Literary Events Calendar

SOPHIE KERR PROGRAM &
ROSE O’NEILL LITERARY HOUSE
2010 - 2011

Washington College
The Sophie Kerr Legacy

SOPHIE KERR, a prolific and popular American writer of the early 20th century, has left an indelible literary mark at Washington College, where the gift she bequeathed 40 years ago has enabled the College to bring to campus a succession of the nation’s top writers, editors and scholars. Edward Albee, Joseph Brodsky, Gwendolyn Brooks, Mary Karr, Lucille Clifton, Eamon Grennan, Toni Morrison, Joyce Carol Oates, Robert Pinsky, Charles Simic, Jane Smiley and Ted Kooser are just a few of the literary heavyweights who have inspired and instructed the next generation of American writers at Washington College.

In addition to the Sophie Kerr Speaker Series, the Sophie Kerr gift provides scholarships for students who show literary promise, pays for library books, and supports various student literary activities. The result is a wonderfully vibrant intellectual culture where the literary arts thrive.

The Kerr endowment also funds the Sophie Kerr Prize, awarded each year to the graduating senior who has the best ability and promise for future fulfillment in the field of literary endeavor. Valued at $64,243 in 2010, it is the nation’s largest literary prize awarded solely to undergraduate students.

The Rose O’Neill Literary House

THE CREATIVE WRITING culture so much in evidence at the Rose O’Neill Literary House is grounded in Washington College’s historic commitment to foster a vibrant writing community across all disciplines and to connect our students and faculty to the wider culture of literature and the creative arts. In collaboration with the English Department, the Sophie Kerr Committee, and the PEN World Voices Festival, the LitHouse hosts a dynamic array of readings, lectures and student-centered workshops with writers from across America and around the globe.

Authors, poets, webcomics, graphic novelists, humorists, playwrights, rock critics, radio hosts, editors, sportswriters and studio artists routinely join us for readings, career events and fellowships. Recent guests include Neil Gaiman, Hannah Tinti, John Barth, Patricia Smith, Nuruddin Farah, James McBride, Philip Gourevitch, Rodrigo Fresán, Irina Reyn and Daniel Handler (aka Lemony Snicket).
Literary House Orientation Open House and Print Shop Demo

August 27, 9:00 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House

The Lit House opens its doors and welcomes the class of 2014. Learn about the campus publications and art and music groups on campus, try your hand at letterpress printing and connect early with like-minded upperclass students and arts faculty.

Print Shop Workshops

Beginners’ Workshop: Introduction to Letterpress
Tuesdays 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Begins September 14. Print Shop, Rose O’Neill Literary House

Advanced Workshop: Book Arts
Thursdays 6:30-8:30 p.m. (prerequisite: Beginners’ Workshop)
Begins September 16. Print Shop, Rose O’Neill Literary House

Our free, non-credit Print Shop Workshops are open to students, faculty and staff at Washington College and our Chestertown neighbors. Come learn the history of the book and the printed word, and try your hand at letterpress printing and bookbinding. Master Printer T. Michael Kaylor instructs. To sign up, e-mail kbursick2@washcoll.edu.
In August 2009, Colum McCann released *Let the Great World Spin*, an “emotional tour de force” (*The New York Times*) that became, instantly, one of the most talked about books of the decade. By the end of the year, it had entered the pantheon of Great American Novels. A polyphonic work set in the New York of the 1970s, but serving as an allegory of the city’s resilient post-9/11 self, *Spin* was chosen as Amazon’s #1 Book of the Year and won the National Book Award. It placed McCann—whose remarkable previous books include *Zoli* and *Dancer*—at the very top rank of contemporary novelists.

Born in Dublin in 1965, Colum McCann is the author of five novels, which have been published in 30 languages. All were international bestsellers. He was named *Esquire’s* Writer of the Year in 2003, and was awarded a French Chevalier des arts et lettres in 2009. He is also a Pushcart Prize winner. His fiction has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Paris Review* and *The Irish Times*. He currently teaches at Hunter College in New York.

**Sponsored by:** The Sophie Kerr Committee

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Steven L. Isenberg

The Harwood Lecture in American Journalism

“Murray Kempton, the Great Baltimore Journalist”

September 20, 4:30 p.m., Litrenta Lecture Hall, John S. Toll Science Center

Steven L. Isenberg is Executive Director of PEN American Center.

