

Write to the Point!



An Anthology of Writing

By 'The Jakes'

Writing Apprentices of Twain Studios

Summer 2013



NEIGHBORHOOD STUDIOS


The Greater Hartford Arts Council's Neighborhood Studios develops emerging artists and teaches teens the value of creativity and fundamental career skills they need to succeed in today's workforce. Travelers is the presenting sponsor of this year's Neighborhood Studios program, with support from contributing sponsor Bank of America. Write to the Point!'s studio sponsor is The Hartford.

Neighborhood Studios receives additional support from Elizabeth Carse Foundation, Fisher Foundation, NewAlliance Foundation, the United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut and individual donors to the United Arts Campaign.

See More Great Work From The Jakes


This collection of writings represents only some of the work the apprentices of Twain Studios did this summer. If you'd like to see more, please visit the studio blog online at www.TwainStudios.com.

GREATER HARTFORD ARTS COUNCIL




NEIGHBORHOOD STUDIOS

AT




The Mark Twain House & Museum




WRITE TO THE POINT!

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Applause, Applause!

Here's to everyone who made it possible

Thank You

Write to the Point! at The Mark Twain House & Museum, the newest member of the wonderful Neighborhood Studios program of the **Greater Hartford Arts Council**. The terrific work these teen writers did at Twain Studios this summer wouldn't have been possible without the help of a lot of people who truly care.

The Arts Council is filled with talented people who are committed to the idea that music, photography, dance, theater, film and writing are crucial to a vibrant community. I'd like to especially thank **Ashley Sklar** for skillfully helping Twain Studios navigate through its inaugural year.

Supporters of the arts are true heroes. Without them, programs like this wouldn't exist. That means these apprentices wouldn't have had the tremendous opportunities they had all summer at The Mark Twain House & Museum. They wouldn't have been writing, meeting fascinating visitors like Stephen King or, equally important, acquiring new friends throughout the Greater Hartford area. So I offer my deep gratitude for the generosity of **Travelers**, the **Bank of America** and all of the sponsors, but especially to our studio sponsor, **The Hartford**. We couldn't have done it without you.

Finally, a huge debt is owed to **The Mark Twain House & Museum** for opening its doors to young people this summer. The entire staff put up with an energetic group of teenagers moving in and being mildly disruptive for six weeks and went out of their



way to make us all feel welcome and at home.

As experts on all things Twain, Publications Editor **Steve Courtney** and Chief Curator **Patti Philippon** cheerfully answered an endless stream of questions. And Patti provided us with precious photos of our brief encounter with Stephen King. Manager of Communications and Special Projects **Jacques Lamarre**, who is wonderfully inclusive of young writers, arranged for apprentices to interview the governor of Bermuda and the world's strongest librarian. **Julia Pistell**, a public relations pro at the Twain House, made sure the apprentices got to see Stephen King and took them to WNPR to record some of their writing with Senior Producer **Catie Talarski**, who kindly took the time to work with each of them. I am grateful to each of them for all they did to help me and support these young writers.



Such a warm and writer-friendly atmosphere wouldn't exist without stellar leadership setting the tone, and at the Twain House, that's the enthusiastic Executive Director **Cindy Lovell**.

Because all these people cared, a diverse group of terrific young people filled their summer with learning, adventure, fun and friendship. I'm honored to have served these amazing teens.

— Jackie Majerus, Master Teaching Artist

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Meet The Jakes of Twain Studios

By Molly Miller and The Jakes

Writing Apprentice

Twain Studios

Five and a half weeks ago, we were just a bunch of crazy teens staring at blank Microsoft Word pages, unsure of what to say to each other, let alone to the world. But through our shared love of the written word, we quickly became best friends, dubbing ourselves ‘The Jakes’ (short for J.K.s, which is short for Journalism Kids.)

The Jakes went on all kinds of wonderful adventures together, through haunted houses, the Connecticut Public Broadcasting recording studios, and the basement of the Immanuel Congregational Church. All of these places inspired our writing.

We honed our interrogation skills by hammering the governor of Bermuda, the world’s strongest librarian, and a photojournalist from Uganda with all the tough questions. We learned to avoid passive tense like the plague by listening to and meeting Stephen King. Journalists from *The Hartford Courant* and *CTNews Junkie*

told us what it was like to work professionally as writers, and taught us tips for acing interviews. We received expert advice on the art of writing resumes and managing money.

In no time, our blank Microsoft Word pages became saturated with our thoughts and research on everything from the mysterious allure of bad boys to Victorian fashion, from One Direction to Harriet Beecher Stowe, and we shared our work with the world through our blog, TwainStudios.com.

We now present an anthology of our finest works in this literary journal. We’d like to thank our teacher Jackie Majerus, who worked hard to put this booklet together, and everyone at The Mark Twain House & Museum who taught us about Mark Twain and let us use their space. We’d also like to thank the Greater Hartford Arts Council, and all of the sponsors who made this program possible.

The Life of Labor in Hartford

By Molly Miller
Writing Apprentice
Twain Studios

Although Mark Twain's neighbors in Nook Farm may have represented the late 19th century Hartford aristocracy, many of them, especially former abolitionists, supported workers' rights.

Opposition came from captains of industry, said Hartford labor historian and former union organizer Steve Thornton. In Hartford, this meant people like Albert Pope of the Pope Manufacturing Company.

In a speech given at his Monday Evening Club, Twain called the Knights of Labor "The New Dynasty." The Knights had more than 30 people elected to the state legislature to represent the workers' interests, said Thornton, including safety and child labor laws. They encouraged everyone to join, and were certainly powerful, but they had no legal protection.

Workers didn't have the right to organize into unions until 1935, and workers who would try to organize were often fired, blacklisted, or jailed for conspiracy.

In 1883, telegraph operators in the Hartford branch of the Western Union Company participated in a nationwide strike, according to Thornton.

Operators worked for 12 to 16 hours at a time. They pushed for an eight-hour day, overtime pay on Sundays, a raise to compensate for the increasing hours and

profits, and equal pay for both genders.

The telegraph operators' strike lasted for about a month, and yielded no results for the Western Union workers. Most strikers were fired, and those who weren't were forced to sign "yellow dog contracts," Thornton said, which prohibited them from joining a union.

According to Thornton, many workers' issues stemmed from the transfer from farms to factories after the Civil War.

"People weren't working for themselves anymore," said Thornton.

Workers would commonly fight for better working hours.

"That was something everyone could fight for," said Thornton. The slogan, Thornton said, was "eight hours for work, eight hours for sleep, and eight hours for what we will."

The business mantra at the time was "make more stuff more cheaply," said Andrew Walsh, who is associate director of the Leonard E. Greenberg Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life at Trinity College. The health and living conditions of the workers weren't taken into consideration.

"They wanted to take advantage of mechanization," said Walsh. "They wanted less skilled work."

If the Paige Compositor – an invention Twain poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into – had been successful, Twain would have helped management

take as much skill as possible out of the printing process.

The biggest issue facing workers, in Thornton's view, is the right for unions to exist. This is somewhat similar to the concern that faced workers while Mark Twain lived in Hartford.

"There's this all-out assault on ... unions," said Thornton, referring to recent collisions between workers and legislators around the country. "The right to exist is the first big issue."

With Detroit hoping to cut workers' pensions in order to aid the city's economic recovery, and fast food employees across the country striking for higher wages and the right to unionize, the issues facing workers today are somewhat similar to those workers faced in Twain's day.

"The people who thought that unions should never have any benefits are now in power," said Thornton, making retirement funds "an easy scapegoat."

However, there are many who believe that unions just aren't as pertinent in a world where workers already have the rights they need.

Wallace Barnes, former CEO and chairman of Barnes Group Inc. and former chairman of the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission, doesn't deny the importance of unions in the late 19th and early 20th century.

"They were very, very necessary," said Barnes. "There was an

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Samuel Clemens AKA Mark Twain

By Meaghan Szilagyi
Writing Apprentice
Twain Studios

Who was Mark Twain? A novelist? A newspaper reporter? A famous author? A popular speaker?

Mark Twain was a “persona” in the eyes of Patti Philippon, chief curator of The Mark Twain House & Museum. He was a mask that was worn by a man named Samuel Clemens.

Samuel Clemens was a real person: family man, father, son, husband.

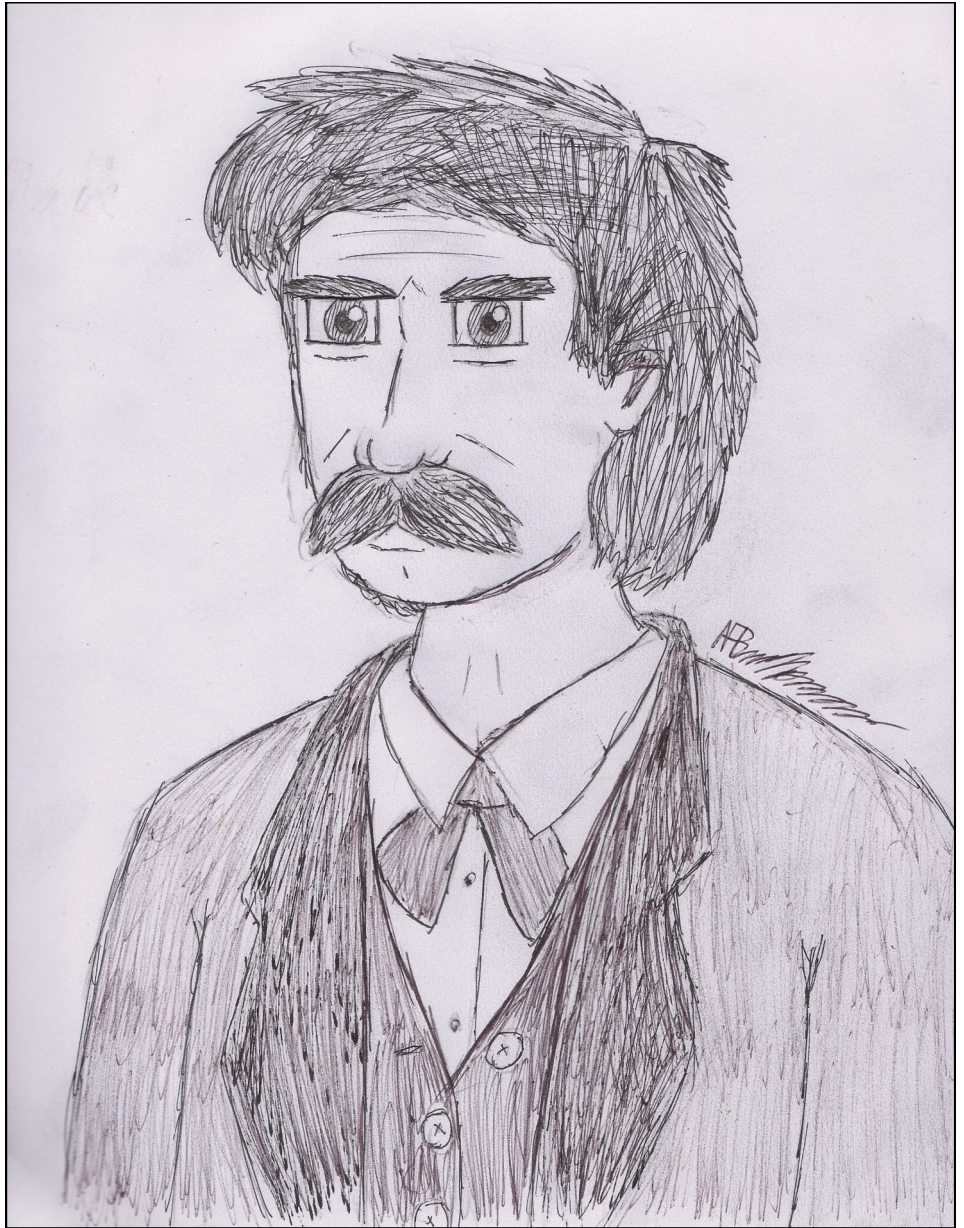
Philippon said that Clemens’ daughters disliked Mark Twain. The world saw their father as the humorist he presented himself to be, when he was really so much more than that. He was caring and loving. Clemens would do anything for his family but when people saw *Mark Twain*, they didn’t see the family man he truly was.

Sam made mistakes. Any real person makes mistakes. A few times, before his years as a husband, Clemens spent a few nights in jail for disruptive behavior and disorderly conduct, according to a Ken Burns documentary about Twain.

Clemens grew up as a rowdy young fellow and had no trouble seeking out adventure. He had many memories of his childhood friends that he later used in his stories.

Samuel Clemens traveled the world during Mark Twain’s great lectures. *Samuel Clemens* fell in love with and married Olivia Langdon. And *Samuel Clemens* became the mastermind behind Mark Twain.

While leading a tour of the Mark Twain House, Grace Belanger, assistant manager of visitor services at the museum, said that when the Clemens’ had guests over, Mark Twain was present.



Alan Burkholder

Samuel Clemens treated Mark Twain as his job, nothing more.

Mark Twain was a one-dimensional character. Sure, you could go to the theater and watch him in 3D but it wouldn’t really be *him*, would it?

Twain presented himself as a humorist – that much is clear.

Twain House publicist Steve Courtney even goes as far to call him a “stand-up comedian.” But was he anything more than that?

Could Samuel Clemens have had multiple personality disorder?

Philippon and Courtney think not. Since it was common for people to have pen names in the Gilded Age, they believe that Clemens was a person with a pen name and that’s it.

So who was Mark Twain, *really*?

Now that he is long gone, I guess we’ll never know the real story. But that’s part of the fun, isn’t it? Mystery adds intrigue and who was Mark Twain, if not a man of mystery?

