



The Catharine Maria SEDGWICK SOCIETY Newsletter

Volume 3, Number 1, Spring 2002

President's Welcome

Lucinda Damon-Bach

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I am very pleased to welcome you to the third issue of the *Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society Newsletter*. Since the last newsletter in February 2001, Sedgwick scholarship has experienced a small boom—evident in the increased number of papers on Sedgwick appearing at national and international conferences, increased attendance at CMS Society-sponsored sessions, and several new publications—and the Society itself has expanded and evolved.

As Sedgwick's position in 21st-century American literary studies grows ever firmer, articles about her work continue to appear in scholarly journals, and publishers are responding to the need for greater resources on Sedgwick. This past winter her fifth novel, *The Linwoods* or, "Sixty Years Since" in America (the third novel to be re-released), was reprinted by University Press of New England. The first volume of literary criticism, *Catharine Sedgwick: Critical Perspectives*, gleaned from papers presented at the first two Sedgwick Symposia with additional invited essays, is currently in production at Northeastern University Press (forthcoming December, 2002). This is an exciting time to be part of Sedgwick studies!

Following the approval of bylaws for the CMS Society last May, an executive committee was elected in June, and the increase in pairs of hands to carry out Society business has had several salutary

effects. Victoria Clements (College of Southern Maryland), Vice-President for Finance and Membership, has completely updated our mailing list and acquired a federal tax identification number for the society; non-profit status is our next goal. This issue of the newsletter marks the editorial debut of Ellen Foster (Duquesne U and Slippery Rock U), Vice-President, Newsletter. Jenifer Elmore (Florida State U), Second Vice-President for Programs, has ably orchestrated our calls for papers and put together panels to review proposals. As a result of Jen's hard work—and that of several Society members—not only was the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society represented at the 2002 ALA Conference in Long Beach, California, but it will also sponsor a special session entitled "Soirees, Slums, and Sympathy: Catharine Sedgwick and the Cultures of Antebellum New York" at the 2002 MLA Convention in New York City. Both of these recent calls yielded a range of excellent abstracts—again a testimony to the rise of interest in Sedgwick. Thanks to all who submitted abstracts for both panels.

I'm happy to report that Sedgwick Society activity has risen steadily in the past eighteen months. Just after the last newsletter went to press, we sponsored the panel, "Making the Marginal Central: Catharine Sedgwick and Women on the Margin," at the First International

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President's Welcome *(Continued from page 1)*

Conference of the SSAWW in San Antonio, Texas. The papers delivered by Patricia Larson Kalayjian (California State U, Dominguez Hills), Charlene Avallone (Independent Scholar, Hawai'i), and Jenifer Banks (Michigan State U) were very well received, and several key figures in Sedgwick studies, including Susanne Opfermann (U of Frankfurt, Germany), Susan K. Harris (Penn State U), and Carolyn Karcher (Temple U), contributed to the post-panel discussion. Three months later at the 2001 ALA our session drew triple the audience of earlier ALA's, as nearly thirty people appeared to take in "Constructing Nationhood in Catharine Maria Sedgwick's Novels: *Redwood*, *Hope Leslie*, *Clarence*, and *The Linwoods*." The papers by Jenifer Elmore, Robert Daly (SUNY—Buffalo), Ellen Foster, and Charlene Avallone provoked spirited conversation that spilled into the hallway following the session. The 2001 ALA also included papers on Sedgwick by non-Society members. Clearly, interest in Sedgwick is on the rise.

New scholarship was presented in May at our Society-sponsored west coast ALA session on "The Short Works of Catharine Sedgwick" and will be presented in December at our first Society-sponsored special session at the MLA convention and in August at independently organized sessions for the University of Virginia's New Frontiers in Early American Literature Conference. A Sedgwick luncheon is part of the New Frontiers program, and we are looking forward to recruiting new members for the Society. Looking ahead, we have just posted our Call for Papers for the Second International Conference of the SSAWW (February 2003), and plans are underway, thanks to Melissa J. Homestead (U of Oklahoma), First Vice President for Programs, for the Third Catharine Maria Sedgwick Symposium in Stockbridge, Massachusetts (June 2003).

I am delighted to report these events, and to note that the CMS Society Web Site continues to get both national and international "hits," all of which demonstrate increased understanding of Sedgwick's centrality to the development of U.S. literature. The Society continues to take a leading role in re-locating Sedgwick at the heart of American literary studies, as this newsletter makes evident. With this in mind, I invite you to read on, renew your membership, and join with us in continuing to spread the word about the work of Catharine Maria Sedgwick! ♦

Acknowledgments

Sincere thanks to **William Williams**, chairperson of the Department of English at Slippery Rock University. The Department of English has generously funded the printing costs of this newsletter. Few part-time faculty members enjoy such strong support from their departments. On the Society's behalf, I offer our thanks.

