

2018 SUMMER CONVERSATIONAL SERIES AND TEACHER WORKSHOP

Little Women in the 21st Century: Celebrating 150 Years of Inspiration

BIOGRAPHIES OF OUR DISTINGUISHED PRESENTERS

ELIF ARMBRUSTER - *Suffolk University, Boston*

An Associate Professor of English at Suffolk University, Elif teaches American Literature, American Studies, and Gender Studies and specializes in mid-to-late 19th and early 20th Century women's literature with emphasis on biography and autobiography, feminism, literary realism, and immigrant literature. She has published on Edith Wharton, Laura Esquivel, and Anchee Min, and has forthcoming essays on Willa Cather and Laura Ingalls Wilder and on Harriet Beecher Stowe. Elif is also current Vice President of the Nineteenth Century Studies Association, and past Co-President of the New England American Studies Association.

ANNE BOYD RIOUX - *University of New Orleans*

Anne is Professor of English at the University of New Orleans and author of the forthcoming book, *Meg, Jo, Beth, Amy: The Story of Little Women and Why It Still Matters* (August 2018). She is editor of the Penguin Classics deluxe anniversary edition of *Little Women*, and her other writings have appeared in *The Washington Post*, *Literary Hub*, *The Daily Beast*, and elsewhere. Anne is also an Advisory Board Member for the Louisa May Alcott Society.

CATHLIN DAVIS - *California State University - Stanislaus*

Cathlin is a Professor in the College of Education who started reading Louisa May Alcott's books at the age of 11, and never stopped. Among her collection of Alcott works is a first edition of *Little Women* which she has actually read with cotton gloves on. In 2011, as part of her research interest in Orchard House, she fulfilled a long-held dream to conduct a tour while collecting data about visitor experiences; she has continued to volunteer as a guide each Summer since. Cathlin has presented at the Conversational Series for over a decade, and published an article based on a Series presentation, with several others in the works. She specializes in Alcott's juvenile fiction, particularly its connection to education and the depiction of children's lives.

GABRIELLE DONNELLY - *Author / Journalist*

Gabrielle was born in London and had known that she wanted to be a writer for as long as she can remember. She graduated with a BA from London University at the age of 22 and has made her living as a journalist ever since. In 1980, Gabrielle moved to Los Angeles for a six-month stint and never left. She writes about show business for a variety of periodicals and is a member of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, but is also a novelist. *The Little Women Letters* is her fifth work (and the first published in both Britain and the States) after *Holy Mother*, *Faulty Ground*, *All Done With Mirrors*, and *The Girl In The Photograph*. Gabrielle and her husband, Los Angeles-born computer specialist Owen Bjornstad, are both Corporators of Orchard House.

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ANDREA EUGSTER INGOLD - *Scholar / Author*

Andrea holds a BA and an MA in English Languages and Literatures from the University of Berne, Switzerland, and is a member of the Swiss Association for North American Studies (SANAS). In 2013, she attended a summer school at Harvard University organized by the Institute of World Literature. In 2014, Andrea began an independent research project focused on Louisa May Alcott in Concord. In 2017, as a continuation of her research, she traveled to Athens, Greece to meet Sigrid R. Ammer, the great-granddaughter of May Alcott. Andrea also teaches special needs children in her hometown of St. Gallen, Switzerland, is the co-author of *Umweltbildung Plus* (2015), a teacher's handbook for sustainable education, and recently published her first collection of poems, *Plant a Poem* (2017).

ANNE-LAURE FRANÇOIS - *Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Defense*

Anne is an Assistant Professor who received her MA from the Sorbonne and graduated from the École Normale Supérieure in Paris. Working in both the English and Law Departments, she teaches classes on British and American History, the evolution of constitutional, statute, and case law, and modern issues and controversies in both countries as well. As a doctoral student, Anne specialized in 19th Century American literature and in women writers, both English and American, and her dissertation offered the first detailed study in French of Louisa May Alcott's fiction. While an educator, she helped to create an alternative high school in the South of France -- a project notably based on Alcott's "Plumfield," the school utopia that paid homage to her father's groundbreaking educational ideas and work. Anne first visited Boston in 2004, first presented at the Conversational Series in 2009, and considers herself a New Englander at heart.

