From Root to Branch

The Kansas African Studies Center is hosting a lecture and book signing by acclaimed novelist and memoirist Animatta Forna on Thursday, 10 November, at 7:00 pm, at the Hall Center for the Humanities. The event is co-sponsored by English. Forna is touring in support of her latest book, From Root to Branch: Travels in the Footsteps of the Enslaved. The work is described as “a ‘reverse Roots’ project that traces the cultural heritage of Sierra Leone through the enslaved in America.” Her previous work includes three novels, The Hired Man, The Memory of Love, and Ancestor Stones. She also has written a memoir, The Devil that Danced on the Water. Forna is currently Lannan Visiting Chair of Poetics at Georgetown University and Professor of Creative Writing at Bath Spa University in England. In 2011 and 2013 she held the post of Sterling Brown Visiting Professor at Williams College Massachusetts. Her talk is part of a project funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities to promote the sharing of migration stories about Africans in local communities through public discussions, community programming, and the creation of educational resources. Byron Santangelo is a co-director of the NEH grant.

The Last Time They Pulled the Phones

The English Department’s telephone system is changing. On or soon after November 9th, it is probable that IT reps will remove all remaining desktop telephone units from the offices of those who still have an assigned 864 telephone number. Alternatively, occupants of those offices may be asked to disconnect their own unit and take it to a central disposal location, very likely in or near the main English office. At that point, all calls to these numbers will route through Skype for Business Phone Service. Department IT technician Don Allmon assures everyone that this is no big deal. The adjustments are not arduous. He is in the process of updating any computers that require new software to accommodate the latest Skype for Business Phone Service program. Brief formal training or self-training should prove comparably minimal.

never change – University administration determined that money could be saved by cracking down on paper and photocopying costs in the departments. Pushback from English ensued. Strong Hall craftily dangled a Hobson’s choice: keep the paper and photocopying funds but sacrifice all office telephone service. Intrepid Chair of English Gerhard Zuther (one assumes with the assent of the Star Chamber – er – Advisory Committee) promptly replied: “Take away the phones!” One Professor Emeritus of English, who shall remain nameless (and who frequently uses that phrase), has called this decision a “stroke of genius.” It saved the paper and copying funds. Moreover, it simultaneously frustrated the suits – and prevented them from venting to English about it on the phone. Incommunicado, every English professor could create a serene office/castle just by closing the door. No phone, no cell, no texts, no e-mail, no Internet, no computer. Perhaps not everyone remembers these times fondly. Apparently, for up to a year, there were lines of faculty members waiting to use the main office phone when circumstances required it. Restoration of phone service in the aftermath of the budget crisis was slow and grudging.

These events are common experiences. Perhaps the most memorable was in the fall of 1981, when the university community learned that the English Department’s telephone service would be saved by cracking down on paper and photocopying costs in the departments. Pushback from English ensued. Strong Hall craftily dangled a Hobson’s choice: keep the paper and photocopying funds but sacrifice all office telephone service. Intrepid Chair of English Gerhard Zuther (one assumes with the assent of the Star Chamber – er – Advisory Committee) promptly replied: “Take away the phones!” One Professor Emeritus of English, who shall remain nameless (and who frequently uses that phrase), has called this decision a “stroke of genius.” It saved the paper and copying funds. Moreover, it simultaneously frustrated the suits – and prevented them from venting to English about it on the phone. Incommunicado, every English professor could create a serene office/castle just by closing the door. No phone, no cell, no texts, no e-mail, no Internet, no computer. Perhaps not everyone remembers these times fondly. Apparently, for up to a year, there were lines of faculty members waiting to use the main office phone when circumstances required it. Restoration of phone service in the aftermath of the budget crisis was slow and grudging.