Ellen Foster

Thanks are also due to **Heather Boyd**. A talented student at the College of Southern Maryland, Heather assisted Victoria Clements in updating the Society's membership lists.

Thanks also to our supportive membership and friends, including those who contributed so much to this newsletter and other Society-sponsored functions in the past year. Your enthusiasm and participation are the life of this Society.

The Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society Newsletter

is published at least once annually as a benefit of membership in the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society.

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(White) Nation-Making in *The Linwoods*

Charlene Avallone

This précis is based on the author's presentation on the Sedgwick Society-sponsored panel, "Constructing Nationhood in C. M. Sedgwick's Novels," at the 2001 ALA conference, Cambridge, Massachusetts, May 25, 2001.

The Linwoods was compelling enough to William Wells Brown to prompt him to rename two of his characters after Catharine Sedgwick's title characters when he revised his novel *Clotel; or the President's Daughter* (1853). Brown, in three subsequent versions of his novel, deploys his mulatta Isabelle/Isabella and her lover-slavemaster Linwood to revision Sedgwick's fantasy of nation-making and destabilize her notions of race and of national identity. At the same time that Brown's novel questions the ontological status that Sedgwick accords race, it also testifies to the brutal realities of race as a social category that shapes personal and national identity, showing racial attitudes and white privilege in the US institutionalized so as to make independence and any social status higher than servitude unavailable to American people of color. This talk examines Sedgwick's construction of whiteness in *The Linwoods* within the novel's historical context to suggest reasons why Brown—or any other reader concerned by American racial formation—would find the text compelling. On the occasion of the reprinting of Sedgwick's critically acclaimed novel, the talk aims to illustrate the significance of making structural racial critique part of feminist reclamation of women writers in its several aspects—biography, contextual and literary history, textual interpretation, and re-evaluation.

The Linwoods, published in the middle of the decade that spanned Nat Turner's rebellion, reactionary measures North and South, and the emergence of a national abolitionist movement, speaks to a crisis in which whites' anxiety and racial bias fed one another. At the turn into the 1830s, David Walker's *Appeal . . . to the Colored Citizens of the World* (1829) claimed the republican birthright of self-protection for black men and considered the merits of armed rebellion to contend for rights proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence. Press accounts of Walker's pamphlet, of Turner's 1831 rebellion, and of other insurrection attempts intensified worries about slave revolution, which in turn prompted increased oppression of blacks in the form of more restrictive laws, mob violence, retrenched educational and economic opportunities, and racist publications. Advocacy of abolition also increased in response, issuing in the national organization of the anti-slavery movement

and some interracial dialogue on racism, but at the same time raising alarm among whites that abolitionists would abet insurrection. African Americans sought whites' support for anti-slavery and anti-racism causes through appeals both to fear and to empathy beyond fear, sometimes invoking unity between races in tropes of family relations or in the biblical trope of nations unified by "one blood" (Acts 17:26), as abolitionist Sarah Forten did in the *Liberator*. (Forten wrote under several pen names, including "Magawisca," perhaps inspired by the impassioned, militant demand for liberation voiced by Sedgwick's Pequod heroine in *Hope Leslie*). But whites' fear of disorder prevented many from answering such appeals and led to the coercion of even African American abolitionists to resign public advocacy of the cause.

The tide of fear that swept the '30s tempered the anti-slavery advocacy of Catharine Sedgwick's family. Brother Henry Sedgwick, in an 1831 Lyceum lecture delivered before Turner's revolt, endorsed abolition, even to the extent of Constitutional amendment, as a measure to prevent slave revolution, while he held racial prejudice, not any inherent inferiority, responsible for the degradation of American blacks. Yet in the climate of heightening fear, brother Theodore Sedgwick in *Public and Private Economy* (Vol. 1, 1836) stressed white preeminence within a god-given hierarchy of races and protested any extension of political and social rights to blacks, including rights of interracial marriage and revolution. Some of the fears about violence and disunion, about threats to white social status and "white blood" that inform her brothers' texts appear increasingly in Catharine Sedgwick's writing as well, compounded by her gender and self-described personal timidity—from her early novel, *Redwood* (1824), to her epistolary expression of antipathy toward cross-race sexual alliance, her confession to Lydia Maria Child of reluctance to write on slavery or to advocate abolition, and her insistence to Harriet Martineau on the priority of preserving the Union. To assuage personal, professional, and political anxieties clustering around race that troubled Sedgwick and many of her white contemporaries, *The Linwoods* retells American history as a story of completed revolution and formation of white national identity.