**Sponsored by:** The Richard L. Harwood Program in American Journalism
Ned Sublette

“Kiss You Down South: An Evening of Music and History”

September 21, 6:30 p.m., Center Stage, Hodson Hall Commons

Ned Sublette, the 2010-2011 Patrick Henry Writing Fellow, is an internationally renowned guitarist, musician, writer and historian. His books include *The Year Before the Flood: A Story of New Orleans*, *The World that Made New Orleans: From Spanish Silver to Congo Square* and *Cuba and Its Music: From the First Drums to the Mambo*. His time at Washington College will be spent working on a history of the American slave coast. Visit starrcenter.washcoll.edu for updates.

The Patrick Henry Writing Fellowship aims to encourage reflection on the links between American history and contemporary culture, and to foster the literary art of historical writing.

**Sponsored by:** The C.V. Starr Center for the American Experience and The Rose O’Neill Literary House

Writers’ Union Fall Family Reading

September 25, 11:00 a.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House

Parents and friends are invited to join the Washington College Writers’ Union and its student members for their annual Fall Family Reading, autumnal tales, spiced cider and cookies.
Mark Long

“John Muir and the Mountains of California: Prospects for Environmental Thinking and Writing”

September 27, 7:30 p.m., Litrenta Lecture Hall, John S. Toll Science Center

Dr. Long is Professor of English and American Studies and the coordinator of first-year writing at Keene State College, New Hampshire’s public liberal arts institution. Dr. Long’s professional experience in the study of environmental writing includes serving on the executive council of ASLE, the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment, and on the editorial advisory board of its journal, ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and the Environment. He is the co-editor of the book Teaching North American Environmental Literature, recently published by the MLA.

Sponsored by: The Sophie Kerr Committee

Poetry and Project Runway, or How to Take Criticism

September 28, 7:00 p.m., Tawes Theatre, Daniel Z. Gibson Center for the Arts

Join the Rose O’Neill Literary House in a playful, poetic and practical look at how to take criticism. Fashion designer Andrae Gonzalo, star of Bravo TV’s Project Runway (Season 2) will be bringing his new line to Washington College, and will be joined by Harvard University professor Stephen Burt (author of the recently published essay “Poetry and Project Runway: Should book critics take their cues from Tim Gunn?”) in an evening where
runway walks collide with the creative writing workshop. Haute couture meets half rhyme ... only in Chestertown.

Sponsored by: The Rose O’Neill Literary House

Erika Meitner

Poetry Reading
September 30, 7:00 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House

Erika Meitner’s first collection of poems, Inventory at the All-night Drugstore, won the 2002 Anhinga Prize for Poetry, and was published in 2003 by Anhinga Press. Her second book, Ideal Cities, was a 2009 National Poetry Series winner, and was published in August 2010 by HarperCollins. Her third book, Makeshift Instructions for Vigilant Girls, is forthcoming from Anhinga Press in 2011. Meitner's poems have appeared in journals including The Virginia Quarterly Review, The New Republic, The Kenyon Review and on Slate.com. Meitner is currently an Assistant Professor of English at Virginia Tech, where she teaches in the MFA program, and is simultaneously completing her doctorate in Religious Studies at the University of Virginia, where she was the Morgenstern Fellow in Jewish Studies.

Sponsored by: The Sophie Kerr Committee

Inaugural Bookmark Letterpress Printing

October 2, 2:00-4:30 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House and Print Shop

Join Washington College Master Printer T. Michael Kaylor and LitHouse staff as we continue our fine letterpress tradition with the hand printing of bookmarks commemorating the inauguration of Washington College’s 27th President, Mitchell B. Reiss.
Charles Bernstein

“Recalculating: Poetry, Poetics, Performance”
October 5, 4:30 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House

Charles Bernstein, Donald T. Regan Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Pennsylvania, is the author of 40 books, ranging from large-scale collections of poetry and essays to pamphlets, libretti, translations and collaborations. Recent full-length works of poetry include *All the Whiskey in Heaven: Selected Poems* (Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2010), *Girly Man* (University of Chicago Press, 2006), *With Strings* (University of Chicago Press, 2001), and *Republics of Reality: 1975-1995* (Sun & Moon Press, 2000). He has also published two books of essays and one essay/poem collection. Co-founder and co-editor, with Al Filreis, of PENNsound, editor and co-founder with Loss Pequenño Glazier of *The Electronic Poetry Center*, and co-editor with Hank Lazer of *Modern and Contemporary Poetics*, a book series from the University of Alabama Press (1998 - ), he hosts and co-produces LINEbreak and Close Listening, two radio poetry series.

