

# The Rodkey Reader

To be taken in the morning with a grain of salt

March 16, 2012 Vol. 6 No. 1

## Voyage of the Song Treader

"Voyage of Song," the title of Erik's travel-themed Senior Recital, proved an apt description of his final year of college. The year began with purely metaphorical travel: Erik sailed through the semester, navigating a course of such taxing but ultimately rewarding classes as World Art, Music History I and II, the Physics of Music, and Vocal Pedagogy. In February his 'Voyage' vocal recital was hailed as a triumph of musicianship. A series of songs with travel motifs were sensitively rendered while the various operatic arias were performed with dramatic flair. The recital was a grand Rodkey event, with the sojourning sisters in attendance as well as Grandparents down from Idaho.

Erik's graduation in May launched the literal side of his musical marathon. Erik sang with his two Westmont ensembles—Chamber Singers and College Choir—at his graduation,



after which they decamped for choir tour in the wilds of the British Isles. Bringing their singing tour on the windswept shores of Iona, the choir wound its way through Scotland and down to the Gothic splendor of York Minster. When not singing, members of the choir enjoyed high tea at a modest 4-story hunting lodge, with its mile-long tree-lined avenue and private herd of deer. It was at this stage that Erik made the acquaintance of a quite respectable peacock.

After the tranquility of Oxford, Erik continued on to exciting events in London: replacing a stolen passport, and a narrow brush with the British Constabulary. After his apprehension and search, Her Majesty's Best eventually decided he posed no threat to the American Embassy or to the phone booth he was attempting to use. Erik thus missed a golden opportunity to occupy London lodgings on the Royal dime ... err, shilling.

No sooner did Erik return from the UK than he was off again to Spain with John (choir touring again). The international travel was followed up by hiking in the Sierras, where Erik acted as narrator extraordinaire of *Trent's Own Case* and principal sleepyhead (jetlag to blame).

His travels temporarily suspended, Erik has taken up residence in the Rodkey ancestral halls. He is working a number of part time jobs in music editing, but much of his time has been taken up in a sustained study of the songs of the working man. In an attempt to recapture the spirit of the labourer, Erik has applied himself to the remodel and he can be heard singing such classics as "I've been working on the bike shed", "What shall I do with a broken finger?" and "Swing low, Sweet Wheel-barrow" in the backyard. It is rumoured that Erik will continue his perambulations by shipping off to IU, where he hopes to continue musical training and, no doubt, serve as secretary for the *Society for the Appreciation of Children's Literature*. -Krista



## Alaska Invasion - Jeanne's Dream Come True



### *Shocking Christian Celebrity Revelation!*

Prior to this year the family consensus was that Jeanne loved nothing in the world so much as babies, but events this past year have conclusively proved that her loyalty to wee ones ranks below her allegiance to her first love, namely Alaskan school children.

This shocking revelation resulted from the critical role that she played in engineering an Alaskan invasion of the South Coast: 12 school children from a small village in

Alaska visited Santa Barbara for two weeks, partaking of all the best things that the "American Riviera" has to offer: museums, the zoo, surfing, horseback riding, ice skating, Magic Mountain, and, of course, Disneyland. To their credit the citizens of Santa Barbara received the invading force in good humor, showering them with hospitality, queries about their rugged lifestyle, and even media interviews. Not that they needed extra media attention: a film crew was documenting their experience leaving isolated Stony River (pop. 40) for the urban bustle of Southern California. Rumor has it that this documentary was itself a result of Jeanne's alleged networking superpowers. The reason for Jeanne's affection for

See *Shocking*, pg 3

## A Room of Her Own (In Toronto's Greektown)

Fast approaching the momentous day when all the coursework for her Psychology graduate program at York University will be complete, Elissa decided to fortify herself for the upcoming season of dissertation-writing by upgrading the roof over her head. Heeding Virginia Woolf's call for women to find their own spaces for intellectual work and, thanks to her ecological psychology background, recognizing the 'affordances' of the many Greek pasty shops, she settled on Greektown as a fitting location for the superior and lofty thoughts devoted to her dissertation topic. The bustling and picturesque neighborhood has already provided inspiration for her studies as she wandered the tree-lined streets, observing the local flora and fauna (mainly pigeons), to gather first-hand

See *Affordance*, pg 2

## Krista, Philosopher-Spy

Krista, erstwhile explorer of all things philosophical, this year returned to her long-suppressed desire to be a Cold-War spy. Though hampered in making this a full-time vocation by the cessation of Cold War hostilities, she has made do with the voracious consumption of spy novels, logging many late-night hours absorbing and analyzing their plots. Does this mean

### Affordances (Cont'd from pg 1)

experience for her 'Historical Perspectives on Women and Nature' class. Inside her new apartment, Elissa and housemate Carole enjoy wood floors and high ceilings, ideal both for hosting social events and the future dissertation-writing lock-down. Not only does living on the third floor ensure a mandatory daily fitness routine, the apartment's location also results in spectacular views from the balcony and numerous windows. Good Greek restaurants, only a step away, make a perfect finish to a day of hard study.