Clemens Girls Learned Many Languages

By Indira Senderovic

Writing Apprentice

Twain Studios

Mark Twain's three daughters grew up learning foreign languages, mostly at home.

Suzy, Clara and Jean Clemens all were homeschooled in the family's Farmington Avenue mansion in Hartford, according to Mark Twain House & Museum tour guide Grace Belanger.

Their mother, Olivia Langdon Clemens, was an educated woman, having attended a women's college in Elmira, New York, so she handled some of the lessons for her daughters.

They also had tutors and others who provided instruction.

Just like her father the famous author, Susy was a talented writer.

At the young age of 13, she secretly wrote a biography of her father that he published when he found out about it.

Clara, an accomplished musician, was only two years younger than Susy.

All the Clemens girls' early years included a full social life, home schooling in language and music, and traveling.

The youngest daughter was Jean, who was born in 1880. Though she was also homeschooled, Jean took some classes in France. Jean was like her mother, kind-hearted and fond of animals.

According to Belanger, one of the family's household staff was a German woman who spoke with the girls only in native language. She said this sometimes frustrated the girls.

German was one of four languages the Clemens girls learned. They also studied Latin, Italian and English.

Karen Demonte, who teaches Italian at Wethersfield High School, said it is hard to be motivated to learn a new language.

"Learning a new language can be frustrating, but if you keep trying you will succeed for sure," she said.

Much like the German woman on the Twain household staff, Demonte doesn't talk to anyone in English. In the classroom, it's strictly Italian

"That's what helped a lot of students pick up the language faster," Demonte said.

Demonte said she believes that the Clemens were right to have their children learn multiple languages.



Christine Stuart, editor of *CTNewsJunkie*, was one of several guest speakers this summer.

Diphtheria Killed Twain's Baby Son

By Jahyra White

Writing Apprentice

Twain Studios

When Mark Twain's baby son died of diphtheria, he blamed himself.

At 19 months, Langdon Clemens was in carriage, riding with his parents in 1872.

"The blanket that was covering Langdon fell away," said Mark Twain House & Museum Chief Curator Patti Philippon, and the author took responsibility. "He really took it upon himself."

The boy, who was born premature on Nov. 7, 1870, had always been sickly. He caught diphtheria and died.

But Dr. Dr. K. Patrick Ober, an endocrinologist at Wake Forest Baptist Health in Winston-Salem, North Carolina who has studied Langdon's death, said Twain wasn't to blame.

The boy died of diphtheria but his father didn't cause it, Ober said. If Langdon was living today, Ober said, he wouldn't ever have had diphtheria.

Dr. Leonard Banco, a pediatrician and chief medical officer at Bristol Hospital, said that children today get four shots to prevent diphtheria by the age of 18 months.

"It would have been totally different," said Banco, if Langdon had been born today.

Banco said diphtheria is caused by a bacteria and is spread person to person. He said it used to be very common, especially in small children and starts like a severe sore throat.

A yellow membrane develops in the throat, Banco said, that cuts off the airway. Eventually the child suffocates, he said.

There wasn't anything parents or doctors could do to stop it.



Langdon Clemens

"There were big epidemics of it," said Banco. "Parents used to worry about that a lot."

A vaccine was developed and immunizations began in the 1940s, Banco said, and today, the vaccine is key to preventing diphtheria around the world.

Labor in Hartford

Continued from Page Six

imbalance of power between workers and management."

But Barnes doesn't think they are as necessary today.

"There's still some need," Barnes said, "but the balance has shifted. Workers have recourse now through the law that they didn't have then."

As a lawyer, Barnes negotiated contracts with unions. Since workers can sue, he said, there's less of a need for organized labor.

Barnes sees Detroit's bankruptcy as "a wake up call to all cities that they've got to adequately fund these pension programs," but he says that unions needn't be involved.



Writing apprentices worked both individually and collaboratively. In this photo are Grant Henry and Jahyra White.

Processed Food Means Fat, Not Phat

By June Tran
Writing Apprentice
Twain Studios

Obesity is a topic that is as common nowadays as the popular iPhone.

According to a report done by the National Center for Health Statistics, between 2009 and 2010, an estimated 36 percent of American adults and 17 percent of youths are obese.

The reason for treating this condition more as a physiological disorder than as an undisciplined behavior spanned from early studies in the 19th century until today's scientific inquires.

While genetics and other factors play a role, nutrition experts say the easiest way to maintain a healthy weight is by eating a sensible diet.

"There are a lot of different factors and there's a genetic component," said Laura Koski, a registered dietitian.

Obesity and the diseases that accompany it became more prevalent over time as people learned to grow their own food and food became more available, especially after the Second World War, according to Prof. Garabed Eknoyan of Baylor College of Medicine. In an article published by the National Kidney Foundation, Eknoyan wrote that it was the abundance of foods and reduced physical activity that posed the greatest problem.

"It's a combination of things," said Koski. "We have more foods available. You can spend less. We spend less of our income on foods than we did, say, 20 years ago."

Although we spend less for our foods, it isn't always the good stuff that gets into our body.

The most important part of nutrition, emphasized Pauline Weissman, a board certified nutritional specialist, is to eat "appropriate foods."

In other words, Weissman said, whole foods that are in their "natural state" and aren't out of a box or package.

Weissman puts the blame on processed foods, and she's not alone.

"They thought that soda was the bad guy, but it's actually the processed foods," said Koski, who explained that people are eating more things like cakes, cookies, pies and chips than in years past.

Processed foods such as refined, simple carbohydrates are easier to break down and be absorbed into the blood stream, according to Weissman. So consumption of processed foods accounts for a spike and ultimate crash in blood sugar, she said, leading to a craving for more sweets.

But complex carbohydrates such as whole grains, are much harder to be processed and allow a slower increase in blood sugar and less of a desire for more, according to Weissman.

A study this year showed that when men ate a meal containing a lot of processed food, especially containing corn syrup, it resulted in increased hunger and stimulation to the part of the brain that triggers cravings, according to a published report in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

While most of the obesity research points towards nutrition, there have been advances that show the biological reasons behind fat regulation and storage within human body.

According to the *International Journal of Obesity*, the most significant progress concerning obesity is in the study of two kinds of fat cells in the body, brown and white. Brown fat, which is associated with low body weight, is good. The research showed an artificial way to grow new brown fat cells from precursor white fat cells that haven't yet developed.

But the nutritionists aren't counting on this discovery to help people, at least right away.

"There's no simple answer," said Koski.

Weissman said obesity is a "lifestyle disease."

Taking into account that obesity is a medical and societal problem, changing our perspective on obese people doesn't contribute toward solving it.

While there may be more acceptance of overweight or bigger people in our society, as Koski pointed out it may be "also because we have gotten heavier."

As Eknoyan wrote, the stigma of being obese began to emerge during the later part of the 19th century. Before that, Western literature and art correlated a heavy-set person with the characteristics of affluence, power and beauty.

Breakthroughs in science may give us an insight into the workings of the human body, though the pathway of nutrition provides an easier and longer-lasting result.

Education about foods and nutrition is important in retraining our bodies to eat in a more healthy and effective way.

Daughters Died of Illnesses That Can Be Treated Today

By Lina Allam
Writing Apprentice
Twain Studios

Like any father, Samuel Clemens adored his children and worked hard to provide them with the life that he never had.

But during the 1800's medicine wasn't as advanced as it is today, and Clemens lost three of his four children at a young age to medical troubles that might have been prevented today.

Clemens, famous for the writing he did under the pen name Mark Twain, lost his first and only son, Langdon, to diphtheria around the age of 19 months.

Clemens and his wife Olivia also had three girls: Suzy, Clara, and Jane,



Susy Clemens

who lived in the family's Hartford home until their teenage years.

But when their father lost all his money from investing in the failed invention, the Paige Compositor, he traveled the world doing public speaking to pay off his debts.

When the time came for his family to return home, his oldest daughter, Suzy, then 24 years old, died of meningitis.

Meningitis is a bacterial or viral infection that attacks the brain or



Jean Clemens

spinal cord. The viral strain is untreatable, but eventually the patient's organs are able to defend the body against the virus, though it could take a week or two.

Bacterial meningitis can be treated through antibiotics, however if it is not treated, it can be fatal. This deadly type of meningitis – called meningococcal disease – causes an overwhelming infection in the body's internal organs.

If antibiotics are given early during the infestation, the antibiotics could save a life, said Dr. Leonard Banco, a pediatrician and the chief medical officer of Bristol Hospital.

At the time Suzy died, there weren't antibiotics available to treat the disease, according to Dr. K. Patrick Ober, an endocrinologist at Wake Forest Baptist Health in Winston-Salem, North Carolina who has a keen interest in historical medicine.

Jean, the youngest daughter, was diagnosed with epilepsy at age 15 and suffered seizures.

Banco said epilepsy is a seizure disorder that occurs in an organism mainly because of incorrect wiring in the brain. In a person with epilepsy, this causes seizures to sometimes occur in order for the body to regain its normal state. They can include the clenching of teeth and intense shaking, Banco said, and sometimes loss of consciousness.

An epileptic episode occurs because of a large discharge of energy released by the brain, Banco said.

But unlike meningitis, epilepsy cannot be cured and is often something that one is born with.

Without antibiotics and other medicine, Ober said, medical treatment during the time of Mark Twain was limited. Some medicines doctors used, including Lepomane, which is a drug like heroin and often leads to addiction, could be harmful.

Without other options, doctors also often tried to bleed the patient out in order to remove any of the "bad" or "sick" blood, Ober said.

Doctors had no way to treat meningitis in Jean's day. Ober said there was no medicine for epilepsy. Many medical professionals at the time thought that the epileptic seizures were the cause of intense amount of stress.

Though her family tried to keep Jean calm, she died of a heart-attack brought on by a seizure in 1909. She was 29.

Today, epilepsy is most treated with anti-seizure medicine, though sometimes other treatments are used, according to information provided by the Mayo Clinic.



Lina Allam

Gilded Age Included Luxury Fashions

By Ashaya Nelson
Writing Apprentice
Twain Studios

The Gilded Age following the Civil War, is known for women wearing corsets, so they could have the perfect silhouette, with long heavy skirts. Men's outfits were set off by spiffy bowler hats.

American author and humorist Mark Twain created the term "Gilded Age." At the start of this time, the country experienced a rapid increase in the population and growth in the economy.

But Gilded Age fashions were for those who could afford it. The upper-class wore these extravagant costumes.

I believe that clothing at this time was valued more than fashion is today. In the eyes of the people, fashion wore was like art. Women wore luxury fabrics, and dresses were detailed and fitted.

According to Patti Philippon, chief curator at the Mark Twain House & Museum, people wore a variety of outfits for different occasions in the Gilded Age, which ended in 1893 because of the bad economy.

Women would have a different costume for going to an opera, visiting or doing work such as washing clothes.

Fashion even mattered in times of grieving. There were stages to the mourning costume. For mourning or funerals, black dresses with pan-

sies were worn, Philippon said, explaining that pansies were flowers that represented thoughts and remembrance.

Teenage girls had to dress as women in long dresses. The younger girls would wear shorter dresses. Toddlers and babies – both boys and girls – wore embroidered dresses that were very detailed, Philippon said.

Women would either go to their own seamstress or go to a boutique to get new clothes. The Clemens family bought their clothing from Arnold Constable & Co. in New York. They also sometimes had their clothes made for them.

Olivia, Mark Twain's wife, had a woman in Paris who created her dresses.

The dresses were so big and bulky; they couldn't fit into a closet. There also weren't hangers at this time. So they used wardrobes to store their clothing.

Clothes brushes were use for dusting off dresses. Also in this era, washing machines were not yet invented.

During the winter, everyone wore dark clothing, and in summer, they wore light colored clothing.

Upper class men wore dark suits that Mark Twain called "crows," but in old age, Twain didn't follow these customs.

He often wore white wool suits out of season, sometimes with colored socks. Twain called it his "don'tcareadamnsuit."

In February of 1906, he wore the suit because he knew it would attract attention before testifying about copyright before a Congressional committee.

In a Gilded Age exhibit at the museum, a bicycle and clothing are on display.

Bike importer Colonel Albert A. Pop of Boston created the "Drop Frame."

It was a safer bike for women that was lowered for skirts. The Divided Skirt and Bloomer Costumes were made for women who rode bikes.

The Divided Skirt looks like a flared skirt, but are actually pants. Bloomers were made for women who wanted to engage in activities.

The bloomers are still worn for athletic purposes, and also for fashion. They're used for toddlers and infants to cover their diapers.

The accessories, just like the clothing, were interesting. The women wore hair combs, hair jewelry, and extensions.

Hair was weaved and made into jewelry and was given to someone else, symbolizing remembrance and mourning.

Some of the unique fashion of the Gilded Age has been revived today. Women still wear hair extensions and combs. Harem pants were inspired by the style of bloomers.

Fashion shows the evolution of history.

Mark Twain: An Estrangement with Religion

By Rae Martin
Writing Apprentice
Twain Studios

It's no secret that throughout Western history – before the rationalist and secular movements of the past few centuries – organized religion has held massive sway over humankind.

By Rae Martin Mark Twain, for his time, was quite progressive in some of his views on religion – and obliquely depressing in others.

It's surprising, on both accounts, considering he was born in a conservative small town, which typically leads to a strong sense of faith.

Being born in Florida, Missouri today would be hard enough, but during the 19th century? Unfathomable. It's simply stunning that Mark Twain grew to criticize religion, an establishment still venerated by some today.

"If you think something is important, and it's going the wrong way, you get really passionate," said Steve Courtney, publicist and publications editor of the Mark Twain House & Museum,

Passionate is a meek word for some of Twain's last writings on religion and life.

