

# The Independent Scholar

The Newsletter of the National Coalition of Independent Scholars

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Contact *The Independent Scholar* at [tis@ncis.org](mailto:tis@ncis.org).

*The Independent Scholar* is published four times a year by the National Coalition of Independent Scholars.

## A Letter from the New Executive Committee

It is with great enthusiasm that the National Coalition of Independent Scholars announces and introduces its new Executive Committee to the membership. But first, on behalf of NCIS's Executive Committee, its Board of Directors, and the entire NCIS membership we want to take this opportunity to wholeheartedly thank the immediate Past-President, Lisa Perry, for her dedication and devotion to NCIS. We hope she will remain an active member and will provide for us much necessary support as we go through this transition. Lisa has performed heroically and energetically to bring us to the point we are at now.

Building upon the hard work that has preceded us, it is now up to all of us to take NCIS to another level.

Our Board represents independent scholars from many fields. Each has his/her own expertise. Bios are available on our website at [www.ncis.org/board-directors](http://www.ncis.org/board-directors).

Our Executive Committee represents the diversity of independent scholarship. Mona Berman, our President, hails from the world of fine arts and studies material culture in an interdisciplinary context. Nicole Salomone, our Vice President, currently teaches classes on 18th-century English medicine and modern research techniques. Margaret Clements, NCIS's Secretary, is founder and director of The Center for Knowledge Diffusion, an organization that promotes educational access by reducing barriers to opportunity. David Sonenschein, our Treasurer (and Membership Chair) researches human sexualities and American popular culture.

The general goals of NCIS can be found on our website at [www.ncis.org/](http://www.ncis.org/). But the world around us is more fluid than ever. The Executive Committee, in recognizing the changing academic world, newly accessible resources made available through the IT revolution, and the impact of social media in general, is interested in defining or redefining the term "Independent Scholar." By so doing we hope to better understand who the independent scholars

## Letter, cont.

are and how we can best serve them.

We know our website has limitations and yes, even challenges, and we are working on improvements now. We have already taken steps to make online member registration and the payment of dues more streamlined. We are keenly aware that a functional website must be coupled with relevant content and graphics to effectively portray NCIS's image to the world. We are also looking into other cost-effective approaches to increase our visibility.

Increased visibility is also essential to growing our organization. We feel growth will help provide us with access to research tools that may not be available to all of our members. A larger more active member pool will help us provide more grants to our members and manage grants for other organizations. To make our community more globally relevant we hope to increase the scope of our work and develop a broader international membership.

We are grateful to each of you who has joined NCIS and ask for your suggestions. Your opinions are extremely valuable and necessary to the continuity and growth of the community of independent scholars.

**Please respond now by emailing  
[benefits@ncis.org](mailto:benefits@ncis.org) and  
volunteering your time.**

We also ask each one of you to introduce a colleague to NCIS. If every member recruits a member, we will meet our goals more quickly.

We have other projects in the works. NCIS will be offering an online bookstore where books by our members will be available for purchase. The bookstore will also feature scholarly publications recommended by our members.

The new Executive Committee has lofty goals. We think they are attainable, but we need the dedication and support of the entire membership. We urge you to get actively involved because without that energy and commitment, our goals will not become reality. We know everyone's time is limited, but if each member could commit to volunteering to an hour per week (or as they say in fund-raising efforts, that's less than ten minutes a day) we will have hundreds of hours of time that can be spent making each of our lives as independent scholars easier, more interesting, and more productive.

We ask you to please respond now by emailing [benefits@ncis.org](mailto:benefits@ncis.org) and volunteering your time. Please let us know your strengths and interests so your efforts can be applied most efficiently.

We have just completed surveying our Board of Directors to better understand what they see as the future for NCIS. We have asked each Board member to indicate NCIS's strengths and weaknesses and to inform us of their vision for its future. Once we summarize that information it will be shared

## Letter, cont.

with the membership.

We hope to make our organization increasingly meaningful as we discover more about the needs of our membership. The Board of Directors under the supervision of Margaret Clements, our new Secretary, is reviewing old member surveys and compiling a new one. When you receive this survey, either by email or by going to our website, we encourage you to respond. This is the only way we can make NCIS meaningful to each and every member and relevant as a 21st century institution.

Our thanks go out to the Board of Directors. We appreciate the guiding hands of Katalin Kadar Lynn and Janet Wasserman, both of whom have been at our sides during our transition. We hope you will remain there for us to lean on and learn from.

We look forward to hearing from and meeting as many of you as we can and thank you for the honor of allowing us to serve NCIS.

Sincerely,

Mona Berman, President

Nicole Salomone, Vice President

David Sonenschein, Treasurer, Membership Chair

Margaret Clements, Secretary

## Creativity, Art, and Scholarship

by Piri Halasz

Until six or seven years ago, I'd never given any particular thought to creativity. It was simply a word like any other, or so I thought. I guess I'd heard about advertising agencies having "creative types," but since all they did was create ads, I didn't think of them as particularly creative. Some people, I knew, associated creativity with art, but to the extent that this was part of my understanding, I equated creativity to imagination, and, after many failed attempts to write fiction, I concluded that I didn't have the necessary imagination, and therefore couldn't be as creative as all that.

All of this changed sometime around 2005 or 2006, when I attended two workshops sponsored by the Authors Guild, to which I belong. I was nearing completion of a book primarily dedicated to promulgating a theory regarding abstract painting that I'd originally published in an art magazine in 1983. Because of the widespread resistance that this theory had encountered, I figured that my best hope of gaining its acceptance was to describe how I'd developed it, as I'd come to realize that it was the culmination of thoughts and experiences that reached right back into my childhood. I hoped that by recreating this progression, I might enable more readers to follow along with me.

By the time I was attending these workshops, I had a three-part first-person narrative. The first third was primarily devoted to the journalistic career I'd had as a young woman, and climaxed with the famous but controversial cover story I'd written for *Time* magazine in 1966 on "Swinging London."

## Creativity, cont.

The second third began with *Time* assigning me to write about art, continued with my leaving the magazine in 1969 and going to graduate school in art history, culminating in the publication in 1983 of my theory regarding abstract painting.

The last third was not part of my original outline, but writing the first two parts took so many years that, by the time it was finished, I despaired of getting a publisher for a narrative concluding so far in the past. Besides, in the course of writing the narrative, I'd achieved many insights that could only have come into being after my 1983 breakthrough. Not least was a breathtaking insight into the rightward drift of the U.S. electorate that came to me only in the wake of 9/11. Thus the last third of

**I had to figure out how  
to sell my book  
before I could even write it.**

the manuscript carried my narrative up to what in 2005 or 2006 was the present, but it was only partially concerned with art and much concerned with politics. I didn't know how to bring these three segments together into a single, coherent whole.