CYRISSE JAFFEE - *WGBH Boston Education Department*

Cyrisse is Editorial Project Manager of the *Masterpiece* Collection on PBS LearningMedia. As part of the Education Department at WGBH (Boston's public television station), she has created resources for *Masterpiece* productions that have focused on the works of Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy, Arthur Conan Doyle and several others. During her presentation, Cyrisse will provide educators with a tour of resources available at WGBH, as well as insights into how using media can enhance the teaching of literature. She holds an MLS from Simons College, was formerly a children's and young adult librarian, and has reviewed children's and young adult books for the *Horn Book Guide*.

ANNA JUREK - *University of Edinburgh, Scotland Masters Program*

Anna received her Bachelor of Arts from Sarah Lawrence College where she studied Russian and French. She is currently working toward her Masters in Comparative Literature at the University of Edinburgh, and is writing her dissertation on *Little Women*. Her non-fiction has been published in the *805 Lit + Art* magazine and *The Avatar Review*, while her fiction has been published in *The Sarah Lawrence Review*. Anna was previously an English teacher at L'Académie de Poitiers in France.

MARY KELLEHER-FITZ - *Cardinal Beran Library, Texas / University of St. Thomas, Minnesota*

A native of Houston, Texas, Mary received a BA in English at the University of St. Thomas. Continuing her studies at New York University, she earned the MA and PhD in English, writing her dissertation on Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Louisa May Alcott. Mary taught as an Adjunct

Professor at several community colleges in Houston as well as at the University of St. Thomas. She then shifted careers by joining the Harris County Public Library and received her MLS from the University of North Texas, where her thesis project centered on African-American children's literature. After working as a high school librarian, Mary again returned to the University of St. Thomas as a Reference Librarian. She is currently Chair of the Cardinal Beran Library at St. Mary's Seminary, and also teaches in the University of St. Thomas MLA program. Mary has published numerous articles and book reviews for *Catholic Library World*, and first presented at our 2016 Summer Conversational Series.

ANDRIANA LANZI - *Instituto Superior de Formacion Docente, Argentina*

Andriana teaches Language and Culture at the Instituto Superior de Formacion Docente (ISFD), a teacher training college in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and is currently pursuing her Master's at the Universidad Nacional de Cordoba. She is a proud grandmother in her native Argentina, and is delighted to be returning as a Presenter for this year's Summer Conversational Series.

MEGAN MARSHALL - *Emerson College, Boston / Pulitzer Prize Winner*

Megan is the author of *Margaret Fuller: A New American Life*, which won the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Biography and Memoir. Her first biography, *The Peabody Sisters: Three Women Who Ignited American Romanticism*, received the Francis Parkman Prize, the Mark Lynton History Prize, and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 2006; both books won the Massachusetts Book Award in Nonfiction. Megan is the Charles Wesley Emerson College Professor at Emerson College, where she teaches nonfiction writing and archival research in the MFA Creative Writing Program. A recipient of fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, the NEH, the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, and the Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Center of the New York Public Library, Megan recently published a third biography, *Elizabeth Bishop: A Miracle for Breakfast*, about the 20th-century poet who was also her professor at Harvard.

JOHN MATTESON - *John Jay College, New York / Pulitzer Prize Winner*

John is a Distinguished Professor of English at John Jay, where he has taught since 1997, and is also a member of the Honors Program faculty. He holds an AB in History from Princeton, a PhD in English from Columbia, a JD from Harvard, and has practiced as a litigation attorney in California and North Carolina. John's first book, *Eden's Outcasts: The Story of Louisa May Alcott and Her Father*, was awarded the 2008 Pulitzer Prize for Biography. His second book, *The Lives of Margaret Fuller: A Biography*, was published in 2012, and his most recent work, *The Annotated Little Women*, debuted in 2015. John's shorter works have appeared in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *Harvard Theological Review*, *New England Quarterly*, and *Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies*. John has received the Alumni Association Distinguished Faculty Award from John Jay as well as the Dean's Award for Distinguished Achievement from Columbia. Over the past three years, he has played a vital role in the production of a new documentary about Orchard House which debuted in May 2018, and has been hard at work on a new book focused on the Battle of Fredericksburg.