If his appreciation of the importance of religion comes from his social environment growing up, then his amiability in terms of differing beliefs comes from his mother, Jane Clemens.

She was not a puritan in any sense, but a sampler of religion who brought her son along for a taste of faith at different houses of worship.

And from church, to cathedral, to synagogue; she sampled religious tastes. And if you can't already tell, that kind of thing simply didn't happen.

"His attitude toward religion changed considerably," said Courtney.

With that history in mind, it now seems unlikely that Twain would have grown up to be anything other than open-minded when it came religion and slavery, the two biggest social conventions of the day.

Patti Philippon, chief curator of The Mark Twain House & Museum, described Twain as "very spiritual."

It's clear to me that Twain did believe in some sort of god, and his rants against that god is more to disparage the church of the day and as an expression of feelings stirred by the deaths of three of his four children.

The untimely deaths of all but one of his children, coupled with increasing American imperialism, the hy-

pocrisy of Gilded Age culture and immense worldwide fame built up a mocking critique of bullshit dogma from religious institutes.

If Twain was alive and writing today, he would probably be agnostic.

Mark Twain "gravitated between two views," said Courtney, either believing that God didn't exist, or thinking God is a sadist.

He'd have possibly railed against the contemporary church even more than he did against the church of his time, due to a surge in anti-religious and anti-church thought that has swept through the Western world.

If he had been born in contemporary times, he would be a Christopher Hitchens-type figure, relentlessly questioning and challenging organized religion.

Twain was not only a magnificent writer of prose but a well-versed public speaker on all issues of culture and society. Not only jabbing at religion, but also foreign policy, class warfare, social and economic dispositions.

His provocative inquiries would likely ignite hatred and threats of personal violence as his distinct boldness in the oral and literary arts is marked by a refusal to back down in the face of cultural taboo.

Another parallel is the surprising friendship that the atheist Hitchens found with Pastor Douglas Wilson. Twain found close counsel in the Rev. Joseph Twichell of Asylum Hill Congregational Church in Hartford, where the Clemens family attended.

In today's extremely polarized society, Twain's caustic demeanor would certainly have been drawn out even more than in his day. He would have been right at home in contemporary pop culture, a place ripe for the pickings of a satirist of Twain's caliber.



Apprentices Cecilia Gigliotti, Rae Martin and June Tran

A House With a Certain Ring To It

By Ambriel Johnson

Writing Apprentice

Twain Studios

Hearing the ring of a telephone has become a regular sound in the American household, something easily taken for granted.

However, in Mark Twain's time, the Gilded Age, this harsh ring was out of the ordinary. Only the wealthiest of households had these new-age communication devices installed in their homes.

Fascinated with modern technology, Twain himself had a telephone in his Farmington Avenue mansion. He didn't use the phone much, though he complained about the quality of the phone calls endlessly.

The member of the household who used the phone most was the family butler, George Griffin.

The 25-room home built for Samuel Clemens, his wife and daughters – Mark Twain was Clemens' pen name – was a showcase.

"They were an up-to-date, sophisticated family," said Steve Courtney, author of *The Loveliest Home That Ever Was: The Story of the Mark Twain House in Hartford*.

The Victorian Gothic Revival house features a breathtaking grand hall with decorative arts by designer Louis Comfort Tiffany, a glass walled conservatory overflowing with green plants, a cozy library, and a third floor billiard room where Clemens wrote his world-famous novels.



Tiffany supervised the interior decoration of the house and designed most of the glasswork.

Legend says the home was designed to look like a riverboat to mimic the theme in Twain's masterpiece, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

Designed by architect Edward Tuckerman Potter, construction began in 1873. The house rested on a large parcel of land when Twain owned it, even more than the museum owns today.

"There was a much more rural landscape then," Courtney said.

The family moved into the house in 1874, three years after Twain decided to build a home in Hartford.

The house in Hartford's Nook Farm neighborhood had hot and cold running water, central heat, gas lighting and other modern conveniences common in the day.

"Any middle class home had indoor plumbing by 1874," Courtney said, adding that gas lighting wasn't new, either.

The Clemens family had all these things.

"In general, it was a time of tremendous change, a very dynamic time," Courtney said.

Gas lighting, which eliminated the problem of smelly whale oil and weak lights that would damage the eyes, was popular.

"Central heating was pretty new," said Courtney, as were the speaking tubes the Clemens had in their walls.

Family members used the speaking tubes to communicate with household staff in different parts of the house.

The telephone made communication with those outside the house easier.

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The Jakes cheerfully pitched in after The Mark Twain House & Museum's annual ice cream social in July. They were happy to help dispose of leftover ice cream, sprinkles and whipped cream.

Twain's Home Showed His Fascination With Technology

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Twain's house was one of the first in Hartford to have a phone, Courtney said, and the listing for Samuel Clemens was one of the first in the local phone book.

Before people had phones, Courtney said, "To talk to someone, they would have to ride their horse downtown."

Courtney said there were odd noises coming over the phone line, possibly because people didn't know how to install the wiring.

Twain kept score, Courtney said, of the various noises he heard on the phone. He tallied them as "cannon fire" or "thunder" and subtracted the number of times he heard them from the balance of his phone bill.

"There were definitely things that went wrong," Courtney said.

Courtney said Twain was always interested in inventing and once invented a game for his daughters so they could learn about British royalty.

Twain also invented a self-pasting scrapbook, Courtney said, that proved quite popular in his time.

Twain invested in items that were familiar to him, Courtney said, such as the typesetter and the Paige Compositor. Courtney said Twain lost \$300,000 on the Paige Compositor.

Despite his interest in technological gadgets, Twain remained old fashioned when it came to his work.

Twain had a typewriter, Courtney said, and it made writing faster. But Twain didn't like using it. He did have other people type his stories for him, Courtney said, but preferred writing in longhand himself.

"It was fashionable to have new and updated technology," said Courtney, and Twain loved to keep up with the latest trends. "He was interested in fads."

The Clemens family lived happily in their home until 1891, when mounting debt forced them to leave. In order to pay off his debt, Twain was forced to go on a lecture circuit.

Some of the family went with Twain on his circuit and others stayed elsewhere. They never lived there again.

In the 1920s, the home was sold to real-estate investor J.J. Wall and survived a number of different owners, including a boarding school for boys.

Katharine Seymour Day's Friends of Hartford campaign ultimately saved it from demolition, restored it, and made it the popular museum that it is today.

In 1963, it was designated a National Historic Landmark.

Twain Celebrated the Nation's Vernacular

By Cecilia Gigliotti
Writing Apprentice
Twain Studios

Do you speak American?

Mark Twain did. In fact, he is credited with pioneering the presentation of a distinctly American language as literature.

At the Mark Twain House & Museum in Hartford, Patti Philippon, chief curator, and Steve Courtney, publicist and author, had much to say about the forward-thinking 19th-century literary superstar. According to Philippon, Twain's use of the vernacular – “slangs and colloquialisms” peculiar to certain geographical regions and races – is what makes books like *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* stand out.

“It's putting into words *how* people from that era sounded,” Philippon said.

Of course, oftentimes people didn't sound so nice. *Huckleberry Finn* is defined today by the censorship and controversy surrounding Twain's extensive use of the racist word “nigger.”

At New Britain High School a few years ago, a teacher in an American Lit class began to teach the novel – but not before closing the door. She introduced the book in hushed tones and told students not to mention it if they ran across the principal. She never said why.

Today, teachers across the state and the nation are working to combat this sensitivity.

Prof. Kerry Driscoll, who teaches English at the University of St. Joseph, is a longtime Twain enthusiast. She taught a summer class on *Huckleberry Finn* at the Twain House, where she has lectured a number of times.

In her experience teaching the book, two major dialectical barriers have stood in Driscoll's way.

“At the level of comprehension,” she said, “It's hard for students to understand.”

Sometimes, it helps students to hear the language rather than read it.

“What I recommend is that if there's a word or sentence that you don't understand, say the sentence out loud,” Driscoll explained. For instance, when the character Jim

“It's putting into words how people from that era sounded “

— Patti Philippon, chief curator, The Mark Twain House & Museum

says “gwine,” what could g-w-i-n-e possibly mean?

“Sound it out,” Driscoll said, and the reader realizes that Jim is saying ‘going to.’

The accuracy of Twain's characterization through dialect is astounding. Driscoll often asks her students' opinions on why Twain includes, before the first chapter, a list of the seven dialects used throughout, such as ‘rural Pike County.’

“This is a realist book,” Driscoll said.

In using local dialects, Twain is holding a mirror to the lifestyle of those regions.

The other obstacle in Twain's use of dialect is harder to conquer. The racial slur, Driscoll said, is what “makes the book so controversial.”



Prof. Kerry Driscoll

But she said it is key to understanding the “evolution of [Twain's] own racial attitudes” and those of the times.

A recent edition of *Huckleberry Finn* in which the word ‘nigger’ is replaced with the word ‘slave’ is “an appalling decision,” Driscoll said. “That's not the book Mark Twain wrote.”

As a teacher, she said, it is her responsibility to use the word in class discussion and stay true to Twain's motives.

“The word appears 219 times in the book for a reason,” she said. “I'm going to read what Mark Twain wrote. It's deliberately ugly, and I want students to hear it.”

Her determination has occasionally come at a cost. A student once complained that she was a racist teacher forcing the class to read a racist book.

But Driscoll has no intention of abandoning her approach.

“There's no magic cure or fix,” she said, adding that the best teachers can give their students is “background preparation” – the word's historical context and the obvious differences in tolerance of the word between the 1880s and now. Still, this is sometimes not enough to alleviate the soreness.

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As they learned about writing and practiced their craft, The Jakes learned about each other, too, and found they had a surprising amount in common.



Mark Twain's Writing Style Was Distinctly American

Continued from page 16

There's been soreness for a while, and for a number of reasons. Since its publication, school districts and libraries in 28 states have banned the book.

But in 1885, public outrage stemmed from the opinion that Huck was not a proper role model for children. People were taken aback at Huck, the "irreverent" narrator, said Driscoll.

Driscoll described Huck as a "white-trash kid [allowed to] tell his own story on his own terms."

In a pivotal scene, Huck decides to protect his friend Jim, a runaway slave, despite childhood teachings that the act would condemn him for eternity.

"All right, I'll *go* to hell," the boy resolves.

Huck was "a bad boy," said Philippon, and Twain's adult readers had a problem with that.

Driscoll pointed out the irony that while the objection in 1885 was not to the language used but to Huck's

offensive behavior, it has only been since the New York City school board banned it in 1957 that Huck's character is celebrated and the language is found offensive.

The civil rights movement of the '60s, Courtney said, was a turning point for the racial slur. That was when it evolved into "a fighting word," he said.

But Driscoll holds fast to her image of Twain as a "careful wordsmith." Whatever words he chose, he wanted, she said.

In an 1888 letter, Twain wrote, "The difference between the almost right word and the right word is really a large matter – it's the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning."

Lightning can be both amazing and frightening to behold. It is an energetic force capable of destruction, but it plays a necessary role in the ecological cycle, and nature certainly would not be complete without it.

Using his charged language, Mark Twain infused our literature with a little more lightning, a spark that is uniquely American.

Mark Twain's Style of Humor Lives On

By Alan Burkholder
Writing Apprentice
Twain Studios

Almost everyone in the world loves Mark Twain. There's no denying that his work has had quite an impact on society, both in the past and in the present.

Don't lie to me. You've heard the name Tom Sawyer before. If you know who Tom Sawyer is, you probably also know about his friend Huckleberry Finn. These two troublemaking brats have become two of the most famous child characters in all of literature. I say two of the most because a certain young woman from England has recently had more success in the way of children's literature.

However, Samuel Clemens, who wrote under the name Mark Twain, is arguably the most celebrated author in classic American literature.

Being from a small town in Missouri, Twain had an American upbringing, and as such Twain's books are very American in nature. These stories range from a story about a notorious gambler in Nevada who gets too cocksure about a jumping frog, to a man from Connecticut who winds up face to face with King Arthur and builds an industrial empire which later ruins their society. *Whoops*.

His books varied in message and tone, but Twain always had one quality which set him apart from other writers of the time: a sharp and dry wit. Twain was at heart a humorist, and he never stopped trying to be the witty gentleman, even in old age. He was aware of his humanity, and often poked fun at his own flaws.

"We ought never to do wrong when people are looking," he wrote in "A Double-Barrelled Detective Story."

But where did Clemens get his inspiration? What was the source of Twain's persona as a witty individual?

Part of the blame can be pinned on Sam's mother. While his father was strict and humorless, his mother

was always the unconventional woman. She was humorous in nature and she bounced around from religion to religion, even once taking her son to a temple rather than a church.

According to Steve Courtney, publications editor at The Mark Twain House & Museum in Hartford, Connecticut, Sam and his mother would often joke a lot with each other, probably trying to see if they could outwit one another.

"This disposition to experiment is an inheritance from my mother," Twain said in a Feb. 28, 1901 lecture reported in the New York Times.

Twain was also inspired by a lot of other people in his life. He based several characters in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* on his boyhood memories in Hannibal, Missouri. His mother became Aunt Polly, his child-

hood sweetheart became Becky Thatcher, and several troublemaking boys combined to make the ever-bothersome Huckleberry Finn. He also based the runaway slave Jim on his butler, George Griffen.

Twain wasn't just about characters, though. He was also heavy into politics and could never keep his mouth shut about anything. The grand result of this love of

satire was a book called *The Gilded Age*, in which Twain practically tore American values of the time apart at the seams and revealed the ugly truth beneath all of it, all the while never letting up or apologizing for his actions.