I was still trying to figure out a solution to this problem when I attended the first of these Authors Guild workshops, although its official purpose was to tell us how to promote our books more effectively (I had started trying to figure out how to sell this book even before I began to write it). Our workshop leader went around the group and asked each of us to sum up what our book was about in one or two words. I wasn't prepared for this and didn't have any ideas, but one of my fellow attendees came up with "tantric sex" as her theme. As the second phrase of this exercise, the workshop leader asked who would like to have her give some ideas about how to promote such a book. The woman with the book about tantric sex quickly raised her hand, and the workshop leader promptly came up with a host of ingenious ideas.

The second time that the same workshop was given, I again attended, and this time I had a vague idea about the one or two words that would describe my book. I couldn't have told you why, but somehow I thought my book might be about "creativity," so that was the word I threw out when the leader again asked for ideas, and, when she asked who would like to have her book expounded upon, I raised my hand more quickly than anybody else.

Well! It seemed as though the whole world would be interested in a book on "creativity." According to our workshop leader, I should get some 12-year-old to access the web (12-year-olds being so much more plugged in to cyberspace than mere adults) and ask him or her to come up with a list of periodicals (hard copy and online) directed at just about every profession you could possibly name, from teachers to advertising people to members of the clergy. All of these people, it seemed, might be interested in a book about creativity, so I should try to reach them by writing articles about it for publications they might be likely to read. The workshop leader added that she herself knew a woman in Chicago who might want me to come and talk to her group. After the workshop ended, one of my fellow attendees told me to access his website, because he had some relevant material, and another wondered if I might like to come and address a church group of hers, somewhere in Fairfield County, CT.

## Creativity, cont.

The problem was that I knew nothing about “creativity.” It was merely a word which had swum up out of my unconscious (or memory, if the concept of the unconscious makes you uncomfortable). But I read up on it, first googling the word. Literally millions of links sprang into view. The New York Public Library (both reference and lending branches), amazon.com and the Columbia University library system (to which I have access as an alumna) had dozens, even hundreds of books and magazines partially or entirely about it. Wading through all of this, I found everything from how-to manuals and inspirational tracts to psychological tomes. Creativity, it seemed, was an industry, with not only books for sale about it, but workshops and courses offered on it, online & off. Creativity coaches offered personalized instructions, and so on and on, but it also looked to me like—as far as the how-to angle was concerned—it was more a buyer’s than a seller’s market, with self-described “experts” a dime a dozen, and possibly somewhat mythical numbers of clients.

**What was creativity, anyway?  
There seemed to be an entire  
industry  
dedicated to telling you  
what it was,  
how to get it,  
and  
how to inspire it  
in other people.**

I’m naturally timid, and knew I’d never have the chutzpah to set myself up in competition with all this expertise, but I also knew that I wasn’t interested in writing yet another how-to book anyhow. Although some examples of that kind of book had plenty of useful thoughts, there was still too much emphasis on the “practical” uses of creativity—how to “create” advertising campaigns, for example, and other commercial uses. And much of the “advice” was targeted toward readers well beneath my book’s level of sophistication—advice to retirees to take up watercolors, and the like. Rightly or wrongly, all this seemed to me too much like snake oil, and beneath my dignity as a scholar (even if it did deal me out of all those golden opportunities to lure readers of magazines directed to the different professions into buying my book with helpful “how-to” hints).

On the other hand, I became very interested in the more theoretical approaches to the subject, as propounded by psychologists, psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, and at least a few social scientists. Their various efforts to define creativity, to discuss how it was to be stimulated in abstract or general terms, and their speculations on whether it was related to mental illness, were all topics of absorbing interest.

One common theme that emerged from all or most of these sources, though, was that “creativity” was another word for “problem solving,” and that practically every example of creative thinking had come about in response to a challenge of some sort—or could be described in those terms. A second common theme was that “problem solving” inevitably involved a fresh synthesis of previously known elements—in other words, that nothing came out of nowhere, and that every new discovery consisted of a new combination of older, familiar elements. These two themes helped to convince me that in writing my book, I’d been more creative than I’d ever known I was (regardless of my lack of imagination). All three of the climaxes of my book represented creative breakthroughs, solutions to problems even though I might not have realized at the time that these were problems that had to be solved.

## Creativity, cont.

Even more exciting was the discovery that my theory about abstract painting established it as a supremely creative act. As I'd come to think of it, abstract painting represented a synthesis of common elements in different images of the external world stored in the artist's unconscious (or again, memory if you prefer), this synthesis being transferred—without the artist being aware of it—onto the picture surface. The fact that abstract artists weren't aware that they were passing along these synthesized images in no way invalidated the fact that they were doing so—not at least, to somebody like myself, who had spent much of her earlier life in an era when Freud was more respected than he is now, and when his concept of the unconscious was more widely accepted among people who considered themselves educated or at least sophisticated.

Actually, neither Freud nor the unconscious were ever totally accepted, even among people who considered themselves educated or sophisticated. Academics, in particular, were always somewhat resistant, and particularly eager to claim that there was no scientific basis for the concept of the unconscious. At present, though, more and more neurological evidence is beginning to come to light that supports the concept of the unconscious, and neurology is a “hard” science (as opposed to psychology, which is a “soft” one). Today, there is even a whole new school of research, called “neuropsychanalysis,” that is dedicated to establishing a neurological basis for Freud's theories in particular. Last winter, I attended a fascinating talk at a symposium on dreaming in Manhattan by Dr. Mark Solms, a South African psychoanalyst and lecturer in neurosurgery: he presented very convincing physiological evidence that dreaming is—as Freud always said it was—a way of prolonging sleep.

In the course of revising my book, which would ultimately be called *A Memoir of Creativity*, I found many situations in which creative thinking, as defined by all the articles and books on creativity that I'd read, could be said to have been at work. Thanks to the wonders of word processing, I was able to sliver many of these insights of mine into my manuscript without having to completely rewrite the whole thing. The book concludes with the best advice I could think of for cultivating creativity in my readers—though I didn't have any helpful hints on how to write better advertising copy, and instead encouraged my readers to dream big instead of small. This, however, may not be the best advice to offer any writer anxious to publish gainfully today.