Greek food was also available in abundance in Bloomington, IN, where Elissa joined Krista and Shannon Ludington for Thanksgiving. A party of international proportions took place at Krista's apartment, where Greek, Swiss, Uzbek, and, of



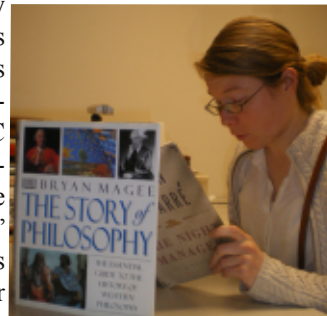
course, American representatives feasted on baklava, rice pilaf, and smoked turkey. The gathered assembly also enjoyed such cross-cultural entertainment as playing limbo and dancing accompanied by accordion. The rest of the weekend featured exploring the wooded trails around a picturesque lake, patronizing every used bookstore in Bloomington, and riding the stone animals common at IU.

Putting such frivolity behind her upon her return, Elissa began preparing to teach a class of her very own in Spring 2012. In "Educational Psychology", she will introduce 110 students to such characters as Dewey, Piaget, and Sayers, all at the delightful time of 8:30 in the morning. If she survives this trial by fire, the class will function as Elissa's personal educational lab, resulting in the expansion of her own educational philosophy and benefiting countless future students.

- Adelle

Krista has given up philosophy? On the contrary, calling midnight to 1 a.m. "professional development hour" she says she is well on her way to "developing an Area Of Competency (AOC) in Spy Novels" that she will attach to her philosophical studies. Pointing out that the philosopher-spy combination at least as good a one as Plato's philosopher-king pairing, she claims the AOC will give her "a competitive edge in the philosophy job market." Krista dismisses skeptics who call her behavior self-delusional and mere procrastination: "I'm pretty sure there

are philosophical themes to be found in *The Spy Who Came in From The Cold*, and besides it is more fun than Kant's *First Critique* any day." Previously Krista had hoped to incorporate her hard-earned AOC in Detective Fiction by writing her dissertation on philosophical detective novels.



However, this project was thwarted when *Aristotle Detective*, the only available example of the genre, was discovered to be an "abomination" and "a slanderously inaccurate portrayal of one of the greatest philosophical minds of history." Despite this disappointment, Krista continues to study Classical Greek, feeling a knowledge of ancient philosophy is excellent preparation for her inaugural teaching role: Introduction to Philosophy, due to be inflicted upon undergrads at IU Bloomington, Spring 2012.

Krista has also continued to do some actual philosophical work, and will be presenting a paper on Hume at the American Philosophical Association and a paper on St. Anselm at a medieval graduate conference. Strangely, her advisor continues to urge the importance of developing AOCs in ordinary areas of philosophy.

- John

## Cody's Cross-Country Capers

The August air shimmered over the dusty trail as the intrepid travelers, laden with the necessities for a weekend trip, begin their descent into the Manzana Canyon. The destination was the historic Manzana Schoolhouse 10 miles down the valley, but the goal of the journey was much loftier: to introduce Cody to the joys of backpacking. The lad lived up to Spartan standards by not complaining about the long trek, and showed a proper interest in such camping activities as pitching tents, filtering water, and securing the food against pesky nighttime animals. Animals of the non-pesky variety also featured prominently: the trail led through a pasture, populated by a dozen horses and a mule, and a surprisingly agile turtle heightened the enjoyment of the Manzana swimming hole. The horse sightings were especially appropriate considering the chosen read-aloud, *The Horse and his Boy*, voiced magnificently by Erik. The Rodkey children, prematurely aged and sobered by their many years of studies, unanimously agreed that having a 12 year old along on the trip greatly improved it, taking years off their age and adding an unprecedented sense of adventure to the smallest water crossing and a previously unknown enchantment to the most mundane campfire.



After his August adventure, Cody was well-equipped with the endurance necessary to tackle his new school, Providence Hall. As he constituted one third of the 8th grade class, it was impossible to neglect such challenging subjects as algebra, Latin, and biology. He even endured the torture of PE in the form of surfing. Miraculously, two months of Rodkey-style home-schooling didn't permanently damage him.

- Adelle



*By poet laureate Lynae Stafflock*  
Daily gesture dramatic  
Twenties flapper charismatic  
You're our triumphant host,  
The Adelfian's boast.