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Calendar

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R 10</td>
<td>Kansas African Studies Center Lecture</td>
<td>“From Root to Branch: Travels in the Footsteps of the Enslaved,” Animatta Forna</td>
<td>7:00 pm, Hall Center Conference Hall</td>
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<td>F 11</td>
<td>Nature &amp; Culture Seminar</td>
<td>“Natural Law, English Degeneracy, and Pastoralism in Charles Kingsley’s The Water Babies: A Fairy Tale for a Land Baby,” Clare Echterling</td>
<td>3:30-5:00 pm, Hall Center Seminar Room</td>
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<td>M 14</td>
<td>Resident Fellows Seminar</td>
<td>“Christine de Pizan’s ‘Epistre Othea’ in England: Two Middle English Translations,” Misty Schieberle</td>
<td>7:30 pm, Malott Room, Kansas Union</td>
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<td>T 15</td>
<td>Voting Department Meeting</td>
<td>4:00 pm, 4051 Wescoe</td>
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<td>W 16</td>
<td>2Cs</td>
<td>4:15-5:45 pm, 1047 Wescoe</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 17</td>
<td>Humanities Lecture Series</td>
<td>“An Evening with Poet Terrance Hayes,” Terrance Hayes</td>
<td>7:30 pm, Lied Center Pavilion</td>
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<td>F 18</td>
<td>SAGE Meeting</td>
<td>4:00 pm, 4001 Wescoe</td>
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Publications

Bensel, Alyse
Review of Nicole Rollender’s Louder Than Everything You Love. Literary Mama, 21 October. Online.

Cipri, Nino

Ellis, Iain

Fowler, Doreen

Presentations

Bensel, Alyse
“Rare, Wondrous Things: A Poetic Biography of Maria Sibylla Merian,” John R. Milton Creative Writers’ Conference, University of South Dakota, Vermillion, SD, 29 October.

Johnson, Kij

Youngdahl, Meagen
“Toward a Poetics of Biosemiotics.” John R. Milton Writers’ Conference, University of South Dakota, Vermillion, SD, 28 October.

Accepted for Publication

Lamb, Jonathan

KU and Regional Events

● Red Hot Research, “New Applications of Network Science,” panelists from Psychology, Linguistics, and Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, 4 November, 4:00 pm, The Commons, Spooner Hall.

● 2016 Lindley Lecture, “Moral Learning and Artificial Intelligence.” Peter Railton, Philosophy, University of Michigan, 4 November, 8:00 pm, Alderson Auditorium, Kansas Union.

● Conflict & International Change Seminar, “Feeding Cities of the Global South: The State of Food Insecurity in Harare, Zimbabwe.” Abel Chikanda, Geography, AAAS, 7 November, 3:30-5:00 pm, Hall Center Seminar Room.

● Simons Public Humanities Fellow Presentation, “Beneath Our Feet,” Karole Armitage, Dancer and Artistic Director, Armitage Gone! Dance Company, 9 November, 12:00-1:30 pm, Hall Center Conference Hall.

● Poetry Reading, “Sanctity, Mysticism, and Everyday Poetry,” Alan Toltzis, 9 November, 7:00 pm, Lawrence Jewish Community Congregation, 917 Highland Drive.

● The Urban Experience Seminar, “Foreclosure Risk and Community Health: Does Social Capital Have a Protective Effect?” Holly Goerdel, Dort Daley, John Pierce, and Renee Dinsmoor, School of Public Affairs & Administration, 10 November, 3:30-5:00 pm, Hall Center Seminar Room.

● Place, Race & Space Seminar, “Native Tactical Cartography in Settler Cyberspace,” Joshua David Minor, Film & Media Studies, 14 November, 3:30-5:00 pm, Hall Center Seminar Room.

● Disability Studies Seminar, “Recent Developments and Interpretations of ADA Employment Discrimination Case Law,” Ivery Goldstein, American Studies, 17 November, 3:30-5:00 pm, Hall Center Seminar Room.

● TGIT, 17 November, 4:00-6:00 pm, Adams Alumni Center.

● KU Center for Online & Distance Learning, “Writing Learning Objectives for Online & Hybrid Courses,” 18 November, 2:00-3:00 pm, Budig 6.

Calls for Papers, Conferences, Symposia, Etc. (Posted)