When it came time to circulate my book to agents and publishers (academic and trade), I found that my first-person narrative was too lively and personal to appeal to academic publishers, while the massive amounts of scholarship that the book also incorporates made it unattractive to trade publishers. The fact that the book is so much about abstract art was a further deterrent. Although artists and even some art critics blandly assume that the whole world is interested in their doings, in truth most Americans don't even go to art museums regularly, fewer still keep tabs on contemporary art, as it manifests itself in the galleries, and fewest of all care much about abstract art. Most of the “art books” being published dealt with famous artists, especially from the past, and/or were luxuriously illustrated tomes just as likely deal with general-interest subjects like lighthouses or the history of the horse as they were to deal with painters or sculptors. True, there were a few short books on more challenging artistic subjects put out by the occasional small independent publishers,

## Creativity, cont.

but my volume weighed in at more than 500 pages, which put it well beyond the facilities of such houses.

In the end, I had to self-publish my book, and, while many articles are talking nowadays about how self-publishing is the coming thing, I am here to testify that it's very, very difficult to get coverage and sales for your book if you don't have a licensed publishing house to help you, at least a bit (and, even though authors with licensed publishers all complain about how little promotion their publishers do, it's still more than any self-publishing outfit will do for their authors, unless the authors are willing to pay them additional fees).

What you also need to publish a book today successfully is what is called in the trade "a platform," which is to say a glamorous job, political clout or previous best-selling publications that will lift your name and book above the herd. My platform is only a modest one. I have a small but nice group of readers who patronize "From the Mayor's Doorstep," my online column of art criticism and art comment. Though only a modest sprinkling of them bought my book, their response was uniformly warm (and, to be fair, I gave a number of the artists who might have been expected to buy the book free copies because they had previously given me samples of their art).

I'd expected that my former colleagues at *Time* would be interested, and sent a review copy to the newsletter published by the Time-Life Alumni Society, but its reviewer couldn't get past all the details in the first part of the book about our former mutual colleagues. Not only did he miss the overall purpose of the book, but he was so ambivalent about it that the review persuaded at most only one or two of his readers to buy the book.

Even more ambivalent, not to say openly snotty, was the review that appeared in *TLS*, the august British organ formerly known as the *Times Literary Supplement*. True, it was almost unheard of *TLS* to deal with a self-published book at all (*The New York Times*, and many other publications, refuse point-blank to review self-published books). However, the tone of the *TLS* review sounded as though they thought I was some kind of celebrity who needed to be debunked. This attitude may stem from the exasperation that some scholars in Britain still feel with regard to *Time*'s 1966 cover story on "Swinging London"—believe it or not, this cover story and the little guide book to London that I was able to write for an outside publisher as a spinoff are still provoking discussion in British universities.

In the U.S. and Canada, kind friends enabled me to schedule four illustrated talks accompanied by book-signings—one at a college reunion, one in an art gallery, one in a Canadian university, and one in a lecture series out on Long Island—but on average they produced sales of only five or six copies apiece. I was also able to get a few nice although short reviews at amazon.com, through professional contacts or friends of friends. But—thank God for NCIS! Far and away the longest, most thoughtful and intelligent review that I got, by Ann Lee Morgan, appeared in January 2011 issue of *The Independent Scholar*.

I'm still glad that I published *A Memoir of Creativity*, and, although it is now four years since it was

## Creativity, cont.

published, I still sell the occasional copy, either from my private closet-full of paperbacks or through amazon.com and Barnes & Noble (which offer, respectively, the Kindle and Nook versions, as well as hard copy). But if there's a moral about creativity here, it's that sometimes you can be *too* creative. Perhaps another way of saying this is that practicality must be factored into your creative equation. If I'd stuck to the story of my life, I might conceivably have found a trade publisher. If I'd stuck to an academic presentation of my theory, there is some remote possibility I could have sold it to a university press. But, by synthesizing the story of my life with the discoveries I made in journalism, academia and as an independent scholar, I created a many-headed hydra that nobody wanted to publish. There it stands, like Ozymandias in the middle of the desert—in ruins, maybe, but nonetheless a grand reminder of Thinking Big.

## Member Interview: Lisa Perry

*In this issue we introduce a new regular series featuring interviews with NCIS members. We begin with outgoing President Lisa Perry, with an opportunity to learn more about her scholarly endeavors.*

*As President, which of your accomplishments do you think were the most important for the organization?*

My time as president of the organization was a time of great change in the organization, some of it a bit painful but most of the change was for the better. In this time, we have taken many steps to improve benefits for our members, but I think the most important is our advancement of funding for member research. One of those advances is our alliance with Foundation Center's Grants to Individuals Online database. Although our members do not appear to be using it heavily, I do think once they take advantage of it and learn of all the funding sources available they will see significant advantages. Another is the institution of the Dorbrecht Grants, which paid out more than \$11,000 in the first year to help fund our members' research and writing.

*You are currently working on a book based on your dissertation research that is to be published by the University of Kentucky. Tell us a little more about that research. How did you become interested in studying the American company town of Wheelwright, KY?*

I am a native of West Virginia, with family roots in those mountains that predate the American Revolution, so I have always been interested in the stories of Appalachia and the lives of the people who live and work there. I also have a degree in mining engineering technology and have some inside knowledge of the industry. When the time came to select a dissertation topic, the problem was not what I wanted to do but where I wanted to focus my research. I came across this little town in eastern Kentucky by happenstance, and realized its story was one that needed to be told. People who lived, worked, or grew up in the coal camp, for that is what these company owned mining towns are still called, still gather from across the nation for a reunion each year. They refer to the town as their Camelot. This went against what most people think they know of coal camps or company towns, so I knew I had to follow through and tell their story.

## Perry, cont.

The work is not yet under contract, but everyone including the folks at UPK anticipate it being there as soon as I complete the revisions.

*How would you describe your research interests? What methods do you use? Who inspires you?*

I am interested in, and conduct research in, areas of Appalachian history and culture, African American history and culture, labor history, and public history. Most of my research is engaged in more than one of these at one time—for example, the dissertation I am revising touches on all these. I use many of the tools of classic historians as well as those of oral history and folklore, meaning I use everything from archival collections to oral histories to diaries, journals, and business records.



Appalachian Mountains. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

I have been inspired by a great many people and hate to leave anyone out, but my own family connection to Appalachia is what grounds me.

While I was a senior at Gilbert High School, I read John Howard Griffin's journal/book *Black Like Me*. I realize today that it is and was quite controversial, but it made me look at the world and the people around me differently, and in a way that still resonates. I continually work to not make judgements until I have walked in someone else's shoes, or at least tried to understand what it was like for them to do so. Among the scholars whose research inspired me are William Trotter, Studs Terkel, Herbert Reid, bell hooks, and Ronald Lewis. There are many others, but this will do for a start.