From the first chapter of *The Linwoods*, the spectre of suppressed slave revolt haunts this novel celebrating an American history of successful revolution, as young Isabella Linwood achieves her own freedom from the

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(White) Nation-Making in The Linwoods

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superintendence of her slave, Jupiter, by frightening him with references to a hundred and fifty slaves executed in the 1741-42 New York uprising. Sedgwick's larger tale affirms a national subject that is key to stanching insurrection and establishing a peaceful American republic, an identity founded in independence, yet subjecting even the strongest emotions so as to avert rebellion and accomplish duties. The novel shows this subjected character manifest along a social spectrum of tasks from President Washington to the servant Rose, and embodied to perfection in the self-subjected patriot hero, Eliot Lee. As Isabella is freed from vanity, pro-English prejudices and misplaced desire, Herbert Linwood liberated from indiscretion, Bessie Lee from delusive imagination, and Rose from slavery, the novel multiplies narratives of individual independence within its overarching narrative of national independence. Unlike the other characters, the black man is the hero of no story of liberation. The novel displaces any history of black men in revolt to the prehistory of the nation.

Sedgwick's figure of the black man appears instead in three carefully placed dialogues which register the primacy of racial determination in the process of nation-formation. Sedgwick frames her novel between two dialogues featuring her heroine and Jupiter, and locates centrally in the novel a third dialogue in which Jupe and Rose debate the claims of black men to rights and revolution. Each chapter, respectively denying blacks manhood, political rights, and social association, does the work of reinforcing interrelated racial, class and gender differences on which the construction of (white) American identity depended in Sedgwick's own historical moment, amid the flux of Jacksonian reorganization.

The Linwoods promotes a feminized ideal of black identity, figured in Rose, that stresses faithful service, industry, self-sacrificial loyalty to whites, and willingness to restrain power and violence. Although Sedgwick invokes a liberal discourse of natural rights as the ground for Rose's manumission, the story of Rose's independence is marked as a digression from the narrative of the actors central in the struggle for national independence, and it does not entail any other ramifications of the rights discourse pertaining to citizenship or any other changes in Rose's condition

or status. Rose's one, principled, act of rebellion frees her young master from prison and forbears physical violence against his jailer, thereby serving white patriotic interests rather than the interests of other blacks' liberty or her own larger independence. Sedgwick's concluding chapter reinscribes the novel's black characters in social exclusion and service employment, while crucially defining post-revolutionary America as a nation-state unified by one "blood" with the English.

The conclusion of *The Linwoods* offers Sedgwick's young countrywomen a critique of arranged marriage, but one that circumscribes its own progressive potential while reinforcing the novel's fabrication of racial restrictions. Sedgwick links her own promotion of romantic union to republican duty to distinguish it from similarly romantic notions promoted by such radical contemporaries as George Sand and Frances Wright, her attack on the threats that "licentious doctrines" pose to the "purity" of marriage implying such targets as divorce and the free love that she attacks in the story "Cacoethes Scribendi," as well as Wright's theories of interracial union and its practice at her integrated utopian community, Nashoba. The concluding moral draws on the novel's rhetoric of revolution to depict a conflict in which "licentious" theories and practices from Europe will be "opposed" and "overthrown" by America's young countrywomen through the institution of "pure" marriage. Sedgwick construes such marriage as much definitive of national identity as the Anglo "blood" which she imagines the "purity of the institution" to guarantee so as to stabilize social and racial hierarchies in the name of republican virtues.

With little more than a decade separating the legal end of slavery in New York from the publication of *The Linwoods*, the novel contributed to the consolidation of political, social, and economic difference in racialized identities and social roles that would replace the strictures of slavery with those of whiteness and serve as foundation to the increasing discrimination against blacks in the 1840s and '50s. William Wells Brown would repeatedly react in print against Sedgwick's version of race and nation, offering other alternatives, while white readers—despite some few objections to her violating literary and social decorum in giving voice to African American characters—made *The Linwoods* a popular and critical success. ♦

A Book for the Millennial Generation: *The Linwoods and Sixty Years Hence in America*

Robert Daly

A Review of *The Linwoods or, "Sixty Years Since" in America*, by Catharine Maria Sedgwick, edited, and with an introduction by, Maria Karafilis. Hanover: UP of New England, 2002. ISBN 1-58465-153-9 \$18.95 paperback

History is not about the past. It's about the sources of inspiration that connect past and future, through a present that won't hold still. In an astute introduction that deserves to be read along with those of Mary Kelley, Victoria Clements, and Carolyn L. Karcher, Maria Karafilis observes that Sedgwick participated "in the project of nation building through her writing" (xxiii). She responded to the divisive forces of the Nullification Crisis (1832-33), with its calls for both secession and ideological purity, by reaching back to the American Revolution and linking it to her own time.