Despite his controversial nature, however, Twain was not a troublemaker. He was simply a rabble-rouser, and he always had a good reason for writing every shocking sentence he ever put to paper.

"Always do right," Twain wrote in 1901. "This will gratify some people and astonish the rest."

Twain's work, to this day, continues to both gratify and astonish readers all over the world. Part of the reason is the way Twain presents his humor.

Mark Twain House & Museum Chief Curator Patti Philippon said Twain tended to write how people actually sound.

Despite his controversial nature, however, Twain was not a troublemaker. He was simply a rabble-rouser, and he always had a good reason for writing every shocking sentence he ever put to paper.

Twain Found a Way to Make His Humor Interesting

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Instead of being flowery and poetic, Twain wrote his books in plain English so that the message wouldn't be lost.

"You can understand (Twain) a lot better" than most writers of the time, Courtney said.

People had written plainly before Twain, Courtney said, but he was "the first to make it a point."

Twain, however was never completely blunt. He realized that in order for the audience to get the message, he had to make it interesting. He didn't tell you to be honest. He simply said, "when in doubt, tell the truth."

Twain is not the only person in the world to use humor as a selling point, however. Modern entertainers borrow heavily from Twain's method of telling stories like they happened. Good humor is always a welcome addition to any story.

Most modern comedies realize that in order to be funny, there doesn't need to be a lot happening.

Shows like *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, *The Colbert Report*, and Louis CK's *Louie* draw a lot of praise and laughs basically having a small group of people who have a small focus, but a lot of insight. I like to refer to this kind of humor as "Seinfeldian," after the show (and comedian) that made it popular.

One person who's familiar with this style of humor is Patrick Skahill, the producer of WNPR's *The Colin McEnroe Show*, a Connecticut-based radio program that deal heavily with satire and wit.

Before each show, Skahill said, the producers and stars of the shows "keep an eye out for weird stories," and then "brainstorm and think of ideas" that they want to discuss.

"Most of it is on the fly," Skahill said.

Humorists don't always script everything. Often, they just come up with ideas and work with them from there. This was certainly true of *Huckleberry Finn*, which started out as the sequel to a boy's book and turned into one of the most humorous and heartfelt books in recent history. A lot of modern humor is based on social satire. Twain was not shy about social satire.

Twain did a lot of lecturing in his time, which was basically the 19th century equivalent of stand-up comedy. He would go out on stage, start telling a tale, and leave the audience roaring.

Off the stage, Clemens was shy and hated talking to people. On stage, he was a social commentator who

seemingly knew more about the country than every politician of the era combined.

Philippon said Twain and Clemens were the same at the core, but Twain was more of a "persona."

Twain used this persona when writing jokes, because Twain was much funnier. The same can be said for a lot of modern comedians. Everyone adopts a sort of stage persona, whether it be the loudmouth who loves to judge people, the quirky girl who observes a lot of crazy stuff happening, or the good-natured fat guy who likes to poke fun at himself.

All have a character on the stage who represents an exaggerated version of themselves. They earn bonus points if they act like this off of the stage as well.

Comedy writers also like to indulge in exaggeration for comic effect. Twain was a master in this field, especially when it came to his satire. Early in his career, Twain wrote in a newspaper about a "Terrible accident" that hadn't actually happened, a satire on the sometimes alarmist nature of the news. Alarming enough, this kind of satire still holds up today, as several members of *Saturday Night Live* could easily attest.

Twain's humor is timeless, touching on topics that are still relevant after about 150 years. To this day, people still follow his lead, in comedy, drama and in writing overall.

In his story, "Green Hills of Africa," novelist Ernest Hemingway wrote, "All of modern American literature can be traced back to ... Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*."

It seems rather ridiculous to place this much credit upon one person, but Twain was brilliant enough to deserve it at the time.

And he still deserves it today.



By the time the all the studios gathered together on the first day, the teen apprentices of Twain Studios had already identified themselves as "The Jakes."

The Grating American Novel

By Grant Henry
Writing Apprentice
Twain Studios

For a nation so proud of its literary canon, the most popular books in America tend to be nothing to write home about.

William Faulkner and Mark Twain are among the many skilled authors that have defined the standards for the novels and nonfiction writing of the nation. But when checking *The New York Times* bestseller list, you will never find books of the caliber of American Classics listed.

The erotic novel *50 Shades of Grey* succeeded in selling a million physical copies in only 11 weeks, and that is not considering the millions of sales on digital e-readers like the Kindle. Meanwhile, there likely are hundreds of potential instant classics that get ignored every year.

Back in the 1990s, according to the *Lakeland Ledger* newspaper, the Delray Beach Public Library in Florida had little space in the library and used the frequency a book was loaned out to decide which stayed on shelves and which were archived in a back room.

To the discomfort of many, the number of times novels by Tom Clancy or Stephen King got checked out was high enough for those books to stay openly available while works by Hemingway and other classic authors had to be stored away, only obtainable by asking a librarian for access.

Stories like these are not rare. The reading habits of the average American seems to contradict what they learn in their high school English courses. Those who are angry about this are incredibly vocal about their thoughts on the matter.

What audacity writer James Patterson must have, to write cheap thrillers meant to mildly entertain people on airports! He should put his talent – and team of ghost writers – on the task of creating something meaningful that will last against the changing tides of cultural fads! It is the saddest thing to learn that those books get read more than critical darlings and classics, many fans of literature and struggling novelists might say.

Folks on the side of high-brow literature fight a mean fight when given the chance. They cannot fathom the stark contrast between the opinions of critics and the reading habits of consumers.

What needs to be considered when addressing the topic of high and low art is the criteria and amount of time required for something to be regarded as “important,” and how public perception and awareness of a work of art can change drastically over extended periods of time.

Let’s look at Mark Twain’s novel, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Though it paved the way for the modernist movement, the novel’s controversy existed right from publication.

The language, for example, was criticized. In *Huck Finn*, Twain portrayed the common language of Mis-



Author Stephen King at The Mark Twain House & Museum.

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Great Art Will Reveal Itself in Time

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souri rather than the idealized Oxford way of speaking commonly seen in literature. Today, English majors and writers alike see this as a milestone in literature, but at the time of release, people saw the phonetically spelled words an inconvenience that got in the way of telling the story.

Critics hated the handling of race as well. To



Sculptor Joe Bun Keo

some, the runaway slave Jim comes off as a caricature and the heavy use of the word “nigger” is still a tough issue today.

But over time and many readings, the consensus grew to see the novel as incredibly anti-racist, vilifying the communities that owned slaves and raised children to morally accept it.

The world could easily have shrugged *Huck Finn* aside after its publication, and the book wouldn't be seen as the achievement it is today. But the test of time proved it a classic and a high contender for the Great American Novel. It's unfair to compare classics like *Huck Finn* to most modern novels because contemporary fiction doesn't have the volumes of in-depth analysis *Huck* has.

It took decades for *The Great Gatsby* to gain the legendary status it has today, and *A Confederacy of Dunces* was published posthumously long after John Kennedy Toole's suicide. We will not know what novels will define our generation, just as peo-

ple didn't know how *Huck Finn* would be remembered a century ago.

But even so, is it worth throwing a fit over people reading paperback romance novels rather than complex contemporary fiction? Should we care when *Twilight* sells more than a Murakami novel?

Many people believe that people shouldn't sweat over books that don't strive for greatness. The popular novelist Stephen King calls himself “the literary equivalent of a Big Mac and fries.”

During a recent appearance at Hartford's Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts, King explained that he dislikes people who willingly avoid the kind of pop-literature that often includes his own work. He compared those people with children who try to keep different types of food on their plate from touching.

Sculptor Joe Keo brought insight, pointing out that art is a business just like anything else. An artist, Keo said, is more than a pretentious person wearing a beret.

An artist is anyone, and the few artists that become household names are incredibly uncommon.

An actor isn't only those seen on the Hollywood screen or Broadway stage, either. There are thousands of actors trying to make a living doing what they love.

To bash books that become financial successes despite sub-par quality is to put up an imaginary distinction that does not exist.

One of Mark Twain's primary focuses when writing was to make money.

In an 1887 letter to William Dean Howells, Twain wrote, “High and fine literature is wine, and mine is only water; but everybody likes water.”

Had it been impossible to make money from book sales, we wouldn't have James Patterson OR Mark Twain.

Time sorts out the imbalances we observe in present-day art. You likely don't know the name of the novel that will be known as this generation's greatest literary achievement. That book will be analyzed and read extensively in literary journals and English classes everywhere.

50 Shades broke sales records, but that won't go on forever. As long as you wait it out, you will find the early 21st century's Great American Novel, but for now, don't sweat about it.

The Irresistible Allure of the Bad Boy

By Meaghan Szilagi
Writing Apprentice
Twain Studios

Bad boys. They are the stereotypes that plague our dreams. But what defines a bad boy?

It seems that each individual has his or her own impression of what a bad boy is.

The most common characteristics of a “bad boy” are exactly what you would think. He lives off adrenaline and risk, he wears a leather jacket, he drives a motorcycle without a helmet, he wears dark shades, he sleeps around, he smokes, and he has tattoos.

Let’s give this bad boy a name. Seth. Perfect.

What about this bad boy image makes girls and guys so blind and infatuated? In my opinion, it depends on the person.

There’s the people pleaser. Let’s name this person Jordan. Jordan will do whatever it takes to get into a person’s good graces. She gets so involved in what people need her to be that she spends almost no time taking care of herself.

People pleasers don’t have their own personalities. Their own opinions are stuffed and buried deep inside them because of their need to be what people need them to be. They get lost in a sea of perspectives that aren’t their own.

Stick up for yourself, Jordan. Sing your own song, not the song everybody else wants you to sing.

Next there’s the rebel, Riley. Riley lives for risk. Hot guy on a motorcycle? Of course he’s going to want to be with him. All the drugs and drinking and other reckless behaviors are what attracted Riley to Seth in the first place.

Riley believes that he can handle anything, no matter what the cost and Seth wants to see just how far he’s willing to go.

Taylor is a scapegoat and always feels guilty about doing or not doing something. If she ends up with Seth, she’ll never leave him because if she did, she would feel like a terrible person. So when Seth asks Taylor for something like sex, she isn’t going to say no.

Does she want to try some LSD with him? Why not? Taylor thinks that saying no would ruin their relationship. Long story short, her life will be spent circling the drain because she just can’t say no.

Last but not least, there’s the enabler, Leslie. Leslie is a fixer. He sees Seth and thinks, *He just needs a little bit of lovin’!*

But in reality, the bad boy doesn’t want to be fixed. He just wants a new toy to flaunt. Leslie never hesitates to make excuses for Seth whether it be to his family, friends or even his boss.

What driving force has infected the human race to idolize bad boys like Seth? It could be about the chase, the bad-ass reputation, the need to put someone back together, or maybe there’s just something in the water.

***Stick up for
yourself, Jordan.
Sing your own
song.***



Meaghan Szilagi and Ambriel Johnson show their allegiance to the Twain Gang, choosing sides in a friendly summertime arts rivalry.

Mark Twain: Working Class Hero and Capitalist Protégé

By Molly Miller
Writing Apprentice
Twain Studios

Between his lavish Nook Farm home and his reckless business ventures, Mark Twain could easily come across as a greedy capitalist, a man who could care less about the thousands of workers who could lose their jobs to the Paige Compositor, so long as it could keep his wallet fat.

In *Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain*, Justin Kaplan wrote that Twain signed an agreement in 1889 which bound him to paying James W. Paige about \$160,000, plus \$25,000 a year for 17 years, in exchange for all rights in the compositor, which Twain referred to as “a magnificent creature.”

Twain thought the machine would give returns of about \$55 million a year.

The Paige Compositor did not pay off as Twain thought it would; instead, it left him bankrupt.

And though Twain did work his way out of bankruptcy by giving lectures and writing novels, he also got by with a little help from his friends in high places.

Henry Huttleston Rogers, for instance, helped bail Twain out of his typesetter troubles. Rogers was a chief architect of the Standard Oil trust, and despite Rogers’ questionable business practices, Kaplan wrote that Twain called him “the only man I care for in the world; the only man I would give a damn for.”

In fact, Twain admired Rogers for his faults.

“He’s a pirate all right, but he owns up to it and enjoys being a pirate,” said Twain. “That’s the reason I like him.”

Kaplan wrote that steel industrialist Andrew Carnegie spoke about

Twain’s recovery in terms of admiration and approval: “Our friend entered the fiery furnace a man, and emerged a hero.”

It may not be accurate to describe Mark Twain as a friend, or even a member of the elite.

“There were definitely people in Hartford who looked down on him because he came from a different area,” said Patti Philippon, chief curator of The Mark Twain House & Museum.

Twain saw himself as a working class hero, and probably a self-made man. He did his part as a writer and lecturer to elevate the workers and denounce the management, but he never put his money where his mouth was.

Twain married into and lived among the upper-middle class, but he still had to work to gain approval.

He was less of a friend, and more of a protégé.

Twain took the advice and earned the approval of the great robber barons, and had a hard time turning down get-rich-quick schemes.

And yet in March, 1886 at the Monday Evening Club, in the company of the most distinguished gentlemen in Hartford, Twain spoke of the worker in high esteem, and condemned the capitalist.

“Who are the oppressors?” Twain asked, according to Philip S. Foner’s account in *Mark Twain: Social Critic*.

“The few: the king, the capitalist, and a handful of other overseers and superintendents. Who are the oppressed? The many: ... they that make the bread that the soft-handed and idle eat. Why is it right that there is not a fairer division of the spoil all around? Because the laws and constitutions have ordered otherwise.”

Twain valued the consent of the governed and the power of the workers.