Sponsored by: The Sophie Kerr Committee

Chestertown Book Festival

October 8-9, Downtown Chestertown

Join us for the second annual Chestertown Book Festival, featuring talks and readings by Michael Dirda, Deborah Rudacille, R. Crumb, Terwana Brown, Michael Buckley, Cynthia P. Gallagher, Vince Gisriel, W. Lawrence Gulick, Vivian Lawry, Debbie Levy, Deborah da Costa,
Fran Severn, and more; panel discussions by Ciera McQueen, LaDonna M. Smith, J.L. Price, Cathy Jones, Alishia Louis, and Betty Chambers; presentations by the Bread of Life mime ministry, the Enoch Pratt Free Library and Sharon Somers; a special radio segment by WRNR’s Voices of the Chesapeake Bay host Michael Buckley and guests; and the semi-annual Kent County Public Library Friends of the Library Used Book Sale. Full details at chestertownbook-festival.org.


Eric Griffin

“The Burden of Comedy: England, Spain, and Our Romance With Elizabeth Tudor”

October 18, 4:30 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House

Eric Griffin is Associate Professor of English at Millsaps College where he also directs the Program in Latin American Studies and teaches in the Living in Yucatan Program. His recent book, English Renaissance Drama and the Specter of Spain: Ethnopoetics and Empire (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), explores Anglo-Hispanic literary and cultural relations from the late fifteenth through the early seventeenth centuries. His work has appeared in Representations, English Literary Renaissance, The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies and other journals and in Envisioning an English Empire: Jamestown and the Invention of the North Atlantic World edited by Robert Appelbaum and John Wood Sweet (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).
Ken Chen

Poetry Reading

October 28, 4:30 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House
Book signing to follow

Winner of the 2009 Yale Younger Poets competition (the oldest annual literary award in the United States), Ken Chen’s Juvenilia is jam-packed with writings that, in the words of Louise Glück, “have isolated and dramatized the profound dilemma of the adult’s relation to childhood in poems of riveting intelligence and sharp wit and profound beauty.” A graduate of the Yale Law School, Ken Chen currently works as director of the Asian American Writers’ Workshop in New York.

sponsored by: The Rose O’Neill Literary House

Benjamin Bagby

Beowulf in Performance

November 4, 7:30 p.m., Decker Theatre, Daniel Z. Gibson Center for the Arts

Benjamin Bagby’s unique performance of the Anglo-Saxon epic Beowulf in its original language, accompanying himself with an authentic Anglo-Saxon harp, has enthralled audiences around the world. In our modern print culture, the reading of literature is primarily a silent, personal and solitary experience. Bagby’s performance brings his audiences back into the ancient literary experience, which tended to be oral (and often musical), social and communal. Listeners have called Bagby’s performance “a triumphant demonstration of the power of storytelling,” noting that “when Benjamin Bagby speaks it is as if a thousand years have disappeared.” Modern English subtitles provided.

sponsored by: The Sophie Kerr Committee
Junot Díaz

Fiction Reading

First-year book: *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Díaz

November 8, 7:00 p.m., Decker Theatre, Daniel Z. Gibson Center for the Arts

Book signing to follow

Junot Díaz’s novel *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* has won almost everything: the 2008 Pulitzer Prize for fiction, the National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction, the Mercantile Library Center’s John Sargent Prize for First Novel, best book of 2007 by *The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, The Washington Post, San Francisco Chronicle, Chicago Sun-Times* and *The New York Daily News*, and *Time* magazine’s “novel of the year.” He faced off with Stephen Colbert on *The Colbert Report* and his writing was characterized in *The New York Times* as “so original it can only be described as Mario Vargas Llosa meets Star Trek meets David Foster Wallace meets Kanye West.”

The First-Year Book program gives new students a common experience over the summer and introduces them to Washington College’s tradition of bringing great writers to campus.

