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Notes from the Editor

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The Hilltop Review is a peer-reviewed journal representative of graduate student research and artwork at Western Michigan University (WMU). Twice a year, The Hilltop Review issues a call for papers. Each successive issue builds on the last, and I am happy to report that the authors selected for publication in this volume live up to the spirit, if not the letter, of the most recent call for papers.

As editor, I work to publish papers that discuss critical issues in the author's field of study, while simultaneously addressing the concerns of neighboring fields of study. Both of these goals have been brilliantly fulfilled in this issue of The Hilltop Review. The lead paper, and the winner of the five hundred dollar cash prize for best paper, is Sara Bijani's "Imagining Women in U.S. Politics: The Problem of Sisterhood in the Long 1960s." Bijani critically assesses the gendered construction of women congresspersons in historical perspective. She finds that despite ideological diversity among congresswomen, these same politicians were forced to respond to gendered expectations of women as second class citizens. The identity of women politicians in the long 1960s is shown to have been constructed by men against an imagined "sisterhood" of women.

The second paper, and the winner of a three hundred dollar cash prize, is Becky De Oliveira's "Harvard Cowboys: The Role of Silas Weir Mitchell's Creative Works in Defining Western-Style American Masculinity." Written from the perspective of literary criticism, Oliveira discusses the identity of the American male. Oliveira analyzes the historical phenomenon of men from the east traveling to the American west in order to get in touch with their imagined rugged "cowboy" selves. For Oliveira this phenomenon typifies a widespread process of identity formation which characterizes the dual nature of the contemporary American male – both striving to be ruggedly 'cowboyish' as well as cultured and cosmopolitan. The third paper, and the winner of a one hundred and fifty dollar cash prize, is Patrick Harris' "Power, Piety, and Rebellion in Al-Andalus: The Reception and Influence of Al-Ghazālī's Political Philosophy in Islamic Iberia." In his paper, Harris discusses the way Al-Ghazālī's call for pious rulership and his criticism of the religious leadership of the Arab and Persian variants of Islam structured the historical identity of greater Islam. The remaining papers are drawn from The School of Music, The Department of History, The Department of Philosophy, The School of Communication, and The Medieval Institute at WMU.

This issue also features a collaborative effort on behalf of The Hilltop Review and WMU's Center for the Humanities. On February 24, 2012, the Center for the Humanities hosted a conference showcasing graduate student research at WMU. The Hilltop Review is pleased to publish the two best papers from the Graduate Humanities Conference. Becky De Oliveira and Benjamin Wright were the winners of the best papers at the Humanities Conference. A special thanks is due to Jason Aiello for coordinating the conference and for partnering with The Hilltop Review.

As always, the efforts of the chairs and directors of the various fields of academic research and science at WMU are indispensable to the peer-review process. The chair or director of each author's home department is contacted and he or she is asked to suggest one faculty member and one graduate student who might serve as a peer-reviewer. The prompt responses and helpful suggestions of the chairs and directors are gratefully acknowledged. Once completed, the peer-review forms are forwarded to the authors, and then each author completes a process of revise and re-submit.

I could not be more thankful for the hard work of the peer-reviewers and quick turnaround with the papers they agreed to review. The members of the Editorial Board also read and copy-edited one paper each. Their thoughtful commentary has undoubtedly improved the overall quality of this issue of The Hilltop Review. The authors are to be congratulated on their timely completion of this process and for taking advantage of this outstanding feedback and constructive criticism. The support and assistance of GSAC members and the folks at the Graduate College is also gratefully acknowledged. The publication of The Hilltop Review is

made possible with funds from the Graduate Student Assessment Fee.

There are now established prizes for best papers and artwork for every issue of The Hilltop Review. We hope this incentive will increase the profile of The Hilltop Review as well as encourage more graduate students to consider submitting their work for review. I am confident that The Hilltop Review will continue to receive and publish more papers and artwork by graduate students at WMU. A painting by Muthanna Yaqoob of the Department of Geosciences titled, "Rug Fixers," graces the cover of the Hilltop Review and won a five hundred dollar cash prize for best artwork. For the Call for Papers and Artwork see the end of this issue or our website: <http://www.wmich.edu/gsac/publications.html>.

Over the semester GSAC went through another set of leadership changes resulting in a completely new leadership team. After a highly successful year, our former Chair, LaTasha Chaffin has stepped down. Our new chair is Britne Amos, who is a graduate student in Counseling Psychology. Our new Vice Chair, Rebecca Sametz is a graduate student in Counseling Education/Counseling Psychology (CECP) and Blindness and Low Vision Studies (BLS). In addition, I am both saddened and thrilled to announce that this is my last year as editor. I will miss the editorial processes but I welcome the new leadership of Tim Bauer as editor in chief of The Hilltop Review. Bauer is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Sociology and has been an active member of both GSAC and the editorial board of The Hilltop Review. Under his leadership this Review is sure to continue to improve both in its academic import as well as its popular appeal for graduate students at WMU.

Finally, at the end of these editor's notes, I shall indulge in a little wishful thinking. Over the past two years, The Hilltop Review has grown in terms of the number of issues distributed, as well as becoming more well-known on campus. The groundwork is in place for The Hilltop Review to provide a forum for graduate students to interact and learn from each other's work, to showcase graduate students' passion for research at WMU, and as a way for us to speak in a common voice on campus and within the greater community. Moving into the future, it is my hope that The Hilltop Review will continue to grow as a well-known and significant reflection of graduate student research and artwork at Western Michigan University.