When we to the mountains  
Direct our long stride,  
How happy the zoombinis  
That you are our guide!

If conditions require it  
You'll recross the river,  
Double-pack undaunted,  
'Nary a quiver.

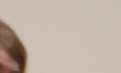
Providing the gorp  
And the PBJ ration,  
You even bring pudding  
(After a fashion).

The children you tame,  
A benevolent piper.  
You calm them with stories  
Or music when hyper.


The household you likewise  
Subdue to your wishes.  
Valiant trencher,  
Remodel-er expeditious.

O Goddess Domestic,  
Your reign is majestic!  
Your skills we admire;  
May your spirit never tire!

Those familiar with Miss Stafflock's work as poet-laureate of *The Society for the Appreciation of Children's Literature* will find it no surprise that her latest piece, "Birthday Ode to Adelle Cherie" melds a deceptively simple poetic style with profound classical allusions. Presented at the ceremony honoring Adelle's reception of the



“Distinguished Servant of Children’s Literature Award” for her tireless efforts to bring works of literary merit to the children of Goleta, the poem was received with plaudits of the adoring crowd.



The poem is in the form of a paen to the “Goddess Majestic” and “Adelfian’s boast”—Adelle, cast here as a minor greco-roman deity—the goddess of neatness and order. Using a poetic technique known to the layman as “laying it on thick”, the stanzas

show in turn her supremacy over various realms, from the home, ("triumphant host") to the mountains, leading small children and backpackers (the mythical 'zoombinis' of stanza 2) in her train.

The references range from the oblique to

the obvious, as throughout the poem Adelle is shown as master of skills associated with the greek pantheon. In the first stanza, the Grecian origin of the Philos Adelfos Society is subtly referenced, the first of many classical allusions; in stanza 2 the parallel between the Sierras ("we to the mountains") and Mount Olympus is quite clear. Similarly, Adelle's skill in ferrying backpacks across the rushing Sierra creeks ("recross the river") will of course draw to mind Charon's ferrying of souls across the river Styx. In stanza 5 Adelle assumes Pan's role, leading children in music-making on piano and oboe (or aulos). Finally, in stanza 6, she bests Athena, goddess of skill, by overseeing the complete re-landscaping of the grounds surrounding the Rodkey Villa—a metamorphosis worthy of Ovid! Unfortunately, not all the allusions are clear; for instance, few will recognise the reference to Adelle's new position as medical assistant to a dermatologist. However, on the whole the critics have been kind to "Ode", calling it "a tour de force", "reasonably unstilted", and "enigmatic."

But what does Miss Rodkey think of the poem written in her honor? “It manages to capture the ups and downs of my last year in seven stanzas,” said Adelle. “My new job, the piano lessons, the remodel...my life flashed before my eyes in paired couplets!” High praise, indeed! - Erik

the children of Stony River is no secret: she spent 4 years of her childhood in the village--the longest stay of any in her nomadic childhood. The degree of Jeanne's attachment to these children can be measured in both difficulty her family had in tearing her away from the visitors to attend Erik's graduation and in the number of bulging suitcases carried by the children on their return to Alaska. Since their departure a mournful Jeanne keeps the connection alive (and the local post office in business) by periodic presents and correspondence for the beloved children.




To prove that her loyalty to Alaskans does not mean she is anti-infant, Jeanne has continued her work at Network Medical, even expanding her after-hours activities with an early pregnancy class and a nutrition class. She even has plans to pass on her legendary child-whispering skills in a parenting class. In the meantime Jeanne has been known to alarm her own children and scandalize bystanders by exclaiming “There’s one of my babies!” when she encounters a Network Medical mother and child.

- *Elissa*

[illegible]

Leaving his beloved plane parked on the tarmac at Santa Ynez, John traveled with about 50 Santa Barbara Choral Society members on a tour to Europe, singing in multiple cities in Spain. Not only was this trip an amazing end to the musical year, Erik's presence on the tour produced a wonderful time for father-son bonding. John found singing in Medieval and Baroque churches and cathedrals to be entrancing, and marvelled at the widely different acoustic characteristics of each venue.

John and his trusty roommate, Erik, explored Spain by foot wherever possible. Relieved of their credit card by a helpful bystander early in the trip, John & Erik depended heavily on their Scotch heritage to stretch their resources, and by obtaining transportation from fair Spanish young ladies on the basis of Erik's personal charm.



As if the trip to Spain wasn't enough fun for one summer, shortly after hitting California soil they began rehearsals for the Rossini opera "*The Barber of Seville*", in which they appeared as motley musicians and somewhat confused soldiers. The theater for the opera was - if not as grand as those they had recently experienced across the Atlantic - the finest and grandest in our fair city. Hence the name: The Granada Theater! (A coincidence that the name is also Spanish? Surely not!)