In the liminal world of *The Linwoods*, we are all and always in a process of becoming, a process for which we need other people, times, and cultures, since we "cannot in the world be singly counterpoised" (259). Even as the Revolution needed help from French, German, Polish and other allies, so the book takes its paratext, particularly its chapter epigraphs, from French, Italian, Scottish and other sources, linguistic traces of an infolded multiplicity that we, no less than the characters, need to learn. For Sedgwick, the Revolution itself, by bringing different peoples together, became a force for conciliation: "Our revolutionary contest, by placing men in new relations, often exhibited in new force and beauty the ties that bind together the human family" (100).

Individualism and self-esteem threaten those ties to the human family and finally threaten one's ability to make sense of the world,

"for it is impossible to say how far a weak mind may become the dupe of its own impostures" (16). The cure for self-delusion is other people. Young Bessie Lee, crossed in love and troubled in mind, does not retire to Walden: she makes straight for New York. With the help of family and friends, she gets over it. Jasper Meredith, the cad who has jilted her to pursue both the person and the inheritance of Isabella Linwood, is awash in self-esteem. Comfortable in "his self-love, his ruling passion" (43), Meredith dismisses Bessie as "a peasant girl," even as something less than human, one of the "birds of the *basse cour*," or farmyard (23). Meredith may write, "I have no distrust of myself" (47), yet it is clear from the narrative action of the book that his trust is misplaced and that this "self-complacent disdain" (24) for others is deleterious.

In 1840, Alexis de Tocqueville would worry, in the second volume of *Democracy in America*, that such an individualistic focus on the self "constantly leads him back toward himself alone and threatens finally to confine him wholly within the solitude of his own heart" (484). Sedgwick had similar reservations five years earlier, and Meredith ends as something even less than a peasant or a barnyard fowl: "he was, like a captive insect, paralyzed in the web that enclosed him" (352). Like Bessie, Isabella gets over him and transcends the rules of "those champions of romance" who "maintain that there can be but one love" (359). She goes on to love Eliot Lee, "trained in the school of exertion, of self-denial, and self-subjection" (321), a Virgilian hero of *ponos*, or self-denying labor for the common good, a Jeffersonian aristocrat of talent and merit. Of this capacity to love many rather than one,

Sedgwick writes, "we honestly believe, that in the capacities of loving, as in all other capacities, there be diversities of gifts" (360) or virtues. No one person, no one group, has a monopoly, and the book's Horatian satire works to mock self-deception and to encourage interaction and intersubjectivity.

For that reason, the ethical force of the book serves not static rules but a virtue ethics, in which such aretaic virtues as courage, honesty, generosity, and intelligence tend to conflate the interests of self and group while serving both. This emphasis on virtue ethics resembles that of our own time. Karafilis writes that, though "the novel resonated so deeply with its contemporary audience" (xxvii), Sedgwick's "faith in merit and manners" might now "seem facile to twenty-first century readers" (xxiv).

But the millennial generation, now writing their own etiquette books on how to participate in groups and get things done for all, may be just the generation to appreciate this book. Neil Howe and William Strauss write that their "thirst for formative heroic virtues will deepen into a thirst for heroic deeds," for "civil duties and public action" (350). With her informed and ranging introduction and meticulous annotations, Maria Karafilis has given them a book that they need and may well want. ♦

Works Cited

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Editing Catharine Maria Sedgwick's *The Linwoods*

Maria Karafilis

I first encountered *The Linwoods* about ten years ago. Fascinated by *Hope Leslie*, I wanted to see what else this recently “rediscovered” writer had produced. One of the things I found was a complex, compelling historical romance written in 1835, a romance that begged the question: why do we read, study, and teach *Hope Leslie*, but virtually nothing else by Sedgwick? The question became even more nagging when I read the contemporary reviews and discovered that her own audience lauded *The Linwoods* as much as or more so than the now-canonical *Hope Leslie*.

My interest in re-issuing *The Linwoods* arose from the opportunity the novel offers for expanding Sedgwick studies and analyzing her relationship to the early national context in which she produced her best works. *The Linwoods* not only reexamines and reinforces some of the generic conventions, narrative styles, and themes that Sedgwick includes in *Hope Leslie*—the epistolary form, the romance, the politics of historiography, the role of women in the public arena, the consequences of community building, etc. *The Linwoods* introduces some intriguing new elements as well, such as Sedgwick's often ambivalent and fraught representation of African American characters and abolitionist sentiments and her return to an explicitly “originary” national moment and development of a white, democratic nation (as Charlene Avallone's essay further suggests).

In preparing the new edition, I encountered a number of pleasant surprises when researching the explanatory notes and reading through Sedgwick's extensive correspondence housed at the Massachusetts Historical Society (much of which is available on microfilm). Her personal writings, along with her literary production explicitly designed for public view, offer great insight into Sedgwick's intellect and social consciousness, her deep engagement with historical and current affairs, and the broad range of her interests and reading.