JOEL MYERSON - *University of South Carolina*

Joel is Carolina Distinguished Professor of American Literature, Emeritus, at the University of South Carolina. He has written or edited over sixty books, including *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (2010),

annotated bibliographies of Emily Dickinson, Margaret Fuller, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Theodore Parker, Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman, and, with Prof. Ronald A. Bosco, *Emerson: In His Own Time* (2003) and *Ralph Waldo Emerson: The Major Prose*, the latter of which received the Julian P. Boyd Award from the Association for Documentary Editing. With Alcott researchers Madeleine B. Stern and Daniel Shealy, Joel was responsible for providing invaluable insight into Alcott, her family, and her writing career through the publication of Alcott's private papers and previously unattributed "blood and thunder tales." Joel has also served as President of both the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society and the Thoreau Society.

BETH RITTER-GUTH - *Union County College, New Jersey*

Beth is Director of Instructional Design, Director of American Honors, and Director of the Innovation Center at Union County College in Cranford, New Jersey. Previously, she was tenured in English in Pennsylvania, and taught American Romantics for 20 years at DeSales University. Beth's current work focuses on the Internet, Virtual and Augmented Reality, and Artificial Intelligence, the use of which in the teaching of literature has earned her multiple awards, including Teacher of the Future from the National Association of Independent Schools, the Nobel Teacher of Distinction Award, the Campus Leadership Team Award from Campus Technology, and in 2017, Innovator of the Year from the League of Innovation and Leadership, and the Innovation Award from NJEdge. Her work has also been featured in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Wired Magazine*, *USA Today*, and *America Online*.

DANIEL SHEALY - *University of North Carolina - Charlotte*

A Professor of English at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte, Daniel has had a decades-long affinity with all things Alcott, having published ten books on Louisa May Alcott, including *Alcott: In Her Own Time* (2005), *Little Women Abroad: The Alcott Sisters' Letters from Europe* (2008), and most recently, *The Annotated Little Women: An Annotated Edition* (2013). Along with Alcott scholar extraordinaire Madeleine Stern and long-time research partner Joel Myerson, Daniel co-edited some of the most seminal works of Alcott scholarship: *The Journals of Louisa May Alcott*, *The Selected Letters of Louisa May Alcott*, and numerous compilations of Alcott's pseudonymous "thrillers." He and Joel are also credited with uncovering the manuscript for *The Inheritance* (1998), an early Alcott text presumed to have been lost. Daniel's areas of expertise extend to 19th Century American literature, the American Transcendentalists and the Concord Authors, and children's literature.

JAN TURNQUIST - *Louisa May Alcott's Orchard House*

A graduate of the University of Wisconsin - Madison and a former teacher, Jan has been Executive Director of Orchard House since 1999, having spent over 20 years prior coordinating its educational programming and living history special events. During her tenure, Jan has succeeded in meeting the operational and capital needs of the historic home by raising over \$10 million, was instrumental in arranging First Lady Laura Bush's visit to Orchard House in 2002, and coordinated a joint exhibit with The Concord Museum in 2012 that showcased photographs from Annie Leibovitz's groundbreaking book, *Pilgrimage*. Last year, she served as historical consultant to the BBC Masterpiece *Little Women* miniseries, providing research material to creative directors and actors, and spending July of 2017 in Ireland advising during the filming. Jan is also an internationally acclaimed living history portrayer of Louisa May Alcott, having performed in countless cities throughout the United States and for Mrs. Bush at Orchard House, in Mexico City, and across Japan, where she was invited to meet Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko at the Imperial Palace in 2012.

KRISTINA WEST - *University of Reading, United Kingdom*

Krissie is a lecturer in English and American Literature at the University of Reading, where she researches Transcendentalism, childhood, and 19th Century fiction, particularly the works of Bronson Alcott, Louisa May Alcott, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. In 2016, she chaired a panel on “Louisa May Alcott and Education” at the *American Literature Association* conference in San Francisco. Krissie also lives just across the River Thames from the site of Alcott House, a school in Ham, Surrey established in honor of Bronson Alcott, which he visited in 1842. This is her Krissie’s time presenting at the Summer Conversational Series, but the latest in many visits to Orchard House -- both for research trips and vacations with her family -- and she is always delighted to return.