral part of the varied secretarial duties she has performed.

"Joining the department introduced me to the world of popular culture," Bernice stated, when asked what she has learned from her current position. When Bernice began as the administrative secretary for POPC, she had to learn how to integrate the university's student, financial, and bureaucratic systems in ways secretaries in larger offices are not required. She is proud to have been a major part of the department and of our role "regionally, nationally, and internationally." One of her fondest memories is the look on Jeff Brown's face when she calmly informed him that his student's outlandish excuse for why he needed an extension on an assignment, that he had been hit by a train, was, in fact, true according to the local paper. (The student was luckily not seriously injured.)

When we asked about other favorite memories, Bernice described her "so-called brush with a celebrity": a surprise phone call a few years ago from BGSU alum Tim Conway that kept her in stitches for several minutes (see the note about Chuck Coletta elsewhere in this issue for more recent news of Conway), and actually finding a two-by-four with "Montgomery Ward" stamped on it in the Popular Culture Building's attic. When asked what she would miss, she replied, "the obvious one is the people in the department" and also mentioned the "quaintness" of the house. She said that she would not miss the winter weather or the struggle to find a parking space. She is looking forward to wearing dresses and skirts again now that she won't have to endure the always unpredictable temperatures in the POPC building.



Bernice doesn't like to be photographed, so instead we're running this picture of Dody -Goodman Blanche.

**O'Neill-Stoddard Gift, continued** would have a positive impact. "As an endowment, it provides money for the future," Dr. Motz said, "The fund will help us in moving ahead. It is also a show of confidence. It is a sign of strong support from an alumna who has positive experiences."

Good news travels fast and other Popular Culture alumni are responding with excitement. "I think that the donation is fantastic. As more and more cultural studies programs disappear across the country for financial and political reasons, it's refreshing to see a concerted effort to prioritize the humanities," said Benjamin Phillips. Phillips graduated with an MA from the Popular Culture program in 2009 and is now a PhD Candidate in American Studies at Michigan State University. (Editors' Note: He knows only too well about programs being cut; shortly after he arrived at MSU, he found out that his year of graduate students would be the last in the American Studies program there.)

Nicholas Ware, 2010 Popular Culture MA graduate and current PhD student at the University of Central Florida, also expected the gift to have a beneficial impact. "Hopefully with the support of alumni like Ms. O'Neill, the faculty, and the current University administration, the Popular Culture program can flourish and fill the need that only a one-of-a-kind program like Popular Culture can. I'm sure Dr. Ray Browne would be happy to have seen this."

### Related Stories

BG Monitor: <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/mc/monitor/12-06-10/page89356.html>

BG Sentinel-Tribune: <http://www.sent-trib.com/front-page/programmed-for-success>

**Bernice Aguilar Retires, continued** She told us, "My life has been so structured, I'd like to see what an unstructured part of life would be" and mentioned that she might like to adopt "a pooch." The department won't be the same without Bernice who, it was noted at her December 10th retirement dinner with the faculty, has never, ever said anything bad about any of us. We will also miss her excellent yet understated fashion sense. Bernice leaves us with the excellent advice she borrowed from the former College of Arts & Sciences dean for whom she worked, which she paraphrases as, "always have a sense of humor about everything." All of us at POPC wish her the best in her retirement and we hope she stops by to visit regularly!

## A REPORT FROM PARIS FROM PROFESSOR JACK SANTINO

*Dr. Jack Santino is currently the Tocqueville-Fulbright Distinguished Chair of American Studies at the University of Paris IV, La Sorbonne. This is the highest award bestowed by the Fulbright Commission, and it recognizes a career of the most distinguished scholarship. We are delighted that he has taken time from his very busy schedule to send us the following report.*



**Professor Santino speaks at a reception in his honor in the French Senate building, Palais Luxembourg, Paris, Oct. 6.**

I arrived in Paris on September 9, 2010, and began teaching shortly thereafter. I am teaching two courses: Holidays and Popular Culture, an M.A. level class, and Ritual, Festival, and Celebration, at the doctoral level.