In addition to the lens *The Linwoods* offers for viewing Sedgwick's contemporary political, social, and literary contexts, I hope that my edition will pave the way for the re-issue of some of her other works. While *A New-England Tale* has been republished and a handful of her short fiction has been anthologized, other works, such as *Redwood* and many of her tales and sketches, need to be made available for further analyses of Sedgwick's writings and her place in nineteenth-century U.S. culture to be developed. We must have access to the full spectrum of her works in order to continue to move past a merely celebratory recuperation of her writings into a nuanced, critical assessment and appreciation of her literary production, a collection of works part of whose significance lies in the way that one of the early nation's most popular authors represents (wittingly or unwittingly) both the promises and the pitfalls of America's democratic experiment. ♦

Contributors

Charlene Avallone writes as an independent scholar in Hawai'i where she is now working on a study of American women's conversation from 1770-1870.

Robert Daly is SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor of English and Comparative Literature, University at Buffalo.

Lucinda Damon-Bach is an assistant professor of English at Salem State College. She is founder and president of the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society.

Maria Karafilis is an assistant professor of English at California State University, Los Angeles. She most recently edited and wrote an introduction to Sedgwick's *The Linwoods*.

2001 Election of Officers

The following officers were elected to serve a three-year term (Summer 2001 — Summer 2004):

Lucinda Damon-Bach, Salem State College
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Victoria Clements, College of Southern Maryland
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Website Update

The Sedgwick Society Web Site, <http://www.salemstate.edu/imc/sedgwick>, continues to receive "hits" from around the world, including Italy and Japan, from high school students looking for chapter notes on *Hope Leslie*, to Sedgwick family descendants who want to learn more about Catharine, to researchers on a wide range of topics. In anticipation of the upcoming ALA session of Sedgwick's short fiction, we plan to add at least two new stories to our web archive, including "The Catholic Iroquois" and "Our Robins." Over the summer we plan to post additional stories, as well as to update information about upcoming events and to complete sections on Sedgwick's life. We continue to suggest corrections to other web sites that include Sedgwick, recently clarifying, for instance, that it was not she who was "principal of a girl's school in Lenox" but her sister-in-law Elizabeth.

We welcome your suggestions and ask that you continue to forward misinformation that needs to be corrected. Please e-mail Lucinda (lucinda.damonbach@salemstate.edu with abstracts of

Proposed Amendments to the Bylaws: Vote by July 15

The Society bylaws, passed at the 2001 Society business meeting, have recently been posted to the Society's website. The Executive Board recommends that Section V. Officers be amended to update the titles and/or job descriptions of officers to reflect the reality of their roles and that Section VII. Meetings be amended to establish formally the composition of selection committees and the practice of a blind submission process for open-call conference panels.

The titles and descriptions of the offices of President; First Vice-President, Programs; and Vice-President, Membership and Finance will remain unchanged. However, the following changes are recommended in **Section V. Officers:**

Second Vice-President, Programs — has primary responsibility for organizing Society-sponsored panels at external conferences and assists the First Vice-President, as needed, in coordinating other activities and programs of the Society.

Vice-President, Communications — produces and distributes the Society newsletter, which is published at least once annually, and communicates other matters of interest to the membership as needed.

The following language, if approved, will be appended to the existing language of **Section VII. Meetings:**

The selection committee for any CMSS-sponsored conference panel shall consist of at least one member from the Executive Board plus two additional members from either the Executive or Advisory Boards whenever possible, or from the general membership if necessary. Whenever the Society issues an open call for papers for a non-Symposium panel, a blind submission process shall be administered. Anyone submitting a proposal for a non-Symposium panel is ineligible to serve on the selection committee for that panel.

Please vote on these proposed amendments by July 15, 2002 (postmark date). The ballot is part of the enclosed membership form insert.

Member News

Sondra Smith Gates is an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin, Fond du Lac. Her dissertation, "The Virtuous Poor in Domestic Fiction by Catharine Maria Sedgwick and Susan Warner," was completed in December 2000 at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Forthcoming Publications

Clements, Victoria, and Lucinda Damon-Bach, co-editors. *Catharine Maria Sedgwick: Critical Perspectives*. Forthcoming, Northeastern University Press, 2002.

This chronologically arranged collection of new critical essays and nineteenth-century reviews situates Sedgwick historically, shows her evolution as a writer, and analyzes, from a range of theoretical approaches, twelve of the twenty books she published, as well as one unpublished manuscript. Included as well are a detailed chronology of Sedgwick's life, five rarely seen images of the writer from both public and private collections, and the first widely available and substantially updated bibliography of her work. Providing as it does the first extended critical overview of her understudied oeuvre, the volume reveals the breadth and complexity of Catharine Sedgwick's contributions to U.S. literature, thereby challenging prevailing twentieth-century paradigms of American literary history and suggesting new directions for twenty-first-century scholarship. The collection is due out in time for spring course adoption.