“If the banded voters among a laboring kinship of 45 million persons shall speak out to the other 12 million or 15 million of a nation,” Twain continued, “and command that an existing system has in that moment, in an absolutely clear and clean and legal way, become an obsolete and vanished thing, then it has utterly ceased to exist.”

In fact, Twain’s Monday Evening manifesto almost sounded Marxist in its declaration of the inevitability of a revolution, once the superstructure falls away and the working class becomes aware of its destiny.

“When all ... the myriads of toilers in whom is slumbering the reality of that thing which you call Power ... when these rise ... a Nation has risen,” Twain is quoted as saying in Foner’s book. “The working millions, in all the ages, have been horses – were horses; all they needed was a capable leader to organize their strength and tell them how to use it, and they would in that moment be master.”

Privately, Twain wrote that men were “half murdered by overwork,” and condemned “capitalist-employers” who demanded that eight-hour work days should be voluntary, not mandated by legislation, according to Foner’s book.

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The Jakes learned a lot in their short time together. In the photo above, they're getting an eyeful of Joe Joiner's basement toy room at Immanuel Congregational Church during a morning of exploring the Nook Farm neighborhood. They heard from many guest speakers, including Donna Larcen, upper right, and Susan Campbell, lower left. They also learned about each other. Rae Martin and Cecilia Gigliotti interview each other in the lower right image.



Twain was Capitalist Protégé, Champion of the Worker

Continued from Page 23

In thought and word, Twain was a staunch supporter of the budding labor movement. According to Kaplan, he saw himself as a sans-culotte, fighting for the common man.

Twain saw himself as a working class hero, and probably a self-made man. He did his part as a writer and lecturer to elevate the workers and denounce the management, but he never put his money where his mouth was.

Instead, Twain put all of his money in the Paige Compositor, even though he knew that, if successful, the machine would put thousands of printers out of work.

He tried to research the membership and organization of printers' and compositors' unions, but Kaplan wrote that Twain did so through an intermediary to keep his name out.

Twain referred to capitalists as "oppressors." Yet when he tried to make millions off of the Paige Compositor, he relied on capitalists to help him pursue his dream.

He relied on their help again after the Paige Compositor left him bankrupt.

Information Age Cheapens American Language

By June Tran

Writing apprentice

Twain Studios

Americans are idiots. The land of America is home to the popular term “YOLO – you only live once” and the constant usage of hashtags and abbreviations.

We Americans are at the pinnacle of bad grammar and spelling. As demonstrated by the daily tweets spewed out by our regular Twitter addicts, the American language has taken a turn for the worse.

Going back more than a century to the time of literary giants Mark Twain and Harriet Beecher Stowe,



Christine Stuart

we see a different type and view of the American language.

Twain, a celebrated American author, completely changed the way the rest of the world viewed the American language.

Patti Philippon, chief curator of The Mark Twain House & Museum, said what really elevated and characterized Twain’s and the American language was his use of “slangs and colloquialisms.”

Twain had the ability to put into words the way that people sounded, presenting the American language as something that is syntactically beautiful and admirable.

The act of crafting a piece of writing was not only practiced by Twain or by the esteemed classes – craftsmanship can be seen even in letters written by everyday civilians or even soldiers.

“People took time with their language and speech,” said Steve Courtney, publications editor at The Mark Twain House & Museum. Back then, he said, people would write 15 pages and take their time crafting it.

With the introduction of mass media technology during the 21st century, letters were replaced by a faster and more efficient medium of communication.

News surrounding a recent event can be received and understood by people in seconds.

Twitter, with its 140-character limit, emphasizes the need to be succinct and to the point.

Information utilized and passed by these sources, however, isn’t always informed and correct.

What is more striking than the degradation of the American language is the abuse of information by the media.

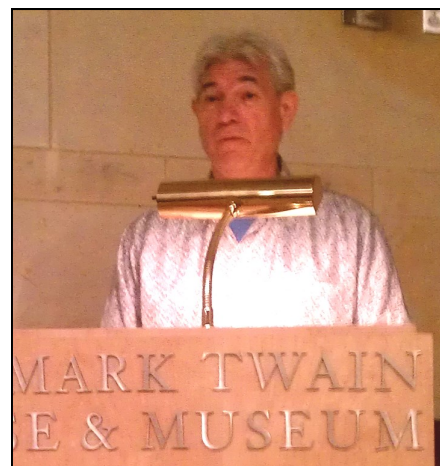
Twain praised the American press in a letter to British poet and cultural critic Matthew Arnold penned in the late 1880s, writing, “Its frank and cheerful irreverence is by all odds the most valuable quality it possesses.”

But there is a fine line between worthy and unworthy news.

As described by Donald Bliss in his book *Mark Twain’s Tale of Today: Haley’s Comet Returns — Celebrated Author Critiques American Politics*, “like the newspaper of Twain’s time ... there are lots of opinions and little fact-

investigations. The more negative and sensational the opinion, the higher the ratings and advertising revenues.”

For serious journalists such as Christine Stuart, the editor of *CTNewsJunkie*, “being credible is more important than being timely.”



Joe Nunes

The language itself does not merely have to confine to a specific style or structure, but must exude the truth to its readers.

All writing, especially in journalism, will eventually shape the public opinion.

Writing something with a “purpose [is what] makes it all worthwhile,” said Joseph Nunes, a former editor at *The Hartford Courant* who is writing a book about the history of the newspaper.

Language would have no purpose as a method of communication if its receiver does not learn anything from it.

Learning is useless, Mark Twain wrote in his 1900 essay, “English as She Is Taught,” if the students’ memories “had been stocked but not their understanding.”

Connecticut Journalists in Stephen King's Company



The morning after his appearance at the Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts, author Stephen King toured the Mark Twain House. He stopped to greet some of the apprentices from Twain Studios on his way out. From left, Rae Martin, King, Molly Miller, June Tran, Grant Henry, Ashaya Nelson, Jahyra White and Indira Senderovic.

By Grant Henry Writing Apprentice Twain Studios

Just as author Stephen King finished his tour of the legendary Mark Twain House & Museum Friday morning, a waiting pack of eager young journalists was ready to pounce.

When King paused on the way to his car to say hello, the writing apprentices of Neighborhood Studio's "Write to the Point!" program each took turns feeling the worn fingers

that brought the world over 50 thrilling novels.

This certainly wasn't the first time King has shaken the hands of fans in Hartford. Just last night he joined NPR radio host Colin McEnroe for a dialogue at the Bushnell Theater.

King discussed his life and opinions to a packed house that laughed and cheered at every remark and reference the author made. The show, as entertaining as it was, had a very human goal: all the profits went straight to The Mark Twain House & Museum.

King was set to arrive at the Twain House for a reception Thursday afternoon. An incredible excitement filled the air, and questions flew in the minds as everyone anticipated his arrival.

"What if he's in the parking lot?"
"Do you think I'll get to talk to him?"

Josh Hanagarne, a bodybuilding librarian visiting the museum, had the honor of having lunch with King. Everyone was jealous. All the adrenaline pumping through the staff's thinking caps could only be rivaled by the

Continued on Page 27

Stephen King is ‘Fretfully Normal’

By Rae Martin
Writing Apprentice
Twain Studios

The thoroughly publicized Stephen King - Colin McEnroe interview at the Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts on Thursday succeeded in packing the house and raising lots of money for the Mark Twain House & Museum.

Everyone shuffled to their seats; some dressed to the nines, others, not quite.

The place itself was well designed, as many old buildings tend to be. Priceless architecture, beautiful ceilings, 1930s styled seating, and an atmosphere completed by a prestigious place across the plaza from the state Capitol.

McEnroe finally came on stage after Gregory Boyko, chairman of the Twain House board of trustees, ended his placid prologue full of classic Twain quotes such as, “High and fine literature is wine, and mine is only water, but everybody likes water.”

Following McEnroe came the big man himself, Stephen King. They both sat and began to talk. And talk. And talk. His personality, a bit like that of a rock star, and the mythos of King and his works kept the crowd enthralled.

The most intriguing thing wasn’t so much what King said – though he was often funny – was just how fretfully normal he seemed. Put his fame aside



Rae Martin shakes hands with Stephen King as Molly Miller and June Tran look on.

and you get a roughly average Joe.

Unfortunately, this seems to be the reality of most “celebrities,” and discovering this hard truth nearly detracted from the experience. Nearly, but not quite, as a story still came from the evening and from a later, personal encounter with him.

“Personal encounter” is actually a major over-exaggeration. As King came from his Friday morning tour of the Twain House, my workshop group and I stood in his way, fawning over his performance from the night before. If we hadn’t, he would have been

able to circumvent us completely.

Truth be told, I was a bit anxious about pestering the man for an autograph – keep in mind that was my main goal – but he seemed to find the group’s attention cute enough to come over, shake our hands, say hi and take a few pictures.

He must be very used to these things by now, which is why he was so very courteous about all of it.

My mouth opened to ask for a signature when King said, “I gotta jet,” a simple sentence to represent the underwhelming nature of it all.

Writing Apprentices Get a Quick Moment With Author Stephen King

Continued from page 26

enormous standing ovations the crowd of thousands gave King at the Bushnell later that night.

A photograph produced itself on the Twain House facebook page mid-day; a picture of the King himself signing books in one of the museum offices! He’s here!

All the young journalists diligently working on independent projects could do was wait for their own shining mo-

ment with the author. It did not come until the day after his stellar performance, though.

King was on a tight schedule before he had to return to Maine, but he made sure to first tour the home where Mark Twain lived. When he emerged from the historic home, the writing apprentices greeted him.

Dressed casually in a red sweater, King gave the grinning young journalists a moment to remember before he said he had to “jet” and return to his comfortable home in Maine to continue spooking audiences everywhere.

World's Strongest Librarian Shares Love Story

By Ashaya Nelson
Writing Apprentice
Twain Studios

"Twitch! Twitch! Twitch!" the crowd screamed when high school freshman Josh Hanagarne stood at the free throw line.

The game depended on him making the shot.

Hanagarne, who had physical and vocal tics that would later be identified as Tourette Syndrome, stood in front of the basket with tears running down his face.

The ball made it into the basket and his team went home with a win. But he didn't leave without flipping off the crowd.

Hanagarne shares his story with people all around the world.

He visited the Mark Twain House & Museum Thursday to talk about his book, *The World's Strongest Librarian: A Memoir of Tourette's, Faith, Strength, and the Power of Family*.

Hanagarne, a bodybuilder, said he learned a lot about himself by writing a memoir.

"Wasn't trying to be a writer, this never was supposed to happen," said Hanagarne.

Now a librarian in Salt Lake City,

Hanagarne always was engrossed in books, and as a kid, tried to find the largest book to read.

He read his first Stephen King book in fifth grade and though his mother banned King's book from their home, he continued to sneak them in.

Now, Hanagarne said, he barely sleeps, reading a book each day.

The night of that basketball game, Hanagarne asked his parents what was wrong with him, and he got the diagnosis of Tourette's.

During his childhood, it wasn't a big deal, he said. In eighth grade it became vocal, and he began to get bullied. As he got older, his condition worsened, and even became violent.

Trying to hold in his Tourette's, he said, "feels like that most intense sneeze."

A mysterious man had an impact on his life. Adam T. Glass, a U.S. Air Force veteran who suffered a brain crushing injury, helped him learn to move his body in ways that

brought relief.

Hanagarne explained that Glass could somehow see where the pain came from in someone's body, and how to fix it. Glass helped Hanagarne by having him use a five-pound dumbbell, and by moving his wrist.

Today, Hanagarne is a happy family man. He said his mother came home from church one day and told him she'd found the perfect wife for him. When he met his wife, he could barely speak.

She did not hear his true voice until eight months after their wedding.

After trying for years to have a child, they had Max.



Librarian Josh Hanagarne talks with apprentices

Challenge of Tourette's Didn't Stop Him

By Jahyra White
Writing Apprentice
Twain Studios

Librarian Josh Hanagarne went through a lot in his childhood, but still managed to make it.

In elementary school, Hanagarne was performing in a class play and noticed that something was wrong. But it wasn't until high school that doctors diagnosed him with Tourette Syndrome, a neuro-

logical disorder characterized by involuntary tics and vocalizations.

According to Hanagarne, Tourette's is just like a sneeze – hard to keep inside – but it's an everyday thing and it happens all the time.

In school, he was bullied for his Tourette's outbursts.

Hanagarne is used to his Tourette's and he doesn't seem to think he's any different from anyone else, but his story gets better.

When he met his wife after high school, she became the love of his life.

It's hard to imagine being married to someone who has Tourette's but his wife told him all of that didn't matter.

A couple of years go by and they decide that they want to have a kid. After trying unsuccessfully and being told they couldn't conceive, they had a baby.

Now they have a healthy five-year-old son named Max.

Bermuda Governor Reclaims Twain

By Writing Apprentices

Twain Studios

Hoping to rebuild the historic connection between the North American east coast and his island home, Bermuda Governor George Fergusson said Tuesday that he wants to host an exhibit featuring Mark Twain's ties to the islands.

Twain "did Bermuda a good turn," said Fergusson, in a visit to The Mark Twain House & Museum in Hartford.

The American author traveled to Bermuda 10 to 20 times and wrote enthusiastically about the islands during his lifetime. Fergusson said that he hopes the exhibit will bring variety to the tourism that already exists in Bermuda.

"Bermuda is a place to go not just for a nice beach, but if you're interested in history, military fortifications, birdlife," said Fergusson. "Bermuda's



While visiting The Mark Twain House & Museum, Bermuda Governor George Fergusson and his wife Margaret stopped at Twain Studios to talk with the apprentices. Photo by Molly Miller.

only two hours away and close to your culture here."