On October 6, 2010, I was presented and received at the French Senate, in the Palais Luxembourg. This event was presented by and under the patronage of Monsieur Jean-Pierre Raffarin, former Prime Minister of France and current president of the French Interparliamentary Group with the US Senate; Charles H. Rivkin, the American Ambassador to France, and M. Arnaud Roujou de Boubée, Director of the Franco-American Commission of University and Cultural Exchanges. I spoke briefly, after these other gentlemen. It was a truly amazing experience.

On November 25 (American Thanksgiving) I presented my



inaugural address at the Sorbonne, "The Carnavalesque and the Ritualesque: An Examination of Ritual and Festival in Today's World." It was an honor, but humbling, to be presenting my research and my ideas in the very halls where Claude Lévi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, and Michel Foucault have lectured.

As part of my award, I gave addresses throughout France. On November 16, I presented a lecture called "American Celebrations and Festivities" at the Franco-American Institute in Rennes (Brittany). On December 2, 2010, I lectured at the University of Montpellier on "American Holidays, Ethnicity, and Regionalism." On December 8, I presented "The Public Memorialization of Death" at the University of Bordeaux, a talk attended by the American Consul, with whom I had dinner afterwards. I am scheduled to speak at the University of Tours in January.

I have become interested in the strike-demonstrations here, as ritualistic phenomena. Also, I have begun to visit the many memorials here, some less well-known, such as the Memorial to the 200,000 Deportees during WWII. I spent the All Saints Day weekend (All Saints Day, Toussaints, Nov 1, is a national holiday. People attend to the graves of loved ones) in cemeteries, including the magnificent Pere Lachaise. Oscar Wilde and Jim Morrison are both interred there, and their graves are the sites of pilgrimage and personalization. I have begun to think about the ways space is sacralized.



To Jack's right is M. Georges Molinié, the President of University of Paris IV, La Sorbonne. The gentleman on his left is an official from the Ministry of Education, M. Duart; next to him Charles H. Rivkin, U.S. Ambassador to France.

I am interested in the various seasonal customs as well. I recently witnessed St. Nicholas on the Champs Elysee, at the Maison d'Alsace. I am planning to head north during Carnival season in February to see what I can see...carnivals in Lille and Dunkerque are quite elaborate.

We'll see about turning all of this into a new course upon my return to BGSU.

Professor Santino comments on holiday decorations in the *New York Times*: <http://tinyurl.com/25sek24>

### What I Did On My Summer Vacation

By Jared Clayton Brown, POPC MA Student

This summer, during the month of July, I was afforded the opportunity (through Bowling Green's Romance and Classical Languages Department) to study abroad in Burkina Faso, a nation located in West Africa adjacent to the Ivory Coast. While there, I, along with five other Bowling Green students, participated in a specialized curriculum that gave us the chance to take courses addressing facets of Burkinabe culture, including daily life and media outlets. As the courses progressed it became evident how complementary these subjects were.

The reason why this study abroad curriculum was so relevant for me as a student of popular culture was that I was able to see firsthand how popular culture offerings can impact the people residing within a region. So much of the population's outlook was reflected in the various media we examined, the media primarily being films by one of Burkina Faso's most renowned film directors Gaston Kabore. In observing the daily life of the Burkinabe, I was able to understand how much influence the films had on people of the region.

In studying a culture so far removed from my own native culture, I was able to glean many important lessons. Out



of these many lessons, one significant lesson relates specifically to my academic pursuits here at Bowling Green. One of the major conclusions I have drawn from my time thus far in popular culture studies is that American

culture is very influenced by media output. From fashion to socially relevant beliefs such as religion, many of our influences come from the images to which we are exposed. Through my experience in Burkina Faso, I now understand firsthand that other cultures are impacted in much the same way. Popular culture, no matter from where it originates, has the capability to influence the manner in which people behave, feel, and think.

Other students and teachers of popular culture have much to gain by travelling to other regions far removed from their own natural backgrounds and exploring colloquial life practices, and how those practices function in relation to the popular culture offerings that are created in these areas. I strongly believe that many scholars would conclude that popular culture works in other parts of the world in much the same way as it works in the United States. Much of my conclusion on how influential popular culture is stems from the portrayal of relationships between characters in the films I viewed and how much of the discourse I saw on-screen was reflected in the real-life activity I observed while living with my host family.