Contributors to and contents of *Catharine Maria Sedgwick: Critical Perspectives*:

Mary Kelley, Dartmouth College, Foreword

Carolyn L. Karcher, Temple University, "Catharine Maria Sedgwick in Literary History"

Melissa J. Homestead, University of Oklahoma, "Behind the Veil?: Catharine Sedgwick and Anonymous Publication"

Victoria Clements, College of Southern Maryland, "'A Powerful and Thrilling Voice': The Significance of Crazy Bet"

Lucinda Damon-Bach, Salem State College, "To 'Act' and 'Transact': *Redwood's* Revisionary Heroines"

Judith Fetterley, University at Albany, State University of New York, "'My Sister, My Sister!': The Rhetoric of Catharine Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*"

Patricia Larson Kalayjian, California State University, Dominguez Hills, "Disinterest as Moral Corrective in *Clarence's* Cultural Critique"

Karen Woods Weierman, Worcester State College, "'A Slave Story I Began and Abandoned': Sedgwick's Antislavery Manuscript"

Robert Daly, University at Buffalo, State University of New York, "Mischievous, Insanity, Memetics, and Agency in *The Linwoods; or, 'Sixty Years Since' in America*"

John Austin, "The Collection as Literary Form: Sedgwick's *Tales and Sketches* of 1835"

Sondra Smith Gates, University of Wisconsin, Fond du Lac, "Sedgwick's American Poor"

Charlene Avallone, "Sedgwick and the 'Art' of Conversation"

Brigitte Bailey, University of New Hampshire, "Tourism and Visual Subjection in *Letters from Abroad* and 'An Incident at Rome'"

Jenifer Banks, Michigan State University, "'From Home to Home': Sedgwick's Study of Deviance"

Deborah Gussman, The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, "'Equal to Either Fortune': Sedgwick's *Married or Single?* and Feminism"

Susan K. Harris, Pennsylvania State University, "The Limits of Authority: Catharine Maria Sedgwick and the Politics of Resistance"

Dana Nelson, University of Kentucky, "Rediscovery"

Damon-Bach, Lucinda. "Catharine Maria Sedgwick." *Encyclopedia of American Children's Literature*. Ed. Connie Kirk. Forthcoming from Greenwood Press, 2002.

Karafilis, Maria. "Catharine Maria Sedgwick." *Writers of the American Renaissance*. Ed. Denise Knight. Forthcoming from Greenwood Press.

Sanchez, Maria Carla. "'Prayers in the Marketplace': Women and Low Culture in Catharine Sedgwick's 'Cacoethes Scribendi.'" Forthcoming in *American Transcendental Quarterly* 16 (June 2002).

Conference Presentations

ALA 2002: The Short Works of Catharine Sedgwick

The Sedgwick Society sponsored a panel dedicated to Sedgwick's short fiction at the 2002 ALA Convention in Long Beach, California, on May 31, 2002:

Melissa J. Homestead, University of Oklahoma, Chair

Jane Gassner, Lehigh University, "Reading the Covert Politics of Catharine Maria Sedgwick in 'A Reminiscence of Federalism'"

Joan Varnum, New York University, "Body and Soul: Assimilation, Apostasy, and the American Woman in Catharine Maria Sedgwick's 'The Catholic Iroquois'"

Lucinda Damon-Bach, Salem State College, "Not Just for Children: Catharine Sedgwick's *Love Token for Children* and *Stories for Young Persons*"

Susan K. Harris, Pennsylvania State University, Respondent

MLA 2002: Soirees, Slums, and Sympathy:

Catharine Sedgwick and the Cultures of Antebellum New York

The Sedgwick Society will sponsor a special session focused on Sedgwick and the city at the 2002 MLA Convention in New York City, December 2002:

Victoria Clements, College of Southern Maryland, Chair/Moderator

Charlene Avallone, "Circles and Spheres: Catharine Sedgwick and the Conversational Culture of New York"

Jenifer Banks, Michigan State University, "'The Infinite Variety of Life': Authority and Subjectivity in Sedgwick's New York Writings"

Sondra Smith Gates, University of Wisconsin, Fond du Lac, "New York and Sedgwick's Fiction of Reform"

Judith Fetterley, University at Albany, State University of New York, Respondent

Independently Organized Presentations

Melissa J. Homestead, University of Oklahoma, will present "The School of Sedgwick: Reading Nathaniel Hawthorne's Experiences with the Gift Books Through Catharine Maria Sedgwick's" at the **Nathaniel Hawthorne Society** summer conference in Northampton, Massachusetts, in June 2002.