*Despite holding positions in the Arkansas History Commission and in teaching, you have found time for independent scholarship. How do you organize time for research and writing?*

I am the Archival Manager at one of three state archives operated by the Arkansas History Commission, and I teach part time at Arkansas State University and American Public University. My family would say I am a workaholic who has no idea how to relax, and maybe that is true. I try to compartmentalize my life and devote time to everything. While I do not get to spend as much time as I want on my research, it is always there. It is kind of like the quilt on the quilting frame in my living room—it is patiently waiting for me to find the time to spend turning it into a finished product. I make time every week—maybe just an hour or two, rarely a whole day with my current teaching schedule.

*Before coming to NCIS you had worked in directorial positions in the non-profit sector. How was your experience as the President of NCIS different from your earlier experiences in non-profit work?*

## Perry, cont.

Each of the positions I have held in the non-profit sector had its own challenges and rewards. I think the biggest difference with NCIS was the geographic dispersion. It was also the biggest challenge. I miss meeting face to face with the board of directors, working side by side tackling problems and achieving goals. In many ways, it has been a very lonely experience. Because we lacked the



Coal company town in Jenkins, Kentucky, in 1935. Photo by Ben Shahn. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

personal connection, working together was more challenging.

*You had a career in engineering before turning to the humanities. What drew you to the humanities field? Has your background in a science and technology field informed your approach and methods of historical inquiry in any way?*

Working in engineering was a job—I was competent but never stellar because my heart was not in it. I grew up the oldest child of an oldest child in a family where people had children young and lived to be fairly old, so I knew many of my great-grandparents. I

grew up listening to their stories of growing up, of both world wars and the Depression, of hardscrabble existence and of the rewards of community. What I really wanted was to find a way to take oral traditions and preserve and interpret them in ways that were meaningful to a broader audience. I am a linear thinker, which served me well as an engineer. My time as an engineer also equipped me with the skills needed to navigate some of the more technical aspects of labor history. I have worked in factories and coal analysis labs and been in underground coalmines, so I understand the technologies and terminology I come across in the field.

*What plans do you have for your research in the future?*

I have my next research project lined up and have completed initial work so everything is ready to pick up when I finish revising my manuscript. It is also an Appalachia-based study that involves all my my interests. I really do not want to give away too much of it at this point, but is something fairly untouched in the history of medicine and labor.

# Independent Scholars on academia.edu

Ever wanted to have an easy-to-use web page where you could highlight your scholarship? A place where you could connect with others in your field, or any field? A free website where you can read the latest papers in your discipline? Search no more. The website academia.edu is a networking site for academics of all kinds, including independent scholars. Based on a Facebook-like model, it allows researchers to post their page proofs, conference papers, and even full books for other scholars to read and cite. Users can also post their c.v.s, list upcoming talks and publications, and status of the moment. Scholars can follow one another's work through a simple click of a button, and academia.edu tracks how many followers you have, what they're looking at on your page, and how often your materials have been downloaded. It also tracks how others found you by providing the search terms that led them to your page.

NCIS maintains a page at academia.edu for members to affiliate with, and you can also affiliate with other organizations. NCIS member Kathleen Sheldon writes that, "I have my visiting scholar site at UCLA's Center for the Study of Women, all of my various alma maters, and the NCIS page."

A few tips for using academia.edu:

Include complete and up-to-date contact information, including your email address and any other websites you have, such as your NCIS page.

Organize your materials in reverse chronological order, so that your newest publications and papers appear first.

PDFs of papers get more downloads because they are seen as safer than Word docs or other formats. You can easily change your papers into PDFs with a number of free programs such as doPDF and CutePDF, available online.

Tag your papers with key words and areas of interest so that users can find your work quickly and easily.

Select several areas of interest so that users are aware of your scholarly presence in those disciplines.

## Digital Public Library of America Launches in Boston

Last week, the Digital Public Library of America launched its publically available website, containing the contents of hundreds of databases from across the United States. According to its press release, the DPLA "is a project to make the holdings of America's research libraries, archives, and museums available to all Americans—and eventually everyone in the world—free of charge." Its website explains the project this way:

## DPLA, cont.

*The DPLA aims to expand this crucial realm of openly available materials, and make those riches more easily discovered and more widely usable and used, through its three main elements:*

*1. A portal that delivers students, teachers, scholars, and the public to incredible resources, wherever they may be in America. Far more than a search engine, the portal provides innovative ways to search and scan through the united collection of millions of items, including by timeline, map, format, and topic.*

*2. A platform that enables new and transformative uses of our digitized cultural heritage. With an application programming interface (API) and maximally open data, the DPLA can be used by software developers, researchers, and others to create novel environments for learning, tools for discovery, and engaging apps.*

*3. An advocate for a strong public option in the twenty-first century. For most of American history, the ability to access materials for free through public libraries has been a central part of our culture, producing generations of avid readers and a knowledgeable, engaged citizenry. The DPLA will work, along with like-minded organizations and individuals, to ensure that this critical, open intellectual landscape remains vibrant and broad in the face of increasingly restrictive digital options. The DPLA will seek to multiply openly accessible materials to strengthen the public option that libraries represent in their communities.*

Users can already take advantage of the DPLA by visiting it at [dp.la](http://dp.la) and using its many apps, viewing online exhibitions, and searching for material by date or place.

*The Independent Scholar* would love to hear from NCIS members who have used the DPLA, including what they were working on, how they found materials, and what their recommendations are for other members interested in using the site. Write to us at [tis@ncis.org](mailto:tis@ncis.org).

## Submit to TIS

*TIS* welcomes scholarly articles from members on any topic not to exceed 5000 words. Articles should be submitted as a Word doc or compatible file and should be formatted in Chicago (in-text author-date) style. Permissions for quotations, photos, etc., are the responsibility of the author. Articles should not have been published elsewhere previously. Send article proposals and complete articles to the *TIS* Editor at [tis@ncis.org](mailto:tis@ncis.org) for consideration.

For book review suggestions, or to offer to become a reviewer, contact Book Review editor David Sonenschein at [dsncis@gmail.com](mailto:dsncis@gmail.com).