Twain wasn't the only artistic superstar to visit the islands. Bermuda hosted a plethora of artists such as James Bond novelist Ian Fleming and painter Winslow Homer.

Princess Louise of Ottawa, Canada, a member of the British royal family and

Twain's contemporary, started tourism in Bermuda, said Fergusson, when she began visiting the islands in the winter.

Bermuda's balmy climate must have seemed like a welcome departure from the cold weather of Ottawa, Fergusson said.



After Bermuda's governor left, the apprentices worked together on a story about his visit.

'Best Song Ever' Lives Up To the Hype

By Cecilia Gigliotti
Writing Apprentice
Twain Studios

Prepare yourselves for the "Best Song Ever."

It's here! July 22, dubbed "1D Monday," was the day 18,911,507 Facebook fans and countless offline Directioners had long awaited.

Six teaser trailers, many image excerpts, and probably 50 anticipation-filled Facebook posts later, One Direction's new single, "Best Song Ever," premiered, complete with an "oh oh oh, yeah yeah yeah" chorus and a hilarious, high-energy music video.

The hysteria-inducing British-Irish quintet and their headquarters (1DHQ) have, in my opinion, milked the whole release for more than it's worth. For example, they reposted the video today at 12:18 p.m., provided viewing and downloading links, and teased their American fans, "USA! 45 mins to go until we hit 24 hours on the 'Best Song Ever' video premiere."

Forty-five minutes until the video has been around for *one day*. Really?

But all the hype works. Crushing waves of "Directioners" flock to their concerts, their every Facebook post gets tens of thousands of likes in mere minutes, and they've wormed their way into teenage small talk and casual conversation.

All the hype works. Crushing waves of "Directioners" flock to their concerts, their every Facebook post gets tens of thousands of likes in mere minutes.

We apprentices at Twain Studio have found ourselves comparing the 1D boys and discussing the quality of their music over lunch. And although I would not call myself a die-hard Directioner, I find their songs catchy and sing-along-able and I think they've got some great ideas, many of which are exemplified in the "Best Song Ever" video.

First off, I love the concept of the opening two-minute skit: two fast-paced Hollywood producers, supported by a wacky production team, bent on making money and winning lots of awards with a movie star-



ring our favorite guys. This satire is helped along by the members of 1D playing all the roles: Louis and Niall as the producers; Zayn as "The Sexy Secretary" in wig, skirt, and heels; Harry as "Marcel," the nerdy marketing manager; and Liam as "Leroy," the peppy and flamboyant choreographer.

It's hilarious, and it shows that they can poke fun at their own industry, that they're aware of the ridiculousness surrounding them as pop stars, that they know their own minds. The whole scene is a wonderful hook. And it made me like the song more.

Then they all shed their disguises and rock out – although the alter-egos do make funny reappearances throughout. And Harry gets rather, erm, close to the "secretary" at times. The rest of the video, once the song actually starts, consists of footage of the boys hanging, running, jumping, and dancing around in their trademark fashion.

It might be rather less compelling, but the energy of the opening scene and the song carried me through and kept me singing along.

All this is merely a glimpse of what's coming in the band's first big movie, *One Direction: This is Us*, set to come out later this year. I do believe this is one I – and all you readers – will have to see.

How *Not* to Fail a Job Interview

By Alan Burkholder

Writing Apprentice

Twain Studios

Facts are facts. And the fact of the matter is, finding a good job is hard to do these days. However, simply finding the job is still less hard than getting it.

Almost everyone has to go through the usual song and dance of “find the job, contact the employer, arrange an interview, get the job, celebrate and profit.” But not many people know how to do the dance. As a result, not a lot of people actually get to the last step.

In order to help future generations of kids not end up stranded on the side of the road and living in a one-floor cardboard apartment, the state Department of Labor presented a two-point-five-hour lecture on landing a job, with the help of career development specialist Gordon Gross.

With the help of a manual that he admitted was a little out of date – no manual nowadays makes use of the word “typewriter” – Gross gave the basics of what makes a good resume to young Neighborhood Studios apprentices.

According to Gross, a good resume should have your contact information, a list of job experiences and skills, at least three good references (meaning, not your family and friends), your education-based qualifications, and what exactly you plan to do at your potential new company.

Whatever you put on a resume, you must make sure that it’s unique, relevant, easy to read, eye-grabbing and free of mistakes. The top two causes of death among resumes are from com-

plications due to typos and grammar errors.

In addition, the apprentices got some advice about what to do in an interview, or rather what not to do. It’s always easier to restrict something than to mandate it, after all.

Number one: Don’t show up underdressed or naked. This will cause the interviewer to not take you seriously, or possibly call security.

Number two: Turn off your phone. If it accidentally goes off during the in-



The Department of Labor’s Gordon Gross coached apprentices about job hunting.

terview, apologize and take a moment to turn it off. If it vibrates instead of ringing, don’t let the interviewer know. Just excuse yourself so you can take care of the twitch in your leg.

Number three: Don’t doze off or nap while the interviewer is talking. This means that your pillow, blanket and teddy bear must stay at home.

Number four: Get to the point. The interviewer wants to get through this just as quickly as you do, so don’t bore them to death with that story about your dog. It wasn’t funny the first time you told it, so why would it be funny the next time?

Number five: Don’t get nervous. No matter what happens, try to stay calm and relaxed, because no one likes sweat. It looks gross and it stinks up the entire room when you do it. And then you have to go shower and wash your suit.

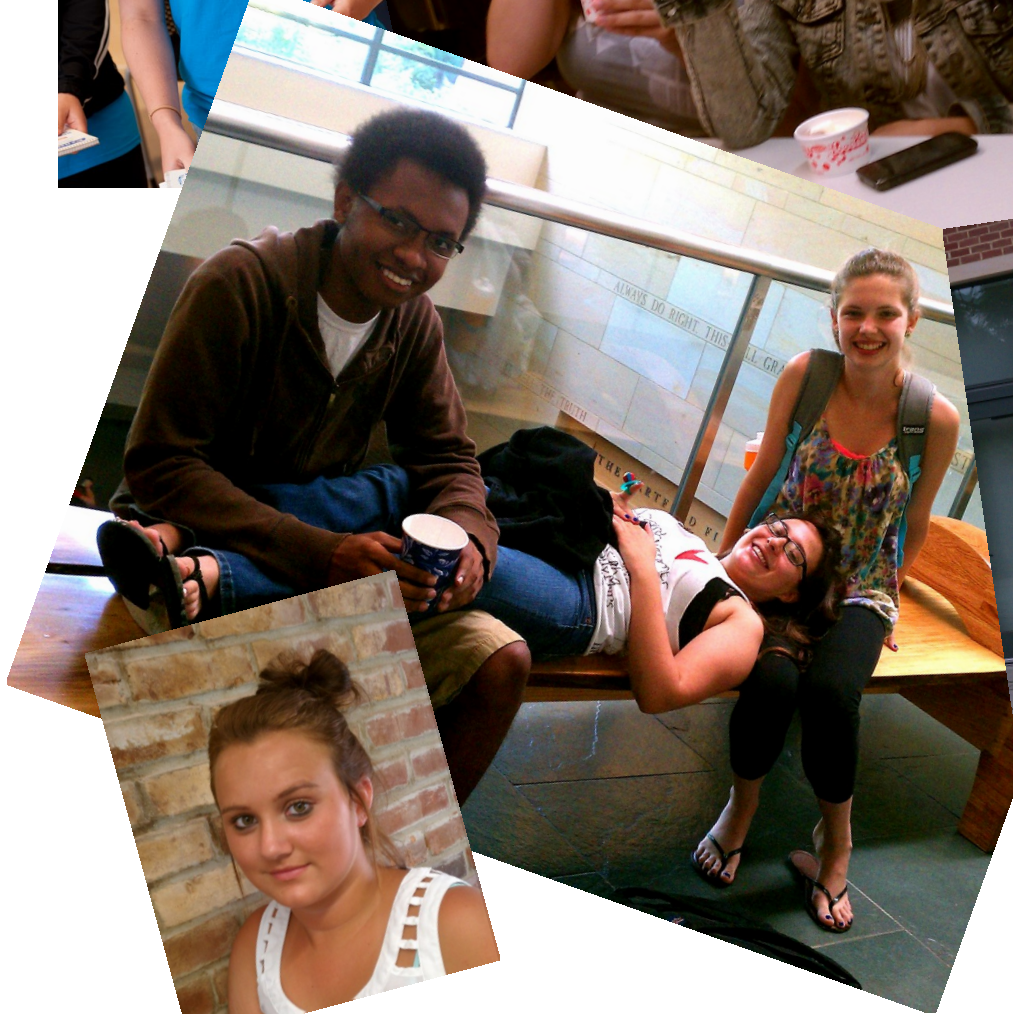
Number six: Make sure that you thank the interviewer for his time. If you don’t show that you appreciate his time, he’s going to think you’re a jerk. So be nice.

Number seven: always have a copy

or five of your resume on hand. You never know if it might get stolen, damaged or worse: edited with a pen.

Follow these rules of the ramble and the resume and you’ll be on your way to having that job you always wanted, that job you kind of thought about wanting once, or the job you don’t really want but you’re going to take anyway because the pay is good. Whatever the case, you’re going to need to know what not to do.

Sarcasm aside, the talk was very helpful. Kids do need to know how to conduct themselves, both in and out of the workplace. After all, the first step to getting a job that you’re happy with is making your employer happy first.



Ugandan Photojournalist Works With Youth

Gilbert Goes Global to Act Local

By Grant Henry and June Tran

Writing Apprentices

Twain Studios

Americans have an abundance of education, information and resources, a Ugandan photojournalist said in a recent presentation at the Mark Twain House & Museum.

Gilbert Daniel Bwette, 24, offered insight on the contrast between American and Ugandan cultures, starting with schooling.

In Uganda, there is no free public education for children, Bwette said, adding that his grandfather paid for him to attend school.

Bwette was amazed at the opportunities Americans have, especially young people.

In Uganda, primary education is not regulated by the government, he said, and often the teachers and funds are not provided, leading to a discrepancy between the private and public sectors.

Bwette said it's difficult for students to obtain resources and job opportunities. Only about 35 percent of those who graduate from high school or who have a college degree will get a job, he said.

After completing high school, Bwette spent two years struggling to figure out what he wanted to do with his life.

This was not the first hurdle Bwette faced in his educational career. He said that during high school there were times he failed or when it felt like "it's not really worth it."

Eventually, he met the celebrity hip hop artist Babaluku, and became "connected" to him. It was this connection which inspired him to finish school and aim for an artistic career.

Bwette, who got involved in the Connecticut-based non-profit Youth Journalism International during this time, chose to be a photojournalist as opposed to the three ideal careers in Uganda: a doctor, lawyer or engineer.

Although he said his mother "almost slapped" him when he told her his plans to pursue photography, he wasn't scared of the limited income that his path would take him.

Bwette traveled to the United States as a youth presenter at a hip hop conference in Washington, D.C.

There are Ugandans who aren't as lucky as Bwette, he said. An economic motivation sometimes isn't a strong enough catalyst for these youths to push themselves in education.

According to Bwette, there is a rudimentary class division between those that are in power in the Ugandan government and average citizens who are simply trying to make ends meet.

In his work with the Ugandan youth, Bwette helps expose young people to a variety of careers that would afford them a better income while also contributing to their communities.

Gilbert Bwette of Kampala, Uganda, a photojournalist with Youth Journalism International and a youth activist in the African hip hop community, gave a presentation at The Mark Twain House & Museum about his work with youth.



Stowe's Skillful Balancing Act

By **Ambriel Johnson**

Writing Apprentice

Twain Studios

Harriet Beecher Stowe, born June 14, 1811, was always a balancer.

From the day this great American novelist was born until she died on July 1, 1896, she was always searching for a way to balance her work with other important things.

Whether it was finding a way to spend more time with her children, paint, or work on her now-world-famous novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe always strived for a balance. She sought a way to do her best in anything and everything she did.

This author is not only known for her book which changed the face of America forever, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, but other bestselling novels such as *Oldtown Folks* and *The Minister's Wooing*.

As most Americans probably know already, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* expressed Stowe's opposition to slavery. Not all people in Stowe's time agreed with this view, however, and she became despised by many.

This hatred never stopped her from writing. Stowe enjoyed the craft; she wrote her entire life, from childhood until her death.

Stowe sometimes used writing as a way to escape her life when things got rough. Her beautiful Connecticut mansion wasn't always a place of comfort as it is talked about. She lost more than one of her children at a young age and used her writing as a way to deal with the sadness.

She enjoyed art almost as much as she enjoyed her writing. Her paintings are prominently displayed at her home in Hartford, Connecticut, where she moved with her husband and children in 1873.

This extraordinary woman was not only the author of 30 books – one containing advice for homemakers – but a painter in her free time. She did most of this hobby painting while visiting her winter home in Mandarin, Florida. Connecticut became too cold for the Stowe family during the winter, so they spent the season in their Florida home.

It's obvious to visitors that Stowe enjoyed painting landscapes. The decorated hallways of her estate are lined with

her art. All the way from portraits to a number of still life paintings, Stowe did it all.

In the front parlor of her home, sophisticated pastels of garden life and country homes adorn the walls.

The home also includes paintings by at least one of Stowe's daughters, who were aspiring artists like their mother.

The front parlor is the space where the Stowe's guests would be entertained in the evenings. It is also the space where Stowe herself did most of her writing, at a small wooden desk tucked away in a corner.



The Harriet Beecher Stowe House on Forest Street

Her husband Calvin, a professor of religion, had his own study in the upstairs of their home, tucked between the bedrooms. Despite the fact that Stowe was wildly more successful than he, she was reduced to a microscopic desk in the family living room.