My education as a student of popular culture has only been enhanced because of the privilege I was given in being able to travel to Burkina Faso this past summer. I know for sure that others can only benefit if they take advantage of similar educational opportunities.

### ...And On Mine!

By Sade Marie Young, POPC MA Student

This summer I embarked on a study abroad to Tours, France and the African country of Burkina Faso. The program was hosted through BGSU's Romance and Classical Studies department and included studying French in France and Francophone culture in Africa. It is a dream of mine to

travel the world and I felt doing it under the guise of education would provide structure and a sense of safety that I might not have had if I embarked on it alone. With African American culture as my research interest I felt the French program and its Africa component would be ideal and complementary to my current research on diaspora studies in popular culture. In addition, as a Black woman, I felt the longing to return to the proverbial motherland.

I spent the month of June in France, studying the French language and participating in weekend excursions. The classroom setting at the Institute of Touraine was unique and multicultural. Nine countries were represented in my class alone and our only common language was French (which we were all learning) and broken English. Although our language was limited, our commonalities were not; we found connections and sparked conversations over global products we shared, such as clothing and entertainment. Our discussions in class or chatting with each other during lunch usually revolved around music videos, Disneyland, and Nike products. It was surprising to actually witness the globalization of American popular culture in Europe and see how it was responded to by people from various countries. This in-class global expansion contrasted with my experience of the city. Going to France, I expected to see the same luxuries as America:



good food, mass produced products, and fabulous shopping. What I actually experienced in Tours, France was a postmodern city of historic and renewed presence. The town consisted of churches and chateaus that were centuries old alongside new apartment buildings and storefronts. At times I felt like I was living in a museum, there was so much culture and history at every turn that it began to feel surreal. In July we traveled to Burkina Faso, Africa for the second leg of our journey. Africa was a totally different experience from France, and not just in the obvious ways of French/ African cultural difference. The biggest surprise was exactly how modern yet rural



everything was. In Burkina, I saw more popular culture than I expected to see in a country that is ranked 175 (out of 177 countries) by the UNDP's Human Development Index. There were Coca-Cola bottles in villages where there was no running water or electricity and there were Nike T-shirts being

worn and American music videos being played all over town. My biggest culture shock occurred when we went to an outdoor bar one night to have drinks as a group. One of the street vendors approached me to sell pirated DVDs, and to humor him I perused the titles. The title that stood out most on the list was a collection of films labeled "American Ni\*\*as" which consisted of a collection of African American movies that varied from comedy and action to dramas and documentaries. After reading the title and processing the gleeful expression on the man's face when I paused to speak, I didn't know if I should feel offended or chalk it up to one of those things that are "lost in translation." I simply told him I was not interested and proceeded to discuss the incident with my peers. Overall, though, Africa was an enjoyable experience. The people were amazingly friendly and hospitable. When we weren't in class learning about Burkina culture and African film, we were on excursions. Some of the highlights of our tours included meeting various chiefs in villages, feeding live chickens to crocodiles, canoeing with hippos, and swimming in the cascades.

Going abroad helped me see not only popular culture but culture and the Black Diaspora differently. It taught me that when analyzing popular culture, context is very important. I learned that during the trip I was interpreting my surroundings, the environments, and the elements in it through an American perspective. Some may interpret my view as elitist but it was just my default setting. Programs like this are important because they offer students a global perspective, one that is lived rather than simply read or theorized about. I embarked on this journey thinking I would fall in love with Europe

and become an expatriate, but now I have a whole new appreciation for America and our distinctive place in the world and influence on global popular culture. It was truly an enriching experience!

## BGSU POPULAR CULTURE GOES TO INDIA:

### PART 1 OF 2

BY KRISTEN RUDISILL



*Drs. Kristen Rudisill and Dan Shoemaker travelled to Hyderabad, India to present at a Popular Culture and American Studies conference earlier this semester. Dan tells his story in the next issue; Kristen*

*Dan Shoemaker, Kristen Rudisill, Ian Gordon, and other participants in the Conference and Workshop on Popular Culture and American Studies at the University of Hyderabad*

*tells hers right here, which also includes conducting field research for her current project on Bollywood dance. A newsletter exclusive!*