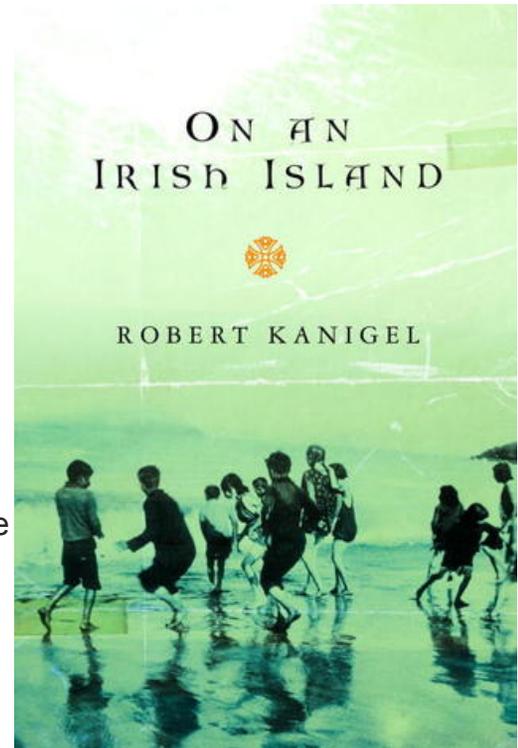
*TIS* also welcomes member news, including recent publications, presentations, honors, and other information. Deadlines for inclusion are February 1, May 1, August 1, and November 1 of each year. Send all materials to the Editor at [tis@ncis.org](mailto:tis@ncis.org).

# Book Reviews

**Robert Kanigel, *On an Irish Island*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012, 336 pp., acknowledgements, notes, illustrations, bibliographies, index, \$26.95, hard cover ISBN 978-0-307-26959-1.**

Reviewed by Janette van de Geest-Van Gruisen

The particular Irish island in the title of Robert Kanigel's book is Great Blasket Island, the largest of a small group of islands that rise dramatically from the Atlantic Ocean, barely three miles off the coast of county Kerry and roughly one quarter of the way up Ireland's ragged west coast. The island's highest point of elevation is 958 feet. It is surrounded by clear water, scalloped with stretches of pristine beach, and inhabited only by donkeys and wildlife. Housing an uncurated museum of geological phenomena, the island might seem a perfect destination for the lover of solitary sojourns in "undiscovered" territories. However, the island was indeed inhabited until as recently as 1953 by a sparse, robust community of farmers and fishermen. Whitewashed stone farms and cottages are still strewn across the island's east-facing coast, although every one of the sturdy buildings is empty of human life. The island is abandoned.



Great Blasket Island appeared on Kanigel's personal and scholarly radar in 2005 when he was honeymooning in western Ireland. The island was visible from the Blasket Center, a heritage center in the tiny town of Dún Cheoin established by the Irish government to tell and preserve the story of the Blasket Islands. Kanigel paid a visit to the centre and apparently lingered there for several hours, at the end of which he was thoroughly absorbed by the story of these deserted islands—and by the folk who had deserted them. The rest, as the saying goes, is history; in fact it is a history that Kanigel has painstakingly researched and interpreted in *On an Irish Island*.

Kanigel tells the story of the island largely through the voices of the islanders themselves: either directly through their own writings or as recalled in the writings of their visitors, guests, and friends. Kanigel draws heavily on the writings of a small and diverse group of "superbly educated men and women" who came from some of the intellectual capitals of Europe to explore the many facets of the island's life. This group comprised scholars, linguists, cultural anthropologists, and others who were simply devout students of life. They included John Millington Synge, a notable playwright and literary figure whose first visit was in 1905, and George Thomson, whose first visit to Great Blasket Island in 1923 was as an eager nineteen-year-old Cambridge scholar whose fascination with language, linguistics, and all things Irish would return him to the island many times in the following years. The ensuing meetings between the islanders and their curious visitors, described in the book as a "collision between two worlds," took place during the first decades of the 1900s and sparked, perhaps

## Book Reviews, cont.

in accordance with the friction theory of growth, a blossoming of the creative and expressive talent latent in the islanders.

Kanigel guides the reader through five decades of evolution and change experienced on the island against the distant but inescapable backdrop of tension that was the new fabric of Europe and, indeed, of the rest of the world.

At the beginning of these interactions between two worlds, the islanders spoke only Irish, very few were literate, and English was a little known and very foreign tongue. By 1953, when the last of the islanders left for mainland destinations both near and far, there existed, according to George Thomson, "a little library of fifteen or sixteen volumes, the Blasket Library." He viewed this as something unique. "There is no such collection in any other language, a collective portrait of a pre-capitalist village community, made by the villagers themselves, at the very moment of transition from speech to writing."

Through a creative interpretation and retelling of this library—a unique, discrete canon in itself—Kanigel delivers a lively narrative of island life. *On an Irish Island* tells the story of a casually constructed but tightly bound community of islanders who had "no electricity, no plumbing, no church, no priests, no taverns, no shops." They had only themselves to rely on. This tiny world of men, women, and children experienced birth, life, death and everything between, while having to be all things to all men, especially to themselves. Theirs was a life lived in unselfconscious harmony with nature's elements, and although it was often filled with the joys of family, friendship, love, and—according to some islanders' stories—a native appreciation for the stark beauty of its quotidian landscape, still it was a fragile life, bleak to the extreme, even brutally raw and hard when considered from the perspective of modern western standards.

Kanigel rewrites his literary fieldwork into a chronicle that is alive and kicking on every page; his writing conveys the flavor, scent, and sound of life on a remote Irish island. But between the lines is an unwritten nostalgia. Kanigel succinctly states that the Blaskets have become "a kind of half-silvered mirror that, even as we look back through it to the past, shows us ourselves and something of how we live today."

*On an Irish Island* is dense with historical and biographical data that grounds the storytelling in place and time and validates the authenticity of its many voices. The "superbly educated men and women" who visited the islands each brought his or her own story to bear on the subsequently rich relationships forged with the islanders. The reader begins to recognize the islanders as a population of multifaceted and complex human beings rather than the quaint inhabitants of a time long-gone and almost forgotten.

While the source of Kanigel's narrative is of necessity secondhand, this aspect is countered by his obvious dedication to painting a true portrait of an otherwise mysterious and disappeared population whose spirit lingers, perhaps, in the green and rugged texture of the islands. Kanigel's exhaustive

## Book Reviews, cont.

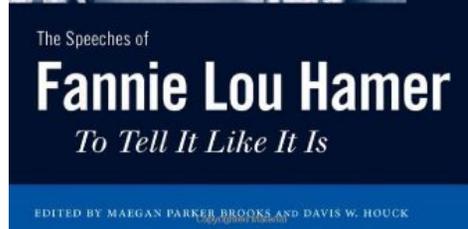
research (32 pages of notes, a 12 page bibliography, an Irish bibliography, and a 12 page index) informs a book written by a scholar for scholars and lay readers. The body of the book is built sturdily upon anecdote and underpinned firmly by historical data that laces together a story rich in color and texture, and is viable as a work of cultural anthropology in its own right.

