

Wednesday, October 4 in Cowles Hall on the Elmira College Campus

7 p.m.

“That heart-breaking bitch’: Aileen Mavourneen & the Transatlantic Anti-Vivisection Movement”

Emily E. VanDette, *State University of New York at Fredonia*



The title of this talk comes from a letter in which William Dean Howells congratulates Clemens on his 1903 anti-vivisection novella, *A Dog's Tale*. Mother dog Aileen Mavourneen's first-person account of a brutal experiment that killed her puppy is indeed heartbreaking, and it gave much-needed support to the movement against animal experimentation. In depicting animal subjectivity and challenging widely accepted social hierarchies, *A Dog's Tale*, like so many of Twain's literary interventions against the norms of his day, was ahead of its time. But also, Twain's stance about vivisection and the status of animals in society was a part of a larger conversation that was taking place at the time on both sides of the Atlantic. This paper will situate Twain's stance in the context of the vivisection controversy, including some leading voices who directly networked with the famous author to solicit his support for the cause, and it will connect Twain's prescient portrayal of animal voice and identity to modern-day animal rights activism and post-humanist philosophy.

Emily E. VanDette is Associate Professor of English at the State University of New York at Fredonia, where she teaches courses in 19th-century American literature and women's writing. As a Quarry Farm Fellow in July 2017, she conducted research for a scholarly monograph about

the literature of the early animal welfare movement in the U.S., which includes a chapter devoted to Twain's anti-vivisection writing and network. She is also currently working on a critical edition of the 1904 anti-vivisection novel *Trixy* by Twain's contemporary and celebrated American author Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.

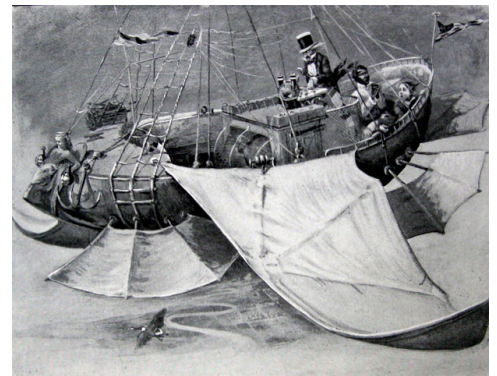
Wednesday, October 11 in the Barn at Quarry Farm

7 p.m.

“Mark Twain and the Inventor Fiction Boom: Technology Meets American Conceit, 1876-1910”

Nathaniel Williams, *University of California, Davis*

In *Tom Sawyer Abroad* (1894), Mark Twain sends his most famous characters—Tom, Huck, and Jim—on an airship voyage across the Atlantic into Africa. By the time Twain wrote that novel, nearly 100 similar stories about young Americans in imaginary aircraft and other vehicles had appeared in magazines and serials. They featured boy inventors using their ingenuity and technology to take over remote locales, not unlike Twain's Hank Morgan in *A Connecticut Yankee* (1889). By looking at Twain's work in the context of the boy-inventor publishing explosion, we find new insights into the early stirrings of his anti-imperialist fervor, his complex views on race, and his wilting faith in technology. Surprisingly, some now-obscure dime novelists wrestled with those same concepts before Twain (and helped birth modern “steampunk” along the way). This presentation covers some of their works along with Twain's unique contributions to the genre.



Nathaniel Williams is a lecturer for the University Writing Program at the University of California, Davis. His book on Twain and 19th-century technocratic adventure fiction is forthcoming from University of Alabama Press. He has recently written chapters for *The Centrality of Crime Fiction in American Literary Culture* and the upcoming *Cambridge History of Science Fiction*. His essays have appeared in *American Literature*, *Utopian Studies*, and elsewhere. He serves on the advisory board of the Gunn Center for the Study of Science Fiction housed at his alma mater, The University of Kansas.

Wednesday, October 18 in the Barn at Quarry Farm

7 p.m.