In September 2010, thanks to Dr. Pramod Nayar and Dean Mohan Ramanan at the University of Hyderabad, a BGSU faculty research grant, and the generosity of my colleagues and students at BGSU, I was able to spend two weeks in India. It was a very busy trip, but it was also incredibly productive both for the university and for my own research. About a year ago, when I first began discussing the possibility of my participation in the University of Hyderabad's Conference and Workshop on Popular Culture and American Studies with Dr. Nayar, we also began talking about setting up a Memorandum of Understanding between our two universities. Dr. Marilyn Motz, Chair of the Department of Popular Culture; Dr. Radhika Gajjala, Director of the American Cultural Studies Program; and Dr. Franklin Goza, Associate





**Dan Shoemaker and two graduate students in Hyderabad**

Dean of Arts and Sciences, have been instrumental in encouraging these talks. My meeting with Dean Ramanan was quite fruitful, and there are endless possibilities for ways in which our programs can collaborate. The University of Hyderabad is particularly eager to reach an agreement with BGSU, because the two universities, and even our two programs, have a history of interaction. Ray Browne, founder of the Department of Popular Culture at BGSU, was a fellow at the American Studies Research Center in Hyderabad in 1979. Other fellows at the Center include John Cawelti and Marshall Fishwick, demonstrating the University of Hyderabad's longstanding academic interest in American popular culture. We hope this renewed interaction will lead to future exchanges, collaborations, and joint conferences.

Dr. Dan Shoemaker and I flew into Delhi, where we were entertained by the very gracious parents of Popular Culture MA graduate Puja Batra-Wells. We did a quick tour of Embassy Row, saw the India Gate, and checked out a supermarket, then were off on a flight to Hyderabad. In Hyderabad, we were extremely busy with the Conference and Workshop on Popular Culture and American Studies organized by Pramod Nayar and Anna Kurian and sponsored by the US Consulate and the University of Hyderabad English and Comparative Literature Departments. Graduate students came from all over India to participate, sharing their work with each other as well as with Dan, me, and the other three invited faculty resource persons (Ian Gordan, Meena Pillai, and Nishant Shah). The workshop lasted for three days and we were busy every second of it. If we weren't in the conference room, we were talking to students and reading their papers. Dan was a tremendous hit, and the students didn't let him out of their sight after his excellent keynote talk on the first day of the conference. The students presented papers on a variety of American popular culture products and practices, covering everything from Michael Jackson's celebrity body, National Park tourism, *Ben 10*, *Sin City*, and open-mike poetry slams. Most of the participating students were from English departments, and my keynote talk for the workshop was designed to help them think more broadly about the methodologies (beyond textual analysis) available to them. Selected student papers from the conference, as well as the talks from all the resource persons, are to be published by Orient Black Swan in Delhi in 2011.



**Kristen Rudisill and a graduate student in Hyderabad**



**Pritham Chakravarthy watching as bricks are brought in to transform former hospital set to an Acting School, Ramanaidu Film City, Hyderabad**

After the conference ended, Dan presented a second lecture for the University of Hyderabad's Humanities Series while I took off for the Ramanaidu Film Studios to conduct an interview for a new project of mine, which I will be presenting for the Popular Culture Colloquium Series on April 14th (see the Colloquium schedule elsewhere in this issue--Ed.). This essay is about theater and women's activism in India, and concerns the work of theater activist Pritham Chakravarthy. When I got to the Film School, I found Pritham in the midst of preparations to open a new acting school. We went to the building site, which is on one of the primary filming areas for the studio's Telugu-language films. When we walked into the building, I noticed that it had a sign on the door proclaiming that it was a hospital. Inside, we found cots, x-ray equipment, a door to the Operating Theater, and a large portrait of Mother Theresa. Pritham mapped out where she wanted faculty offices, a classroom, and a library, and things began moving quickly. Within



Dan Shoemaker and Jeff Anderson at restaurant in Hyderabad

the hour, everything was cleared out and women were busy carting in bricks and the construction had begun. Pritham took me on a brief tour, past two separate film shootings, and I saw the street scene, the palace, the bungalow, the poor housing, and eight trees that apparently cost \$10,000 apiece and were shipped in from Saudi Arabia for dance sequences. After this, we returned to her house for a three-hour interview.