While Kanigel is powerless to turn back the clock and fulfill George Thomson's wish to "bring the people of the Gaeltacht into modern civilization while retaining their own culture," he succeeds in making a powerful contribution to the initiative to honor that which must not be lost to the passage of time.

Readers who wish to dive deeper into the story of Great Blasket Island and hear parts of its story from an insider's point of view will do well to read Tomás O'Crohan's *An Islandman* and Maurice O'Sullivan's *Twenty Years A-Growing*, two captivating and eminently readable volumes from the Blasket canon. With their help and that of their fellow island men and women, Kanigel has interpreted and delivered a responsible, colorful, and poignant narrative of a way of life, lost but never forgotten, on an Irish island.

**Maegan Parker Brooks and Davis W. Houck, editors, *The Speeches of Fannie Lou Hamer: To Tell It Like It Is*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2011, xxxii, 221 pp., acknowledgement, appendix, bibliography, index. hardcover, \$38. ISBN 978-1-60473-822-3.**

Reviewed by Stephanie Harp



Firebrand civil and human rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer never minced words nor softened her stances for the comfort of her audience. From segregationist Mississippi Senator James O. Eastland to presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, she challenged leaders to live up to this country's founding ideals and rebuked them when she smelled hypocrisy. In accepting his first nomination for the presidency, Bill Clinton famously quoted her saying she was "sick of tired of being sick and tired." Now in *The Speeches of Fannie Lou Hamer*, editors Maegan Parker Brooks (NCIS member) and Davis W. Houck have compiled complete transcripts from twenty of her twenty-eight known recorded speeches and testimonies from fifteen years of public oratory, along with an oral history interview with her, and one with her daughter. Through this collection of her local and national addresses, the reader is able to trace her unexpected path to prominence.

In this book, through her own words, Hamer comes alive. For the reader who never had the opportunity to hear her speak—other than

## Book Reviews, cont.

in YouTube videos or news clips of archival footage— these transcripts are a treat. Her voice leaps off the page through her trademark style of “image making, testifying, dissembling, mimicry, and circumlocution” (p. xxiii). Editors Brooks and Houck are communications scholars, and that is the perspective that informs their presentation as they examine Hamer’s use of rhetoric, grammar, and turns of phrase. They intend for their volume to encourage readers to reconsider the role of speech in advancing the civil rights struggle and to engender a renewed appreciation of grassroots activists like Hamer, who often were overlooked in favor of such prominent figures as the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X (p. xxii).

A largely self-taught Delta sharecropper, born in 1917 as her parents’ twentieth child, Hamer said, “I had never heard, until 1962, that black people could register and vote” (p. 150). Her first attempt to register that same year resulted in her subsequent expulsion from her sharecropper’s job and home of eighteen years. Sixteen bullets were fired into the house where she later was staying. When she and fellow activists attended a 1963 voter registration and education workshop in South Carolina, upon their return to Mississippi they were arrested and severely beaten at the hands of police. In speech after speech, the account of her jail experience is harrowing. The beating and subsequent sham of a trial exemplify how out of balance the so-called justice system was for African Americans in 1960s Mississippi. Readers not familiar with details of the civil rights struggle will find the accounts of murders and blatant injustices both educational and eye opening, as is the almost superhuman bravery of Hamer and her fellow activists when she worked with the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (a grassroots alternative to the all-white Mississippi Democratic Party), Head Start, and her Freedom Farm Cooperative, founded in 1969 to help Sunflower County, Mississippi, families obtain food and other needs. She was a sought-after contributor to the women’s rights movement, helping in 1971 to found the National Women’s Political Caucus.

In describing the harsh conditions facing African Americans in Mississippi and, by extension, throughout the South, Hamer asked, “now how can a man be in Washington, elected by the people, when 95 percent of the people cannot vote in Mississippi?” (p. 62). She herself launched multiple, unsuccessful bids for political office. The legacies of slavery, Jim Crow, and white supremacy were still in full force in the 1960s and into the 1970s as white southerners struggled, with increasing futility, to retain the control over their black neighbors that they had enjoyed throughout centuries of enslavement and for another one hundred years after emancipation. When southern police who beat Hamer, other civil rights workers, and ordinary African Americans were figures to be feared, where could one turn for protection from harm? Hamer used stories like these to effectively illustrate the dramatic differences between the experiences and perspectives of white Americans and African Americans in what she called, “the land of the [lynching] tree and the home of the grave” (p. 82), and therefore the urgent need for change.

She even was leery of John and Robert Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, exposing their sometime lack of attention to violence and civil rights. Even as they were being lauded by others, Hamer knew – and discussed – the delay with which they responded to the actual violations on the ground in Mississippi and elsewhere. Much like the contemporary criticism leveled at the “Great Emancipator” Abraham

## Book Reviews, cont.

Lincoln for his less-than-pure views on enslavement and equality, Hamer perceived hesitancy and political motives in the actions of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson.

In their thoroughly documented introduction, filled with succinct summaries of Hamer's life events, the civil rights struggle in general, and well-chosen anecdotes, Brooks and Houck analyze her rhetorical approach and ground it in her life story. Like the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., her oratorical style evolved from a lifetime spent in black Baptist churches and thus she knew how to appeal both to emotions and to higher purposes. Because she spoke from her lived experiences, she almost never needed notes, preferring to speak extemporaneously, skillfully weaving stories and making points to most effectively reach the particular audience she was addressing at any given time. She captivated listeners at the 1964 Democratic National Convention's credentials committee in Atlantic City with the story of her attempt to register to vote, and her jailing and beating at the hands of police. Elsewhere, she described the young woman who, just having proudly graduated from high school in 1971 and looking at her new diploma, was gunned down by white supremacists in Drew, Mississippi (pp. 140, 142). To black southerners, she talked about shared experiences; to white northerners, she issued challenges to rethink their places of privilege and comfort, and their beliefs that the North was a more enlightened place: "Until I'm free in Mississippi, you're not free in no other place," and, "And if you think you are free, you drive down to Mississippi with your Wisconsin license plate and you will see what I am talking about" (pp. 81, 125). Here she spoke to a largely black audience, but was addressing white listeners: "So I don't care if you're white as your shirt or black as a skillet, we are made from the same blood, brother. And you're going to have to deal with it" (p. 87).

Unlike some later movement leaders who tended toward separatism, Hamer was solidly on the side of lifting all poor people, regardless of skin color or background. "And I'm not fighting for a black Mississippi; I'm fighting for a people's Mississippi," she said in 1969 (p. 89). In later speeches, she connected both poverty and race to issues as diverse as abortion, hunger, education, and fighting communism in Vietnam. Continuing in the vein of the post-World War I and especially post-World War II discontent among early civil rights activists, Hamer asked why America was fighting for democracy abroad but lacked it at home.