Stowe made more than \$1,000 on her first novel. In her time it was unusual for the woman of the house to make

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Stowe's Hartford House is a Real Home

Lina Allam

Writing Apprentice

Twain Studios

Upon entering the home of the famous author and wonderful mother Harriet Beecher Stowe, viewers can see the difference between a home and a house.

The Harriet Beecher Stowe home is nothing like the Mark Twain House. It depicts the nature of a woman who is both working on becoming one of the most elite authors of all time, and the typical wife and mother of her time.

Stowe had seven children, and only three outlived her. After the loss of her son Samuel Charles Stowe, who died at the age of two,



The Jakes paid a neighborly visit to the Harriet Beecher Stowe House on Nook Farm.

she began understanding the feeling and emotion a mother felt when they saw their child sold into slavery.

Her son's death became the inspiration for one of the most famous novels of all time: *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Uncle Tom's Cabin was widely read, becoming the second best seller of the time, second only to the Bible.

This novel portrayed slavery in its truest form instead of portraying the political and economic side of the inhumane act. Stowe portrays slavery as an inhuman, horrific act that must end.

She describes events in the novel as she saw them in real life. Because

this novel received worldwide attention, it helped strengthen the abolitionist movement.

The Duchess of Southerland was so inspired by this novel that she traveled all over Europe gathering over millions of signatures from women who agreed with abolitionists and encouraged them to continue their work.

Stowe wrote 30 books in 30 years, and completed multiple paintings, including some of magnolias, since she said this flower was like her: strong in the roots.

Today the Harriet Beecher Stowe House, where Stowe retired, is a museum dedicated to the works of this acclaimed author.

Author and Mother Harriet Beecher Stowe Was An Early Multi-Tasker

Continued from page 34

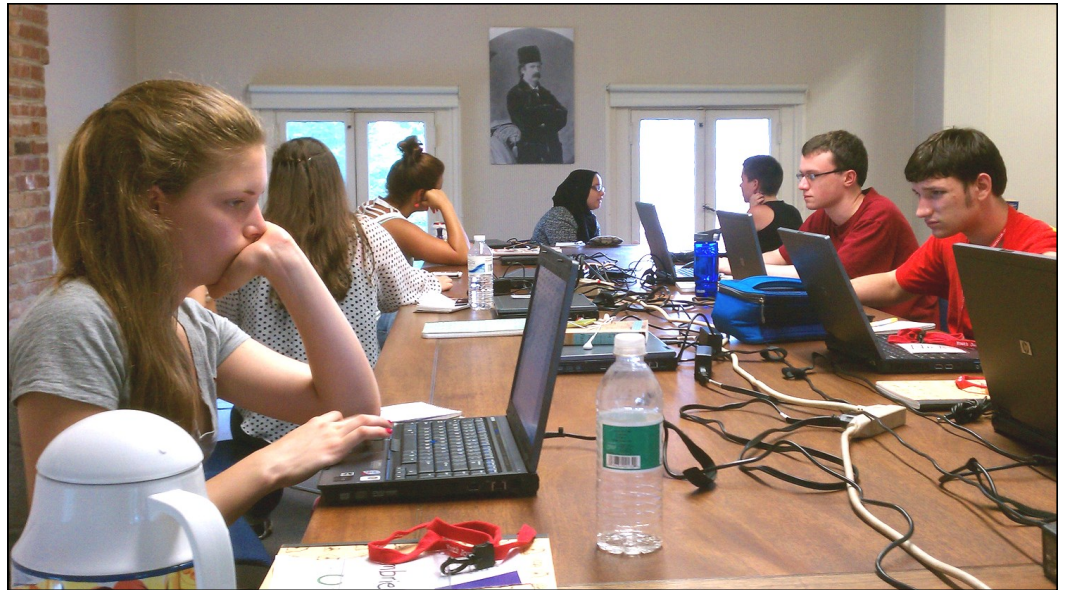
more money than the man, however Stowe's husband was very supportive of her career.

Stowe's family spent time together in the back parlor of her home. This room included many extravagant decorations, including a painting given to Stowe by a duchess who was a big fan of Stowe's work.

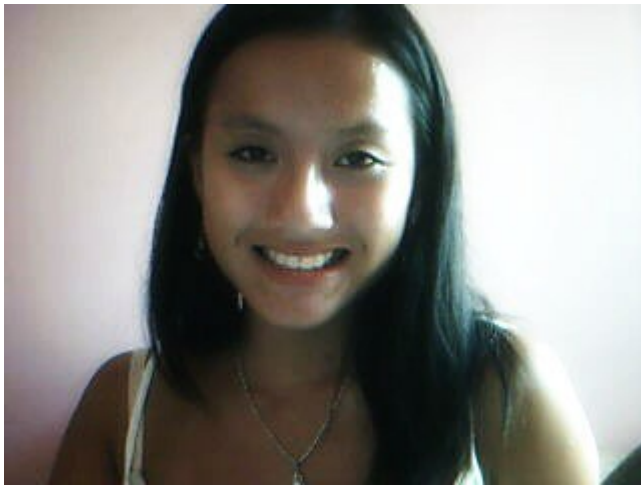
Stowe was sometimes forced to give up time when she could be working on her art to pursue other things. After all, she did have seven children. This did not stop her from becoming a great American novelist, a role model for writers and an icon for all people.

Stowe, who expertly balanced her work and busy family life in her marvelous Hartford home, will forever have an impact on our world.

The Jakes at Work



Meet The Jakes, the Writing Apprentices of Twain Studios



Born in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam in 1996, June Tran immigrated to the United States in August 2004 and is currently living in Central Connecticut. June attended South Windsor High School, where she received accolades such as the Academic Award of Excellence, the Interact Club's Community Services Award, and the Rotary Club Award of Merit. In addition, Tran spent a lot of her time volunteering as a mentor in the

JUMPSTART Mentoring Program and as a summer

June Tran

volunteer at St. Francis Hospital. Despite her busy schedule with extracurricular activities and Advance Placement classes,

June found time to participate in sports as a Junior Varsity indoor and outdoor track runner and thrower. Other than on the outdoor tracks, June can be spotted in the school library shelving books or working with the preschool students. Tran is spending this summer as a writing apprentice at The Mark Twain House & Museum. As a rising senior, she will be beginning the process of applying to college. She hopes to stay in the New England area and major in biochemistry. Inspired by a family friend whose work with wounded veterans changed lives through reconstructive surgery, June intends to pursue a dentistry career in maxillofacial prosthetics.

Born in Hartford Connecticut, Jahyra White has lived her whole life in the state capital. At 16 years old, she currently attends Global Communications Academy. Though her parents split up when she was five years old, she still manages to stay close to her father. She feels as if she's been moving from house to house all her life, whether it be staying at the home of her grandma, dad and mom. Her parent's names are Jason White and Cerice Collins. Jahyra has one brother who is three, Kameron Willson. She also has one older sister who is 20 years old. Her name is Quanesha

Jahyra White

Terry and she and Jahyra are always bickering; they are like cats and dogs and can never get along.

Though Neighborhood Studios Jahyra would like to make connections with new people, learn the importance of being part of a group that shares her passion for art. She wants to be a team player, which will help her in the future when she uses these skills in college. Jahyra has the exuberance and dedication to push herself and those around her to succeed.

Jahyra would like to take a new look at the different areas of art that she hasn't experienced yet. Jahyra wants to get out of her comfort zone and meet new challenges that she cannot get at her high school. She expects to broaden her awareness of the world of the arts, which is where she intends to be after high school. Her goal is to leave this program enriched with the experience of creative writing and journalism and to make connections with new people. When Jahyra's not writing, she's usually taking pictures or babysitting.





Born in and raised in Wethersfield, Connecticut, Meaghan Szilagy had always been a happy child. Then, at the age of 13, she went through a difficult time. The fact that people had feelings, in her mind, made them vulnerable to being taken advantage of and getting hurt. She witnessed many bad things happen to good people. This made her see the world differently. Meaghan was scared to be herself, and she learned to develop a mask.

When Meaghan entered her freshman year of Wethersfield High School, she joined the Literary Magazine. This is a school club where artists and writers come together to share their work.

Meaghan Szilagy

Lit Mag gave Meaghan the creative space she needed to grow as a writer, as well as a person. She became more comfortable in her own skin.

Throughout high school, Meaghan has had many influential teachers but none as great as Cheryl Ryba, who was Meaghan's Humanities English teacher. During her time in Ryba's class, Meaghan came to appreciate writing and literature in a way she never had before. Meaghan was fascinated by Ryba's passion for teaching. Ryba is not afraid to fail when trying something new and Meaghan could not help but aspire to be like her teacher.

When Meaghan isn't writing, she is like any other girl. She can be found reading or spending time with her friends. Most people who know Meaghan know that she is never without her iPod. She is constantly finding new music artists or vloggers to follow.



The Jakes find another use for their reporter's notebooks when they take a break from writing for a few minutes of fun playing the balloon game.



What do you get when you take the writing style of Ernest Hemingway, the satire of Samuel Clemens, and the creative mentality of a hyperactive 10-year old? Chances are you'd get an incredibly odd person. In this case, you get Alan Burkholder.

Alan Burkholder, AKA Argo Brimstone, has many odd tastes and interests. He is a big fan of cartoons, rock music, junk food and a lot of other things that are "bad for you." He loves creating characters, telling jokes and bringing those characters to life however he can, whether it's through writing, art, music, or even acting.

Alan Burkholder

Alan is a recent graduate of Bristol Eastern High School, a great school with horrible students. He is currently preparing for the next semester at Boston University. He is studying communication and hopes to have some idea of what he's doing by the end of his first year.

Alan is a nice enough person if you get to know him well, and loves to crack wise about all sorts of topics. Nothing is sacred to him, but almost everything has merit. Alan often wonders to himself about

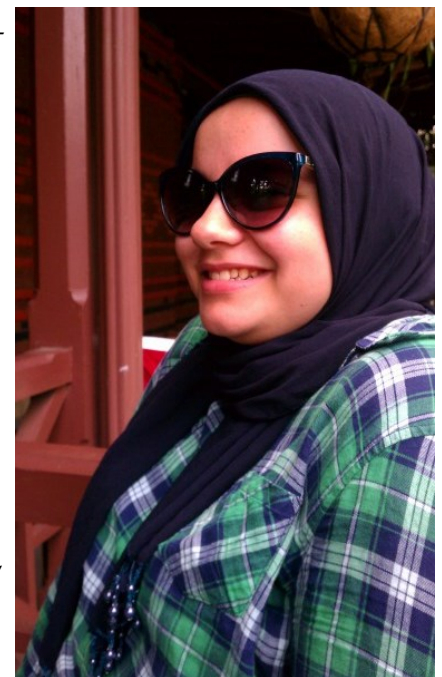
why subjects become taboo, and what he can do to talk about them in a way that people need to hear. His writing delivers a punch where the punch is needed and never apologizes for it. After all, if you don't offend somebody, you're doing it wrong.

In the end, all you really need to know about Alan is that he has a great sense of humor, is an extreme opportunity-taker, and always plays fast and loose with rules and conventions. He's not afraid to take the world head-on, and no matter what happens, he will always have something to say. And chances are, he'll probably say it just to make you laugh. You're welcome for that.

Born in 1996 in Quebec, Canada, Lina Allam wants to earn a doctoral degree in either biology or law. Allam studies at the Connecticut International Baccalaureate Academy, where she is working to gain both her high school diploma, as well as the International Baccalaureate Diploma, in an International Advanced Degree. Allam volunteers her extra hours at the Connecticut Children's Medical Center and a local soup kitchen. There she gained experience on communicating with children as well as working in an office environment.

Lina Allam

Allam earned honors throughout her high school education and takes part in Student Council, managing the school store, Interact, Class Interact Officer, Biology Club, and as advisor for the school's celebration of Chinese New Year. By working with different people, Allam has gained confidence and is able to speak in front of large audiences and is comfortable taking the lead of a challenging project. Allam is working on an extended thesis paper in biology, looking at different methods of helping Third World countries become less vulnerable to common diseases. Besides her interest in biology, law, and writing; she is also engrossed in photography, painting, and reading. Allam currently lives in Connecticut, and is fascinated by different cultures and languages. She has traveled to many countries, including Canada, Egypt, France, and all across the United States. She speaks fluent Arabic, English and a little French, Spanish, and Chinese. Allam likes to spend her extra hours reading or taking nice quiet walks along the beach.



As a kid growing up in Hartford, Conn, Molly Miller had many different ideas about what she wanted to be when she grew up. She wanted to be a marine biologist, a writer, a teacher, and a Boston Duck-Boat tour guide. All of these fields have at least one important aspect in common: communication. Molly's interest in being a writer, scientist, tour guide, and teacher stems from her passion for sharing information and stories. In order to pursue this passion as a career, she enrolled at the University of Connecticut as a pre-journalism major, and hopes to double-major in history, political science, or environmental studies.

Molly Miller

Molly is concerned by the scarcity of mainstream publications and news programs in which journalists report facts without any intention of skewing viewers' opinions. That being said, some of her favorite journalists and writers include Rachel Maddow, Matt Taibbi, and Chris Hayes, all of whom refuse to sacrifice their leftist slants for the sake of providing unbiased news. Molly thinks that these journalists provide fabulous insight on today's issues, but their insight means nothing to viewers or readers who have no idea what the Affordable Care Act consists of, or what the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt actually is. She wants to go into media because she wants to make details about legislation and international affairs more interesting and accessible.