Now finished with work, my friends Shannon and Jeff (who both work for Deloitte, a multinational tax auditing corporation in Hyderabad), picked up Dan and I and took us to a fun Panjabi restaurant for dinner, where we were served chicken on a sword by waiters with fans on their hats. Before dinner, we even got to sample Hyderabad's famous *haleem*, thanks to Shannon and Jeff's driver Zeph. This is the food with which Hyderabad Muslims tradi-

tionally break their fast during Ramadan, and it consists of minced meat cooked for hours with butter and wheat. The next day, I took off for Chennai, really hoping that that guy in Florida wouldn't really burn a Quran on September 11th.

In Chennai, I was in time for both Eid (the end of Ramadan) and Ganesh Chaturthi (the Hindu festival of Ganesh), so it was an exciting few days. I caught up with some friends from my previous research and went to a play, then visited freestyle dance schools to talk about possible interviews for another new project. It was a productive visit, but too short, and I left for Delhi after only a few days. In Delhi, I worked at the Center for the Study of Developing Societies library and played tourist. I toured the Red Fort and climbed to the top of a minaret at the Jamma Masjid, then visited a famous sweet shop and went to a Bollywood film. The whole city, from the airport to Delhi University to Connaught Place, was torn up in preparation for the Commonwealth Games, which took place in October. Overall, it was a productive, fun, and exciting trip, and hopefully we will soon have a Memo of Understanding signed with the University in Hyderabad that will allow for much more exchange and interaction between the two universities and cities.



Dance Master Prabhu at the Spring Boots Dance Academy, Chennai

## Faculty and Student Notes

**Tim Bavluka** and **Ted Freese** had an excellent adventure when they were interviewed in October for an upcoming documentary film on the rise of Newgrounds.com, a participatory online community for animators. Taking advantage of the Flash animation platform early on, it was one of the first communities online for artists and designers to upload short animated films or games for anyone to watch or play, and it dramatically upset the conventional wisdom of old-media producers by being absolutely free. More info: <http://everything-by-everyone.com/> and <http://nakrown.newgrounds.com/news/post/526835>.

**Kendall Binder** was contacted by CNN iReport to discuss why he chose to wear purple on October 20, 2010. Here's the story:

<http://news.blogs.cnn.com/2010/10/20/taking-a-stand-for-gay-teens-in-the-beahero-challenge/> Kendall holds the utmost respect for the "It Gets Better" Campaign, created by Dan Savage, and its goal to bring bullying issues into the minds of people locally and globally. For more about Kendall see <http://becwriters.blogspot.com/2010/10/popular-culture-grad-student-invokes.html>.





Dr. Esther Clinton and Dr. Jeremy Wallach (on right) at the SEM 2010 national meeting in LA with Dr. David Harnish (to Jeremy's right, BGSU College of Musical Arts), Dr. Katherine Meizel (seated below Esther, formerly of the College of Musical Arts, now at Oberlin College) and an enthusiastic group of BGSU Ethnomusicology graduate students.

In addition to editing this newsletter, **Drs. Esther Clinton and Jeremy Wallach** organized a panel discussion on the legacy of Ray Browne for the 2010 American Folklore Society meeting and each presented a paper at a session they organized titled "Toward an Aesthetic Analysis in Global Popular Musics" at the 2010 meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology in Los Angeles (see photo). On January 6th they leave for eighteen days in Indonesia, where they will be travelling from the capital city of Jakarta, where Jeremy was invited to present a paper at a conference sponsored by the Royal Netherlands Institute for Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, to the Central Javanese city of Semarang, where they will be representing BGSU at a conference on English language instruction and American Studies, along with our own **Dr. Angela Nelson** (participating via teleconference) and ACS

Director **Dr. Radhika Gajjala**, who will also be in attendance. Esther and Jeremy promise to write about their adventures in Indonesia in the next newsletter. See the article by **Dr. Kristen Rudisill** for a description of a journey to a similar event in Hyderabad, India in September made by her and **Dr. Dan Shoemaker**.



A scene from Merdeka Square, Central Jakarta, Indonesia.



Dr. Charles Coletta with comedy legend and BGSU alumnus Tim Conway.