Hamer knew she held the moral high ground and did not cede a single inch of it. As her daughter later said, "she stood for what's right; she tried to help anybody—she didn't pick, she didn't discriminate" (p. 208). Again and again, she asserted that she had no wish for payback for the injustices done to her and to her fellow African Americans: "I refuse to bring myself down to the depths of hell to hate a man because he hated me" (p. 115). Black Americans repeatedly have been called upon to forgive and to be better than those who oppressed them. Hamer knew that if she let herself be consumed by hatred, she would be the one to suffer; her haters would not. She said, "I don't want to be equal to the people that rape my ancestors, dead, kill out the Indians, dead, destroyed my dignity, and taken my name" (p. 117). That was not the sort of equality she sought.

The fact that she almost never wrote her speeches ahead of time was a legacy both of her desire for authentic immediacy and of the oral traditions of a largely illiterate culture of Delta sharecroppers.

## Book Reviews, cont.

Though she herself had enough formal education that she could read and write well, many people in her life could not; it was from them that she learned her rhetorical style, and to them that she often spoke. The importance of this volume lies in the effort put forth by the editors to collect and verify these recordings. Hamer's considerable collected papers (the index of her correspondence, alone, runs seventy-four pages) include campaign flyers, financial records, and resumes, but no folders of her handwritten drafts of speeches because they do not exist. Offering her words, exactly as she spoke them, was the only way to collect and to make accessible her formidable rhetorical powers.

Because she spoke to audiences in the language of her everyday life, Brooks and Houck have chosen "southern black vernacular" to describe Hamer's speech, emphasizing traits that, taken together, are more descriptive of Hamer's style than other common labels such as African American Vernacular English, Black Dialect, or Ebonics. They posit that, because of Hamer's background, the lexical, grammatical, and syntactical qualities of her speech provide an alternative model to the more widely known oratory of the period (p. xxiii). Her informal style drew criticism from more educated blacks and whites, including Roy Wilkins of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNC), and Vice President Hubert Humphrey. Campaign manager Charles McLaurin told her not to pay attention to the critics, assuring her, "You're somebody, you're important." Without a doubt, Hamer was a fearless, determined, persistent woman who knew the obstacles she faced but was unwilling to let them deter or silence her. She remained unflinching in her sharp clarity of meaning.

The book's index lists biblical references, an unusual inclusion but one appropriate to Hamer's weaving together of biblical lessons, life experiences, shared oral expressions, and core topics. Criticized for a supposed lack of focus in her speeches, Hamer's circumlocution rather served to draw her audiences into the trajectory of her thoughts. The editors have chosen speeches showing her range of topics, style, and audience, and always with her trademark bite, effectively comparing her various speeches and highlighting her skill. Among her research specialties, Maegan Brooks focuses on "the rhetoric of social change, with particular emphases on the roles gender, race, class, and sexuality play in amplifying/silencing voices in the public sphere." Davis Houck similarly researches the New Era and early New Deal, among other areas, emphasizing race, gender, class, and sexuality. They employ some language specific to their specialty, but not so much as to be off-putting to a reader not versed in the field.

The excellent introductions to the individual speeches, in combination with the texts, allow the reader to trace Hamer's life, goals, and challenges. Those not previously familiar with her story may wish for an additional source of biographical information, such as a timeline of significant dates, to connect the speeches to one another and to the larger events of the 1960s and 1970s, without the need to return to the book's introduction to fill some gaps. At times, reading from speech to speech gives the impression of leaping through time, without a clear sense of her activities in the interims between the speaking events. Photos of Hamer, her family, fellow activists and collaborators, and significant locations in her life also would have been a welcome addition to further illuminate her stories and the people in them.

## Book Reviews, cont.

But Hamer is so alive in her words, so vibrant and vivid, that even without photographs, the reader easily can imagine her commanding stage after stage, by turns shocking and electrifying both black and white audiences with her no-holds-barred telling it like it was. For the very ordinariness of her life before she rose to national fame, for her experiences so representative of the time, place, and people around her, Fannie Lou Hamer should hold to her rightful place among the leaders of her day. This volume shows us the reasons why.

## Member News

**Glenn McGovern** wrote an op-ed piece for *The Wall Street Journal* titled "Who will Protect the Protectors?", which was published on April 11, 2013. He also published an article titled "Motorcycle Hit Teams: A Global Tactic" which appeared in the April/May edition of *The Counter Terrorist Magazine*.

**Jasmine Pues's** upcoming presentations include "Philosophy and Lore of Shin Megami Tensei/Persona series" at Anime Boston in late May 2013 and PortCon (Maine) in June.

## Scholarly Calendar

**Don't forget to check your disciplinary association's website and H-Net for other opportunities in your field.**

### **Calls for Conference Papers and Book Chapters**

**The Varied Roles of the Amateur in Early Modern Europe:** RSA 2014, New York, March 27-29, 2014.

Deadline June 1, 2013.

A central identity in early modern Europe for fashioning one's self as a participant in sociability and public-building was the lover (liefhebber/es, Liebhaber/in, amator, amatore/amatrice, un/une amateur). Currently the liefhebber or amateur is usually considered from the perspective of the history of connoisseurship in art. However, the lover was not only a persona in the art world. One could be a lover of alchemy, of liberty, of mathematics, or of the fatherland. The question is then, how did the identities of the lovers in one arena intersect or not with those in others? Can the agency of the lover in the development of taste, expertise, and cultural content, as one sees in art, also be seen in other endeavours? Are national or regional differences visible? What was the role of gender? Were there distinctions between lover, connoisseur or virtuoso? What were the relationships between the non-professional lover and standard arenas for the assurance of expertise, such as guilds and universities? How does the role of the lover relate to models of citizenship and participation in a market society?

## Scholarly Calendar, cont.

We invite submissions of papers discussing the role of the lovers from all disciplines (literature, history, art history, history of science, etc) and from various areas of Europe c. 1500-1700 for a series of panels at RSA 2014. This session is arranged by Lisa Skogh and Vera Keller. Please submit an abstract in English (150 words max.) and abbreviated CV (300 words max.) and email [lisa.skogh@arthistory.su.se](mailto:lisa.skogh@arthistory.su.se) no later than June 1, 2013. [www.rsa.org](http://www.rsa.org).

**SAMLA Conference : Women's Studies Panel: "Contemporary American Women Writers: Confronting Changing Times,"** Atlanta, Georgia, November 8-10, 2013.