In high school, Molly was a columnist, reporter, and editor-in-chief for her school newspaper, and she wrote articles for both the *Kingswood Oxford Alumni Magazine* and the *West Hartford News*. She was also the captain of the JV volleyball team and the co-president of the gay-straight alliance. She enjoys reading, running, acting, singing, and finding fantastic bargains at tag sales, and she is excited to continue writing this summer!



Ashaya Nelson intends to have a career in journalism. As a 17-year-old aspiring journalist, she looks forward to having her articles published in *Newsweek* and *The New York Times*. If you think Ashaya's missing, she's most likely at a mall, and Forever 21 might be the store you want to look first. Being interested in fashion, she would love to write for a fashion magazine like *Elle*.

Ashaya Nelson

Writing is the best way that Ashaya has found to express herself, because she can share both her feelings and views on world and local events. Creative writing is an outlet where she's not limited by the opinions of others. When writing, she loses awareness of her surroundings, and creativity takes control of her thoughts. After writing, her vibe improves. It feels as if her problems and thoughts are on that paper. She recommends journaling to her friends and family if there is something bothering them. They have also found that after journaling, they feel much better.

Her desire to become a writer began in freshman year of high school. She attends Metropolitan Learning Center in Bloomfield, CT. A friend suggested journalism as a possible career. When Ashaya's older brother Javon Turner passed away last year, writing helped her cope with the loss. Today she still writes to him about things that are going on in her life. Without the gift of writing, Ashaya would have probably kept her emotions bottled up to this day.

As an apprentice this summer, Ashaya is getting a taste of what journalists actually do and also hopes to improve her public speaking skills.



An aspiring writer and musician, Ambriel Felide Johnson was born Jan. 29, 1999 – two months late – a burden to her mother. Born and raised in the capitol of Connecticut, Ambriel has been living in this bustling city all her life. She resides with her family and a handful of red leghorn chickens right in her backyard, despite the fact that she does not like eggs. Ambriel graduated from Breakthrough Magnet School in 2013 where she won first place in the Science Fair for a project on cyber bullying. In the fall, she will attend high school at the Connecticut IB Academy in East Hartford, Connecticut. At the Academy, she will take college level courses to earn her IB (International Baccalaureate) diploma in addition to a high school diploma. Ambriel spends her time away from pen and paper playing clarinet.



Ambriel Johnson

Ambriel got her start as a musician in the school band, where she was part of the group that won first place in the Trills & Thrills Music Festival three years in a row. She intends to remain a part-time musician for the rest of her life. In her free time, Ambriel also enjoys skiing the glades at Sugarloaf Mountain, reading John Green novels, and playing soccer. Ambriel loves working with children. During her free time at school she volunteers as a teacher's assistant in pre-school classrooms.

Still, writing always comes first for Ambriel. This is her philosophy, something that she lives by. She got her love for this field from her grandparents who are both published authors, as well as from her favorite book, *The Fault in Our Stars*. She is currently honing her writing skills by working as an apprentice at The Mark Twain House & Museum. In the past she participated in the writing summer camp at Central Connecticut State University. Ambriel also received the highest writing prompt score out of her eighth grade class. Her favorite thing to write is short stories. She has one published in the Central Connecticut Writing Program Anthology. She plans to attend a four-year college, earn her master's degree and then her PhD in journalism. After this, she would like to start her own magazine geared towards teens, focusing on reviews of popular books and films. She is currently taking the first few steps to make this dream come true.

Grant Henry grew up in Connecticut. He tries to enjoy the world of art and media from any angle possible. Though his heart lies in the mediums of animation, film, comics, and video games, most of his experience lies in theater and music, having written and acted in a variety of plays. He also sings and plays piano in musicals and ensembles. In the fall he will head to Clark University. His high school years took place at Watkinson School in Hartford,

Grant Henry

Conn. As a writer he hopes to explore culture and sociology from a critical and personal perspective. He also likes to explore the different techniques and tools required when exploring different artistic mediums, such as cinematography in film or the flow of language in prose. If you asked him his favorite Pixar movie he would be a hipster and say *Ratatouille*. Among his many pet projects are thrillers of varying lengths and a 'rap musical' based on the television series *Breaking Bad*. He does not know where the future will take him, but it likely will be in academics or the performing/media arts.



Born into an age where vapid statements and shallow fancies were the norm, Rae Martin could never envision himself consigned to an existence revolving around the nine-to-five work schedule. To him, that way of life has always been the sickest of things. Not just the job, but the uniformity associated with it. He has also been known to dry heave at the idea that such a level of conformity is the ideal way to live in a nation supposedly as “free” as America.

Rae Martin

Writing happens to be one of the only things he has been able to outright call himself good at. It is the only occupation he can see himself in without the urge to quit overwhelming him every day that he is essentially asked to be happy, just for the chance to make someone else wealthier than him. He always wants to improve his craft, and if no one around him is willing or able to help him, he’ll do it himself, sticking to his regimen of one short story a week, with a few free-form poems on the side.

To Rae, writing is more than just a string of words on a piece of paper: it can speak to an existential sub-layer of the human consciousness. Both prose and poetry highlight aspects of the world around us that usually go ignored to the “regular” man, but Rae prefers to not judge others that way, because, after all, what defines regular? What defines normal? It has always amazed him how people judge others so quickly without an objective criteria on which to gauge each other.

Inspiration comes to him in many and all forms. Sitting on a bench during gym can lead to a poem or short story – many times both – even if they go unwritten. It



comes in the form of people as well, though not many of his inspirations are still living.

Charles Bukowski, Ernest Hemingway, Mark Twain, and William S. Burroughs all influence him in the creation of prose and poetry, though Bukowski has left the greatest impression. He had a certain sensitivity in his poetry and a unique, gritty, dark, and sometimes humorous perspective on the world in his prose that, while Rae doesn’t mean to copy, he can’t help but admire.

When he’s not writing, Rae can be found drinking coffee into the wee hours of the morning, usually for fun.

Cecilia Marie Gigliotti (as in *gelati*, a multitude of Italian ice creams) was devouring books by age two and soon after started scrawling down the stories in her head as well. The remaining time she spent riding the flowered horses at the Bushnell Park Carousel in Hartford, Connecticut. These hobbies have shaped the writer, singer, and thespian she is today. The combination of a sophomore year, week-long excursion to Italy, a summer in French Canada, two trips to Disney World, vacations in Cape Cod and Delaware, and frequent visits to family in the Midwest and D.C. area sparked her love for travel. She hopes to pursue a writing career that

Cecilia Gigliotti

will take her around the world; meanwhile, at home in New Britain, Connecticut, her Italian and Chinese studies have tided her over. She would especially like to see Paris, the city that spurred two of her favorite writers – Fitzgerald and Hemingway – on to greatness. She aspires for her work to reflect “a happy talent for composition and a remarkable felicity of expression” (John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 1776: *The Musical*). She has sung in school and church choirs since age seven – high school brought her to regional and statewide festivals and one East-Coast-wide treble choir – and has appeared in various theatrical productions since age nine. A recent graduate of New Britain High School, Cecilia is bound for Pennsylvania’s near-Amish country to answer the call of Susquehanna University as a creative writing and music double-major. Over this last summer before college, she plans to hone her journalism skills and expand her horizons beyond the realm of creative fiction.



Born in Switzerland but currently living in Wethersfield, Conn., Indira Senderovic attends Wethersfield High School, and has been in Wethersfield public school systems since third grade. Before that, she went to Naylor Elementary School in Hartford. Her grades weren’t perfect, but her English grade was always excellent. Her ninth grade teacher, Carrie Guarino, had a big impact on her. She was so tough on Indira that it made her persevere and work hard, which spurred a great interest in reading and writing. In Connecticut, Indira Senderovic wants to learn journalism and art but also very much enjoys music. She volunteered at the Keeney Museum of Arts in Old Wethersfield helping analyze and write about the art gallery and what she saw. Courteous and organized, she hopes to one day have an artistic family just like herself.



Indira grew up in a normal, five person family household where her parents taught her good morals: never give up, go to school and pursue a career in what you love.

Indira Senderovic

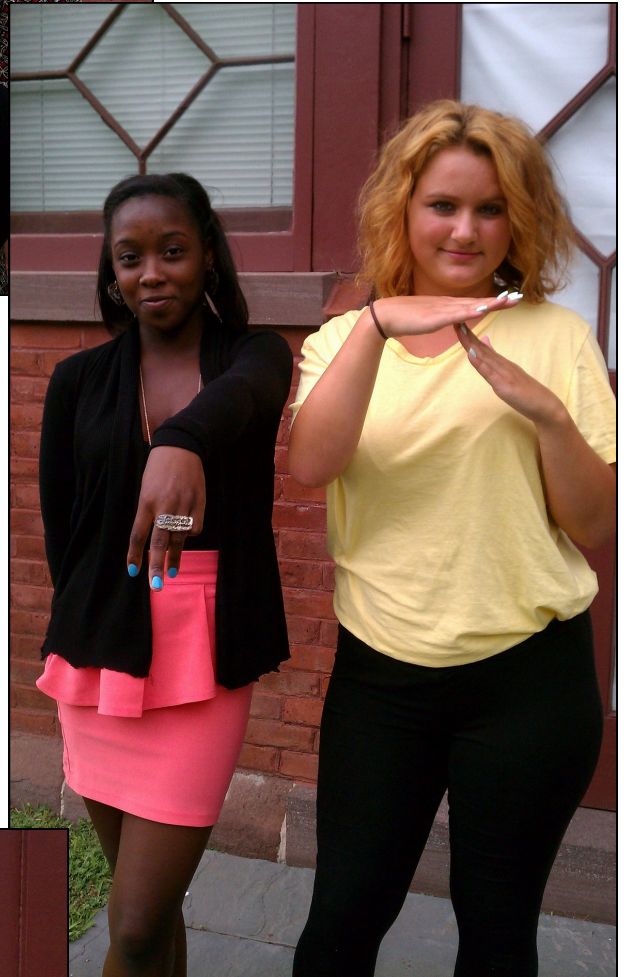
Every year she’d choose a music-related class for her elective. Indira played the violin from third grade till eighth grade. She highly enjoyed it and still till this day can pick up a violin and play a little song.

Art is a fascination to Indira. She’s traveled to many countries around the world. For example, she’s been to Italy, France, Switzerland, and Holland. So while you could say she’s seen a lot of different types of cultures and art around the world, Indira hopes to have many more chances to learn about art and grow as a writer.

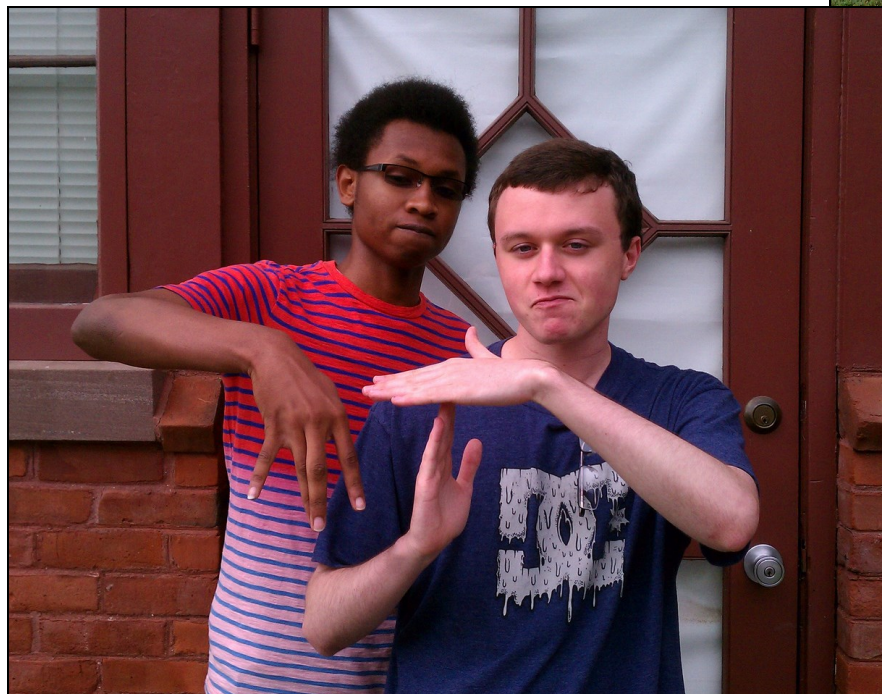
June Tran and Lina Allam



*Signing M & T, The Jakes Give
More Evidence That They're Part of*
The Twain Gang



Jahyra White and Indira Senderovic



Rae Martin and Grant Henry

About Master Teaching Artist Jackie Majerus

To her work as a writing coach and editor, Master Teaching Artist Jackie Majerus brings a passion for journalism, a dedication to teaching and a genuine appreciation for the young people she serves.

An award-winning reporter who has worked for daily newspapers in three states, Majerus and her husband, Steve Collins, began teaching young writers, artists and photographers in 1994. Together they founded Youth Journalism International, a Connecticut-based educational non-profit organization. Though it began as a purely local venture, Youth Journalism International now includes students on six continents. Its work is online at YouthJournalism.org.

As YJI's executive director, Majerus interacts with her students in groups and one-on-one, teaching reporting and writing and coordinating collaborative efforts among youth from around the world. She has hosted visiting students from South Africa, Singapore, Canada, England, South Korea, Tunisia and Uganda and many U.S. states.

She is delighted to be spending the summer with a new group of talented, enthusiastic young writers. After many years of bringing visitors to see a favorite spot – The Mark Twain House & Museum – she is honored and inspired to be doing the work at the home of America's greatest writer.

A native of Wisconsin and a graduate of The University of Iowa, Majerus lives in West Hartford with her husband, their teenage son and daughter, and two loud, hairy collie dogs.

She can be reached at jmajerus@youthjournalism.org.





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