**Dr. Charles Coletta** contributed entries for *Action Comics*; *Aquaman*; *Detective Comics*; *Batman & Dracula*; *Catwoman*; *Captain Marvel*; *Dennis the Menace*; *Gotham by Gaslight*; *I, Joker*; *The Shadow*; *Speeding Bullets*; *Tarzan*; and *Teen Titans* in *The Encyclopedia of Comic Books & Graphic Novels* (Greenwood 2010). He was the keynote speaker at an event titled "From Wham, Bang, Pow to 'Why So Serious?'" at Loras College in Dubuque, IA in March 2010 and was an invited speaker at the 7th Annual Lakeland Community College Comics Symposium in Kirtland, OH in April. In that same month Dr. Coletta also spoke at Peter Coogan's Institute for Comics Studies at C2E2 in Chicago. On June 7th he presented Tim Conway his BGSU Centennial Award at the Chagrin Valley Little Theater in Chagrin Falls, OH as part of a fundraiser to celebrate the CVLT's 80th anniversary (see photo). Conway even sang the BGSU fight song during the show! Lastly, Dr. Coletta presented a paper on *Krazy Kat* (marking the comic strip's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary) at the 2010 Festival of Cartoon Art at OSU held at the Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum October 14-17. Those in attendance included Matt Groening (*Life in Hell*, *Simpsons*), Art Spiegelman (*Maus*), Roz Chast (*The New Yorker*), Paul Levitz (DC Comics publisher), and Jean Schultz (widow of the *Peanuts* creator).

**Dr. Becca Cragin's** pedagogical essay, "Teaching Sexuality through Media," will be published in *thirdspace: a journal of feminist theory & culture*. The essay grew out of a workshop of the same name co-presented with **Dr. Jeffrey Brown** at the 2008 National Women's Studies Association conference in Cincinnati.

**Dr. Matthew Donahue** won in the Most Innovative Art Car category for his two Jackson Pollocktik cars at the Hot Times Music and Arts Festival in Columbus, Ohio in September (see photo). He also exhibited art car photographs in the Parkwood Gallery local artist series in October and November. There was a special showing of his 2003 documentary film *The Hines Farm Blues Club* at the Ottawa Tavern in Toledo on November 22nd, part of a collaboration on a cover story with the *Toledo City Paper*: [http://www.toledocitypaper.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=3130:hines-farm&catid=96:cover-stories&Itemid=508](http://www.toledocitypaper.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3130:hines-farm&catid=96:cover-stories&Itemid=508). Dr. Donahue's music project MAD 45 was also featured recently in the City Paper as part of its City Beat section, which profiles musical groups from throughout the region: <http://tinyurl.com/2cmg9tj>.



Dr. Matthew Donahue with his rubber-spider-festooned Most Innovative Art Car trophy at the Hot Times Music and Arts Festival.

Speaking of **Ted Freese**, his article "A Jack of All Trades and Master of One: The Artistic Merits of Video Games as an Exclusive Medium" was published in *Pop Culture Universe: Icons, Idols, Ideas* this September by ABC-CLIO and his review of Ubuntu (the Linux distro) appeared in the special Fall/Spring double issue of *Computers and Composition Online* (<http://www.bgsu.edu/cconline/>). He also took part in a successful all-POPC panel at Meaningful Play, the gaming conference at Michigan State University this past October (<http://meaningfulplay.msu.edu/program.php>) His fellow panelists were **Tim Bavluka**, **Menghan Liu**, and **Nick Ware '10**.

**Dr. Montana Miller** was one of the three authors (with Vikki Krane and Sally Ross) of the article "Power and Focus: Self-Representation of Female College Athletes," which came out in June 2010 in the *Journal of Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise*. A second article, "'It's Cheesy When They Smile': What Girl Athletes Prefer in Images of Female College Athletes" is in press at *Research Quarterly for Sport and Exercise*. At the American Folklore Society Annual Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee in October, she presented, "Breaking the Surface Tension: Professional High Divers' Storytelling Traditions, from Theme Park Survival to Facebook Revival." This past July, she served on an expert panel (with Elizabeth Buchanan, John Palfrey, and Michael Zimmer) before the Secretary's Advisory Committee to the Office of Human Research Protections, titled "Internet Research Ethics and IRB Review" in Washington, DC. She also recently served on the faculty at the national Public Responsibility in Medicine and Research (PRIM&R) conference for Institutional Review Board members in San Diego, December 5-8, where she led three conference sessions and gave a full-day pre-conference workshop on Internet research ethics. Dr. Miller also continues to share her knowledge and enthusiasm with the general community outside the University. She was the keynote speaker at an event for the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter, in Calgary, Alberta, November 22-23. While at the CWES, she also taught an intensive seminar on Internet safety and social networking. On October 21st, she was a guest speaker for the Kiwanis Club of Bowling Green and gave the presentation, "Perceptions of Risk, Perspectives on Fear." On September 13th, she was a guest speaker for the Bowling Green Parent Teacher Organization and spoke about "Trends in Texting and Social Networking: Helping Parents Respond and Relate."