## Spanish Main (From pg 3)

John continues to find membership in the Choral Society to be satisfying—even more so now that Adelle and Erik have joined. He also finds satisfaction acting as de facto contractor for the never-ending remodel and landscaping projects with Adelle and Erik, or working with Erik rebuilding the cylinders on the airplane engine. Fiercely playing racquetball three times a week not being sufficient exercise (his well-earned sobriquet "Dr. Kill" notwithstanding), he is considering adding biking to and from work twice a week to his schedule in an effort to stave off the inevitable effects of age.

- Jeanne

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See Jeanne

## Temporal Diversity Grant Pursued

It was sometime between Friday afternoon badminton and high tea that the Rodkey children realized they were, in fact, an Edwardian family. The realization was a shock, but not an unpleasant one. Quoth Erik, "I mean to say, it makes sense of my clothes, what? I've always had a hankering for an Edwardian collar." According to Elissa, the idea had occurred to her earlier when reading an E.M. Forster novel where the description of Lucy and Freddy's tennis antics was "eerily familiar." However it was when a half-hour segment of family dialog completely mirrored a section in J.K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* that other members of the family first had an inkling; when the family elected to read aloud instead of watching TV the family felt their suspicion confirmed. Though lacking an authoritative explanation of the temporal mix up, theories range from time travel to Platonic transmigration of souls. The family has adjusted well despite having come through as an impoverished Edwardian family. "It's a pity we turned out more the Fallen Fortunes of the Bastibles than *Downton Abbey*" says Krista. The situation may not be without remedy: Krista has already submitted grant proposals for the study of temporally displaced persons: "As a family, we make for an even more interesting case study. If funding does become available, we can finally go fox-hunting." If the grant falls through, the family will turn to Plan B: raising the family fortunes by marrying off Adelle to a member of the landed gentry.



- Krista

*Much to the delighted surprise of the Rodkey Reader editorial board, there is at least one person who can 'Write Like a Rodkey', with that rare ability to simultaneously express humility and self-adulation, whilst weaving a tapestry of multi-syllabic antiquated lexemes. With no further ado, the Reader is pleased to present Danica Smith and her winning contribution to the 2010 Write Like a Rodkey contest.*

My Dear Rodkeys,

Thank you for directing my attention to the Rodkey Reader; I am always grateful for literary recommendations from friends and acquaintances. Several evenings ago, time and inclination agreed so I read all the issues through in one sitting, in chronological order per Mr. Rodkey's advice. This did indeed bring great pleasure, but allow me to observe that your collective accomplishments and the personal and familial brilliance recorded in the Reader were rather overpowering. It was very sensitive of you not to give these to me until I had bid farewell to the ancestral halls, or I might have been self-conscious in such celebrated company. Perhaps the strong effect of these chronicles and my consequently weakened condition were due to my failure to follow the editors' directions. Instead of taking each issue in the morning, with a grain of salt, I took them all in one evening

with a large handful of chocolate chips. Increased frailty is the inevitable result of intemperance.

I attach, by way of illustration of my state, a photograph I took at Hampton Court Palace. Here Jillian, the youngest daughter Smith, and King Louis XIV, the "Sun King," are mutually blinded by the glory of one of the kings of England who resided in Hampton Court Palace. Picture me in similar posture, having worked my way to the 2010 edition of the RR, shielding my eyes from the glory issuing from my laptop screen.



I have the great honor to remain,  
Your friend, D.G.S.

*Our Dearest Danica:*

*The editorial board of the RR assembled in the great hall for an emergency session to read and respond to your letter. We are most concerned about your physical condition. As a restorative, the staff nurse prescribes several cups of hot chocolate and readings from A.A. Milne or E. Nesbit.*

## Rodkeys Recommend Reading

Assignment in Brittany (MacInnes)  
The Thief (Turner)  
Northanger Abbey (Austen)  
In Nature's Name (Gates)  
The Year of Miss Agnes (Hill)  
Trent's Own Case (Bentley)

## Rodkeys Recommend Watching

Of Gods and Men \*  
Life on Mars (BBC)\*  
Sherlock (BBC)  
Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy (BBC)  
Alaska Dreams Travel Far  
Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day

Downton Abbey  
Max Manus\*  
Little Dorrit  
Tree of Life  
Bright Star

\* Not for the faint of heart

## Editorial Staff

rodkey@westmont.edu erodkey@gmail.com  
jerodkey@gmail.com krodkey@gmail.com

arodkey@gmail.com  
errodkey@gmail.com