Several presentations on Sedgwick will be made at the **New Frontiers in Early American Literature** conference at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, August 8—10, 2002. These include:

Charlene Avallone, "Catharine Maria Sedgwick and the 'Art' of Conversation"

Peter Balaam, Princeton University, "'Piazza to the North': Melville Reading Sedgwick"

Jenifer Elmore, Florida State University; **Ellen Foster**, Duquesne University; **Karen Woods Weierman**, Worcester State College; and **Lucinda Damon-Bach**, Salem State College, "Turning a New Page in Sedgwick Studies: From Sealing Wax to Surfing the Web," a roundtable discussion

Ben Railton, Temple University, "'A Very Different Picture': Art and the Native American Historian in Catharine Maria Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*"

Jane Rose, Purdue University, North Central, "Professing the Potentialities of Womanhood: Lessons to be Learned from Catharine Sedgwick's Domestic Fiction and Nonfiction"

Joan Varnum, New York University, "Resistance, Survival, Continuance: Catharine Maria Sedgwick's Representations of Native American Women on the Early American Frontier in 'The Catholic Iroquois' and *Hope Leslie*"

Queries . . .

From Italy, **Dr. Serena Bertolucci** writes for information regarding the story/essay "Bianca Milesi Mojon," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, XVI (April 1858), 641-653, that Sister Mary Michael Welsh first attributed to Sedgwick in 1937. (N.B. The story is available on-line at Cornell U's Making of America web site.) Dr. Bertolucci is actually working on the work of Alessandro Manzoni, who, she writes, is considered the best and most well-known Italian writer in the 19th century. For the time being she's interested only in a biography of Bianca Milesi, who "was friends with many Italian men of learning at the same time as Sedgwick's travels." While I cautioned Dr. Bertolucci that we don't know the basis of Welsh's attribution (or Richard Banus Gidez's later attribution), I suggested that it may actually be a translation by Sedgwick of a review of Emile Souvestre's review. The opening of the story is awkward, since it refers to him, which raises many unresolved questions. This, then, is not a "bibliographic" inquiry. If anyone learns more about this story, please contact Cindy Damon-Bach at lucinda.damonbach@salemstate.edu.

Jana A. Bouma sends along the following tidbit from the Caroline M. Kirkland correspondence: In an 1847 letter to Eliza (Mrs. Henry) Bellows, Kirkland mentions a trip to Charles Sedgwick's home, where she spotted "the Lenox banner"—Catharine Sedgwick's nightgown—hanging, according to the mistress's instructions, in front of the Sedgwick house, so that it might whiten in the sun. "I believe the night cap was there too—but I will not swear to that," Kirkland writes. The nightgown incident can be found in Letter 113, Caroline M. Kirkland to Eliza Bellows, [1847], in Audrey Roberts, "The Letters of Caroline Kirkland," dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1976.

Jana would like to hear from Sedgwick scholars who know of other information in Sedgwick's papers regarding Sedgwick's and Kirkland's long-time friendship and association in New York City. Please contact her at JnBouma@aol.com.

Pam Brock, editor of the *James Madison U. Magazine*, is looking for notes or letters referenced and quoted in Sedgwick's biography, "A Memoir of Joseph Curtis, Model Man." Pam is seeking information on a 19th century whaler, who, as an orphan, was among the first inmates at Joseph Curtis's House of Refuge. She believes his letters are quoted by Sedgwick in the biography (all the former inmates were quoted anonymously) and hopes to uncover more information on the whaler's origins and early life. Please contact Pam at Jimmycoyot@aol.com.

Charlotte (no last name given) writes to know if anyone has come across information on the house of Colonel Ashley's son, Major General John Ashley, in their research on the Sedgwick/Mumbet connections. This is NOT the house owned by the Trustees of Reservations (the historical property). Please contact Charlotte at SUnderwoodMiller@aol.com.

Jenifer Elmore would like to know if anyone has *conclusive* evidence that Sedgwick was familiar with Judith Sargent Murray's writings, particularly *The Gleaner* essays. Please contact her at jelmora@gate.net.

Nancy Gahagan, School Programs Coordinator at the Orchard House in Concord, Mass., would like to know if anyone has found evidence that Louisa May Alcott and Sedgwick ever met. Please contact her at nancygahagn@rcn.com.

John Sedgwick has recently contracted with Harper-Collins to write a book about his family ancestry and what it means to him. One of the key questions is how the Sedgwicks, almost uniquely, have been able to preserve their family loyalty over so many generations. He believes that this idea (or myth) of the primary importance of family — indeed, a kind of family imperative — began with Catharine Maria Sedgwick. He would like to hear from those who could produce evidence from CMS's letters, journals, and/or books to support (or reject) this idea.

Please contact John at Sedgwick@attbi.com.