**Sponsored by:** The Rose O’Neill Literary House and the Dean of the College
Dr. David Pilgrim is the Chief Diversity Officer at Ferris State University and one of this country’s leading experts on issues relating to multiculturalism, diversity and race relations. He has been interviewed by National Public Radio, *Time* magazine, the British Broadcasting Corporation and dozens of newspapers, including the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, *Chicago Tribune* and the *Los Angeles Times*. Pilgrim is best known as the founder and curator of the Jim Crow Museum—a 5,000-piece collection of racist artifacts located at Ferris State University. The museum uses objects of intolerance to teach tolerance. Pilgrim’s lecture, “THEM: Images of Separation,” will showcase items from popular culture used to stereotype different groups. The negative imagery—found on postcards, license plates, games, souvenirs and costumes—promoted stereotyping against such groups as African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanics, Jews and poor whites, as well as those who are “other” in terms of body type or sexual orientation. Dr. Pilgrim will discuss the connection between race and cultural memorabilia to show how discrimination and stereotyping are not just black/white issues, but much more pervasive.

**Sponsored by:** The Sophie Kerr Committee, the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Department of Art and Art History
Holiday Open House

December 7, 4:30 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House

Join the Rose O’Neill Literary House, the English Department, Sigma Tau Delta and the Washington College Review contributors for some holiday cheer as we decorate cookies, sip eggnog and celebrate the publication of the 2010 WC Review.

Living Writers Series

Spring 2011, Rose O’Neill Literary House

This spring’s creative nonfiction Living Writers class will focus on the themes of labor and immigration. Scheduled guests include filmmaker Stephanie Black, who turned Jamaica’s Kincaid’s classic A Small Place into the award-winning documentary Life and Debt; Kao Kalia Yang, celebrated author of The Latehomecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir; and investigative reporter Gabriel Thompson, whose Working in the Shadows: A Year of Doing the Jobs (Most) Americans Won’t Do was recently featured on PBS’s Tavis Smiley and C-SPAN’s Book TV. For specific dates and times of these events, please visit http://lithouse.washcoll.edu.

Sponsored by: The Rose O’Neill Literary House and The Sophie Kerr Committee
Roy Kesey

Fiction Reading

February 1, 5:30 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House

Roy Kesey’s fiction has been published in some of the world’s most respected literary journals including McSweeney’s, The Iowa Review, Kenyon Review, Georgia Review, American Short Fiction, New England Review and New Sudden Fiction. His novella, Nothing in the World, won the Bullfight Short Fiction Prize in 2006, and his short story “Wait” was selected to appear in the Best American Short Stories 2007 collection. Roy’s most recent collection of short stories, All Over, was published to critical acclaim. His new novel, Pacazo, set in Peru in the late 1990s, is due out in 2010 from Dzanc Press. Roy is a 1991 graduate of Washington College. He currently lives in Peru.

Sponsored by: The Sophie Kerr Committee

Washington College at AWP

February 3-5, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. each day, Washington, D.C.

Stop by the Rose O’Neill Literary House/Washington College table at this year’s Association of Writers and Writing Programs conference in Washington, D.C. Our students are excited to be there! Visit awpwriter.org to register. Book Fair is free and open to the public on Saturday, February 5.

Tea & Talk: Philip Walsh

Visiting Assistant Professor of English, Washington College
“A Possession For All Time: Why Ancient Greek Drama Matters”

February 10, 4:00 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House
Professor Walsh joined the Washington College faculty in 2008. He taught previously at Brown University, where he completed his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature. He has studied at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and traveled extensively through Greece, Italy and Great Britain. Walsh is a broadly trained comparatist and classicist whose research and teaching interests include drama of all periods, reception studies of the classics, ancient historiography and the prose fiction of Kazuo Ishiguro. His current project focuses on the comic plays of Aristophanes, and explores their reception in various modern contexts (e.g., in translation and in visual illustration). He is the faculty mentor to the Mirania Club, a student organization that promotes the study of the classics on campus. The LitHouse Tea & Talk series features writers and scholars from within Washington College and the Chestertown community.

**Sponsored by:** The Rose O’Neill Literary House

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**First-Year Reading**

**February 23, 7:00 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House**

Come celebrate with the Washington College First-Year writers as they read from their first semester’s original work.

**Annual Graduate School Tea: Getting In and Beyond**

**March 3, 4:00 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House**

Washington College faculty and alumni discuss their experiences with graduate school—the application process, succeeding in a graduate program, and careers—and offer tips to students who are considering graduate school in English.