**Nick Porter** presented his paper "Violence as Signifier in the Pro Wrestling Performance" at the Midwest Popular Culture Association meeting in October.

**Dr. Dan Shoemaker** and **Dr. Matthew Donahue** were interviewed by Jessica Dill of *Fox News* in Lima, OH, for her three-part story on "Disposable Technology." The story aired during November sweeps. Dr. Shoemaker was also interviewed for a story about the Lone Ranger for *Big Rapids News* (Big Rapids, MI).

**Dr. Christopher Williams**, Visiting Fellow of the Center for Popular Culture Studies, has joined the faculty of the University of Toledo as Visiting Assistant Professor of Musicology. In addition to teaching the full

music history and ethnomusicology curricula at our sister institution, he has been busy making connections for BGSU's Department of Popular Culture among his new colleagues. After speaking with Dr. Matt Yockey, who joined UT's faculty as Assistant Professor of Film Theory and History this fall, he knew immediately that Dr. Yockey's research on superhero fan culture would be intriguing for BGSU students and faculty. As an eventual result of this initial contact, Dr. Yockey gave a well-received POPC colloquium presentation last month. Dr. Williams is continuing his own work as Visiting Fellow by preparing his research on classic Indian film music for publication and is available for consultation through the Center.

## **POPC COLLOQUIUM SERIES SCHEDULE & PRESENTERS**

**SPRING 2011 (Thursdays, 11:00am - 1:00 pm, except where otherwise noted)**

January 20, BTSU 207: Kristine Blair, English; **Blogs, Wikis, and Podcasts, Oh My! Implementing Best Practices in Multimodal Teaching and Learning.**

February 17, BTSU 207: Angela Nelson, Popular Culture/Ethnic Studies; **"It's A Mad, Mad, Madea World": Tyler Perry, Urban Theater, and Black Popular Culture.**

March 17, BTSU 314: 2nd-Year Popular Culture M.A. **Thesis Presentations.**

April 7, BTSU 207 (5:00-6:00 pm): Giovanna Del Negro, Texas A&M University, English; **The Bad Girls of Jewish Comedy: Gender, Ethnicity, and Whiteness in Post-WWII America.**

April 14, BTSU 207: Kristen Rudisill, Popular Culture; **Storytelling for Change: Women's Activism and the Theater of Pritham Chakravarthy.**

**2010-2011 POPC Colloquium Coordinators: Tim Bavlnka, Brandi Venable**

**Erratum:** The last newsletter, in the story about the Ray Browne memorial service, made the erroneous statement that Sound Recordings Archives Director William Schurk began to work at BGSU in 1969. He actually started in 1967, the same year Ray joined the faculty.

**COMING ATTRACTIONS:** Volume 2, number 3, which will hit newsstands February 2011, will feature commentary from Dr. Dan Shoemaker on his and Dr. Rudisill's trip last September to Hyderabad, the story of how Dr. Montana Miller became a sought-after expert on precautions against online predators, information about a forthcoming edited volume on popular culture scholarship, the return of the *Where Are They Now?* column and much, much, more!

Remember to check our Twitter page! <http://twitter.com/PopCultureBGSU>

Here's an excellent short article about the department:

<http://becwriters.blogspot.com/2010/10/popular-culture-department-offers-close.html>

***DON'T FORGET: Abstract Deadline for the Music and Everyday Life Conference is February 1.***



***HAVE A GREAT WINTER BREAK!***

**Department of Popular Culture Newsletter**