John also announces the recent publication of his new novel, *The Education of Mrs. Bemis*, a psychological mystery set in Boston. More information is available at www.johnsedgwick.com.

. . . and Answers

Charlene Avallone responds to **Jenifer Banks'** inquiry regarding Sedgwick's suitor, "Mr. B." Charlene points out that Mr. B. is identified in Mary Dewey's *Life and Letters of Catharine Sedgwick* (1872) as Harmaan Bleeker, friend of one of Sedgwick's brothers.

In a related quest, **Cindy Damon-Bach**, with help from the Berkshire Historical Society, finds that Sedgwick most likely broke her first (known) engagement, to William Jarvis, sometime during the spring of 1812, when she was 23. Jarvis committed suicide later in life; CMS mentions this in one of her letters, published in Dewey.

Get Involved!

Seeking submissions for the Fall 2002 newsletter . . .

- **Bibliographer** to prepare list of publications on Sedgwick (or including substantial coverage of Sedgwick) in recent years, including books, chapters in books, journal articles, theses, and dissertations. Depending on the size of the compilation, we may split its publication between the Fall 2002 and Spring 2003 newsletters. Graduate students (MA or PhD) are especially encouraged to volunteer.
- **Short articles** (length negotiable, between 500—1500 words) on interpreting, researching, or teaching Sedgwick
- **Accomplishments, publications, presentations, announcements, notes, queries, and answers**
- **Proposals or submissions for future issues.**

Please contact Ellen Foster at efoster@pathway.net or at the English Dept, SRU, Slippery Rock, PA 16057.

Please send queries regarding the bibliography project or articles for the Fall newsletter **by July 15, 2002.**

Seeking volunteers . . .

- To serve on future ALA, SSAWW, and MLA selection committees. If interested, please contact Jenifer Elmore at jelmore@gate.net.
- To serve on sub-committees for the 2003 Sedgwick Symposium or volunteer during the Symposium. If interested, please contact Melissa J. Homestead at mjhomestead@ou.edu.
- To distribute membership information within your department or at conferences you attend, whether local, regional or national. If interested, please contact Victoria Clements at vclem@radix.net.
- To submit ideas, material, etc. for the Society website. Please contact Lucinda Damon-Bach at lucinda.damonbach@salemstate.edu.

Submissions for the Fall newsletter must be received by October 1, 2002.

Thank you!

Membership Form

Membership in the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society includes a subscription to the newsletter and e-mail updates of all Society activities, including calls for papers. The membership year runs from July 1 to June 30. Membership expiration date appears on the newsletter address label to remind members of when it is time to renew.

Please be careful to write LEGIBLY!!

Membership (check one):

Regular	\$10.	_____	Lifetime	\$200.	_____
Institutional	25.	_____	Student	5.	_____

Name _____

Affiliation _____

Preferred mailing address *(Please use home, if possible; saves us space and time!)*:

Preferred e-mail address *(only one, please)*: _____

Phone numbers (H) _____ (O) _____

Would you like to receive e-mail updates from the Society? _____ Yes _____ No

Please return this form and your membership payment (by check or money order made payable to Sedgwick Society) to: Victoria Clements, 3710 Chaneyville Rd., Owings, MD 20736

Calls for Papers

Sedgwick Society-sponsored panel at the **Society for the Study of American Women Writers** Conference, September 24-27, 2003, in Fort Worth, Texas:

The Choice of a Lifetime: Marriage and Singlehood in Catharine Sedgwick's Writings

As her writings attest, Sedgwick was deeply interested in the personal and social implications of marriage and of remaining single—for women and men. For SSAWW 2003, the Sedgwick Society invites proposals for papers exploring Sedgwick's writings—fiction, non-fiction, correspondence, or other personal writings—on matrimony and spinster/bachelorhood as institutions with distinct and often gendered advantages and disadvantages for individuals and for society. Send a cover letter and three unsigned copies of your proposal to Jenifer Elmore, 12324 Gingerwood Ln., Wellington, FL 33414, or send an e-mail with your proposal attached as a Microsoft Word document to jelmore@gate.net. Postmark deadline: October 1, 2002.

Hystorical Fictions: Women, History, and Authorship, August 5—7, 2003, at Gregynog Hall, University of Wales, UK. This three-day conference seeks to address the nature of the past and history as it is and has been written by women authors. Please email a 250-word abstract by Friday 29 November 2002 to: a.b.heilmann@swansea.ac.uk; m.e.llewellyn@ntlworld.com; or rachel_sarsfield@hotmail.com. The full text of this call for papers can be found on the Literary Call for Papers site at <http://www.english.upenn.edu/CFP/>.

<p>In the Fall issue . . . Report from ALA 2002 Bibliography of recent scholarship on Sedgwick 2003 Sedgwick Symposium: Call for Papers and General Information</p>
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c/o Ellen Foster
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