“Mark Twain and the Narrative Magic of Medieval Literary Spunk-Water Stumps”

Liam Purdon, Doane University

While much instructive scholarship has been published treating Mark Twain’s interest in and use of Malory’s *Le Morte D’Arthur* as predecessor text for *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*, his interest in and use of works from Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* as potential predecessor texts for *The Prince and the Pauper* and *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* constitute a dimension of his medievalism that invites further inquiry. We know he read Chaucer carefully since one of his Christmas presents to Livy in 1874, Thomas Tyrwhitt’s most recent edition of Chaucer’s poetical works, bears the impress of his imagination in thoughtful as well as humorous penciled marginalia in the *Squire’s Tale*, the *Wife of Bath’s Prologue*, and the *Friar’s Tale*. We also know the narrative structuring device of the *Canterbury Tales*’s pilgrimage itself caught his attention given its incorporation in *A Connecticut Yankee* in chapter 21 when Hank Morgan and Sandy join a “company of pilgrims” who tell tales “that would have embarrassed ‘the best English society twelve centuries later.’” However, understanding how the *Squire’s Tale*’s emphasis upon the relationship between effective translation and character may offer a narrative structuring device for the *Prince and the Pauper*, as well as understanding how the *Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale*’s emphasis upon manipulation of differing world-conceptions may offer a narrative structuring device for *Joan of Arc*, provides an instructive perspective on narrative construction worthy of consideration since it sheds light on the imaginatively effective ways in which Chaucerian predecessor texts appear to help Twain align his later literary works and vision with great works identified as foundational to the establishment of English literary and cultural tradition.



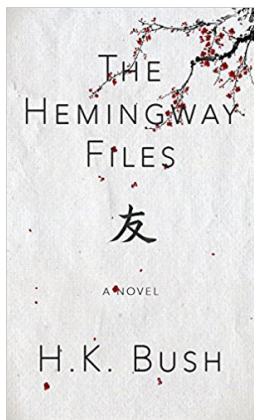
Liam Purdon is Professor of English at Doane University. His field of specialization, medieval British literature, has enabled him over the years to publish and make presentations on a number of well-known works by Chaucer, the Pearl-Poet, and other medieval authors. Interest in the Wakefield Master’s “play doctoring,” a course of study encouraged by late-twentieth-century examinations of material culture in plays of the York and Chester Cycles, led in 2003 to publication of new “readings” of the Master’s play revisions in light of the late-medieval emphasis upon the morality of technology. Continuing interest in 19th and 20th century American authors in general and Mark Twain in particular has led to interest in examining Twain’s creative medievalism, as well as the relationship between contemporary American author Tom Robbins and Twain.

Wednesday, November 1 in Peterson Chapel on the Elmira College Campus

7 p.m.

“Collecting Mark Twain: Obsessions over the Great Authors and *The Hemingway Files*”

Hal K. Bush, St. Louis University



Obsession is frequently an overlooked focus of major literary works. In novels like *Moby-Dick*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *Possession*, *The Aspern Papers*, *The Great Gatsby*, and many others, characters are often driven to extremes by their various obsessions over various objects or concerns. But sometimes obsession infiltrates the author’s audience as well. One manifestation of this is when a reader’s relation to and obsession with a famous author leads to a powerful yearning to collect: a desire to gather and accumulate almost anything ever owned or scribbled by the celebrity author. One theme of my own novel *The Hemingway Files* is just this desire: in particular, a wealthy collector intent on purchasing Hemingway manuscripts and Twain letters. Such obsessive collecting is not unusual among bibliophiles. But why do we collect? How does one begin the long journey of any sort of collecting? And what are the pros and cons of obsessive connection to iconic writers like Hemingway and Mark Twain? This lecture will consider how we get drawn into such compulsive relations with these long dead writers and other celebrities: including my own lengthy journey into the heart of Mark Twain studies, and into the composition of my novel, *The Hemingway Files*.

Harold K. Bush is professor of English at Saint Louis University and author of six books, including *Mark Twain and the Spiritual Crisis of His Age* (2007) and *Lincoln in His Own Time* (2012). He has most recently completed *Continuing Bonds with the Dead: Parental Grief and Nineteenth-Century American Authors* (2016). He is lead editor of *The Mark Twain-Joseph Twichell Correspondence* (2017) and of *Above the American Renaissance: David Reynolds and the Spiritual Imagination in American Literary Studies*, which will appear in 2018. His first novel, titled *The Hemingway Files*, was published in summer of 2017. He is presently at work on a study of spirituality and American literature and culture, titled *Spiritual Blink!*

CENTER FOR MARK TWAIN STUDIES

(607) 735-1941

twaincenter@elmira.edu

www.MarkTwainStudies.org

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