**Sponsored by:** The Sophie Kerr Committee and the Center for Career Development
Kristin Naca

Poetry Reading

March 31, 4:30 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House

Kristin Naca was raised in northern Virginia and has made her home in cities across the U.S. over the past two decades. She is a long-time member of the Macondo Writers Workshop and a recent fellow at Bread Loaf Writers Conference. Her book *Bird Eating Bird* was selected for the National Poetry Series mtvU Prize and appears with Harper Perennial. She earned her M.F.A at University of Pittsburgh and the Ph.D. at University of Nebraska. Currently, she resides in Minneapolis and serves as mentor for the Loft Literary Center’s Mentor Series. She teaches Asian American and Latino poetics, and creative writing, at Macalester College.

Sponsored by: The Sophie Kerr Committee

PEN World Voices/Washington

College Fellow in International Letters

April 2010

Each spring, an international writer joins us for a residency and series of lectures on his or her work before heading to the PEN American Center’s World Voices Festival in New York City. Past Fellows include Argentinian-born Spanish writer Rodrigo Fresán, French graphic novelist Emmanuel Guibert and Somali novelist Nuruddin Farah.

Sponsored by: The Rose O’Neill Literary House and the PEN World Voices Festival, PEN American Center
Natasha Trethewey is author of *Native Guard* (Houghton Mifflin), for which she won the 2007 Pulitzer Prize; *Bellocq’s Ophelia* (Graywolf, 2002), which was named a Notable Book for 2003 by the American Library Association; and *Domestic Work* (Graywolf, 2000). She is the recipient of fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Study Center, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Bunting Fellowship Program of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard. Her poems have appeared in such journals and anthologies as *American Poetry Review, Callaloo, Kenyon Review, The Southern Review, New England Review, Gettysburg Review,* and *The Best American Poetry 2000 and 2003*. Currently, she holds the Phillis Wheatley Distinguished Chair in Poetry at Emory University.

**Sponsored by:** The Sophie Kerr Committee and The Rose O’Neill Literary House

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**Senior Reading**

*April 11, 7:00 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House*

Bid farewell to your favorite graduating senior writers and wish them luck as they read from their original works. Reception follows.

**Sponsored by:** The Rose O’Neill Literary House, The Department of English and The Writers’ Union
Spoken Word Assembly with Kevin Coval

April 17-20

Spoken word phenom Kevin Coval, who appeared four times on Russell Simmons’ hit HBO series “Def Poetry,” will be in residency at the LitHouse in mid-April. Coval’s visit will include a DC workshop at the Institute for Policy Studies and a reading at DC’s historic Busboys & Poets on April 17, a workshop in the LitHouse’s “Spoken Word Assembly” program, and a performance on the LitHouse’s enclosed porch. Coval is author of Everyday People and Slingshots, anthologized in The Spoken Word Revolution, and called “our hope for a new world of peace, grace, and beauty” by the legendary Studs Terkel. Coval will also screen Louder than a Bomb, a new film by Jon Siskel and Greg Jacobs about the nation’s largest youth poetry festival in Chicago.

Sponsored by: The Rose O’Neill Literary House

All events in this brochure are free and open to the public.

Visit lithouse.washcoll.edu and English.washcoll.edu for updates, more info and additional events.
Spoken Word Saturdays

**June & July 2011**

High school creative writers: come spend an entire Saturday expanding your creative horizons and perfecting your craft at the Rose O’Neill Literary House! Rising high school first years to rising high school seniors can spend a day writing and revising creative works in journals and notebooks, hand-setting and printing their words on a letterpress with LitHouse master printer T. Michael Kaylor, and performing their works to an audience on the LitHouse’s enclosed porch—the same stage where Yale Younger Poets prize winner Ken Chen gave a reading earlier in the year. Spaces are limited, so register soon.

For more information, contact Kathryn Bursick at kbursick2@washcoll.edu or 410-778-7899.

**Sponsored by: The Rose O’Neill Literary House**

Washington College Residency for Cave Canem Fellows

**July 2011**

Cave Canem [http://cavecanempoets.org], the nation’s leading organization for African American writers, teams up with the Rose O’Neill Literary House and Washington College to inaugurate the Washington College Cave Canem Residency in July 2011. Chosen through a rigorous application process, the Fellow will be expected to spend the month researching and writing in Chestertown. Additionally, the Fellow will serve as creative writing instructor for one of our Spoken Word Saturday programs and give a public reading on the LitHouse porch together with high school writers one Saturday afternoon in July. Check our website, http://lithouse.washcoll.edu, for more details.

**Sponsored by: The Rose O’Neill Literary House**