Deadline: June 15, 2013

The last forty years have witnessed a number of changes in US political, social, and economic history. Some subjects that have been at the center of commentary, both popular and scholarly, include globalization, lifestyle/social class change, environmental degradation, religious discrimination, war, and civil/human rights. Increasingly, women's studies scholars have been examining the portrayals of such matters in the work of creative writers. This panel aims to further the discussion and explore contemporary political, social, and economic changes and their manifestations and/or influences on American women writers and their work. Particularly welcome are proposals that consider the intersections of gender, race, and class in relation to these changes.

In general, papers for this panel might examine 1) specific writers who embody these or similar matters in their works; 2) the engagement of women's studies with an increasingly digital and networked world (in keeping with the conference theme, "Cultures, Contexts, Images, and Texts: Making Meaning in Print, Digital, and Networked Worlds"); or 3) broader issues in women's studies. Possible questions for consideration: How are lifestyle and social class changes reflected in recent literature? What images of environmental activism exist in fiction? How is a "culture of war" portrayed in creative writing? How are high-speed technologies and transnationalism examined in US women's writing? All theoretical and critical approaches, including feminist, Marxist, and postmodernist, are welcome. If any audiovisual equipment is needed, please include a list of the equipment with your proposal.

Please send abstract of 250 words and a brief bio to Robin Brooks, University of Florida, at [rbrooks@ufl.edu](mailto:rbrooks@ufl.edu).

**SAMLA Conference: "Second-Class Scholars?: Outside the Ivory Tower, Off the Tenure Track,"** Atlanta, Georgia, November 8-10, 2013.

Deadline: May 17, 2013

This roundtable seeks independent scholars and adjuncts in the fields of language and literature to share their experiences of being an active scholar on the "margins" of academia, and the challenges (if any) that they encounter.

From MLA's *Profession* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education* to *Inside Higher Ed* and #alt-

## Scholarly Calendar, cont.

*academy: A Mediacommons Project*, the decline of tenure-track research positions and the rise of alternate academic careers have been duly noted, but what are the implications for those PhDs seeking to research and write? A recent issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (21 Jan. 2013) highlighted the situation of independent scholars, and mentioned the Ronin Institute for Independent Scholarship as a potentially viable alternative to a bricks-and-mortar research university. Possible topics include: do you ever feel like a “second-class scholar”? Do you feel that you are met with bias in certain academic situations? Is this liminality productive, and if so, how? Do you work entirely on your own, or have you found supportive communities near you or online, for instance, through blogs or networking sites like academia.edu? What kinds of obstacles, if any, have you encountered in terms of accessing materials, applying for grants, and funding travel to conferences? Have you faced particular challenges in getting work published? Are traditional publishing avenues, such as the refereed journal, important to you? Have you successfully collaborated on projects with tenured academics or with other independent scholars or adjuncts? How do you see older notions of scholarship changing, and do you welcome those changes (or not)? Personal accounts are welcome, as are thoughtful variations on the topic.

Proposals of 250 words, along with a brief CV, are due by May 17, 2013 (deadline extended), to mhcrocombe@gmail.com.

**Telling Stories: Personal Narrative in Writing Instruction**, editors: Duncan Koerber (York University); Robert G. Price (University of Toronto).  
Deadline: June 15, 2013

We are now accepting paper proposals for an edited collection that will bring together the latest research on the use of personal narrative writing in the classroom.

In writing personal narratives, students tell stories about their own lived experiences while working on grammar and style. Personal narrative assignments have grown in popularity as a means to improve students' writing skills and also to help students understand the fundamentals of academic disciplines. This book will explore how personal narrative belongs, and makes good pedagogical sense, in college and university classes.

We will gladly accept proposals from instructors of writing and composition courses. Additionally, we are quite interested in submissions from instructors who are using personal narrative in disciplines that do not have a tradition of using personal narrative writing (examples include biology, chemistry, physics, math, business, sociology, psychology, political science). Looking broadly, the collection will reveal the wide suitability of this written form, and it will help us understand the varied ways instructors have employed personal narrative writing in their disciplines.

Solely theoretical submissions will be considered; however, preference will be given to papers that present quantitative and/or qualitative research projects such as surveys, ethnographies, experiments, case studies, rhetorical analysis, discourse analysis, content analysis and so on.

## Scholarly Calendar, cont.

Nonetheless, proposals must connect research projects with current theoretical conversations in writing and composition pedagogy.

Submit your 500-word proposal and CV to Duncan Koerber (dkoerber@yorku.ca) by the deadline of June 15, 2013. We will notify contributors by July 15, 2013. Final drafts of 6000 to 8000 words will be due by December 15, 2013.

**Women, Work, and the Web: How the Web Creates Entrepreneurial Opportunities**, edited by Carol Smallwood, publisher: Scarecrow Press.

Deadline: June 15, 2013

Seeking chapters of unpublished work from writers in the U.S. and Canada for an anthology. Interested in such topics as: Women Founding Online Companies; Women Working on the Web With Young Children or Physical Disabilities; Woman's Studies Resources and Curriculum; Surveys/Interviews of Innovative Women on the Web.

Chapters of 3,000-4,000 words or two chapters coming to that word count (up to 3 co-authors) on how the Internet has opened doors, leveled the playing field and provided new opportunities for women, are all welcome. Practical, how-to-do-it, anecdotal and innovative writing based on experience how women make money on the Web, further careers. One complimentary copy per chapter, discount on additional copies. Please e-mail 2-4 chapter topics each described in two sentences by June 15, 2013, along with a brief bio to smallwood@tm.net Please place INTERNET/Last Name on the subject line; if co-authored, paste bio sketches for each author.

**Writing After Retirement: Tips by Successful Retired Writers**, edited by Carol Smallwood, publisher: Scarecrow Press.

Deadline: June 15, 2013

An anthology of unpublished 3,000-4,000 word chapters or two chapters coming to that word count by successful, men and women retired writers from the U.S. and Canada (up to 3 co-authors) previously following other careers than writing. Fiction, poetry, memoir, nonfiction, journalism, and other writers welcome. Looking for topics as: Business Aspects of Writing, Writing as a New Career, Networking, Using Life Experience, Finding Your Niche, Privacy and Legal Issues, Using Technology. With living longer, early retirement, popularity of memoir writing, this is a how-to for baby boomers who now have time to write. Compensation: one complimentary copy per chapter, discount on additional copies. Please e-mail two chapter topics each described in two sentences by June 15, 2013 with brief pasted bio to smallwood@tm.net placing RETIREMENT/Last Name on the subject line. If co-authored, pasted bios for each.