Dear Friends and Colleagues:

It is with both gladness and melancholy that I write to you as the season wanes. This year's conference in Denver, 11-13 April, was a highly congenial occasion.

RMMRA activities have continued apace: in May, the organization sponsored a session at Kalamazoo, while over the summer, executive board members read papers for the annual award contest (see below). We are now considering the possibility of developing a travel award for graduate students who attend the annual conference—more details to come.

It was with great sadness however that we learned of the passing of our good friend Michael Walton. Each of us who knew him will have our own stories of his wit and kindness. Please see the memorial review of his life below in this newsletter.

While the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association will not be the same, it is clear to me—that in part thanks to him—the organization has deep roots, involving many different people. We look forward to the 2014 conference, again in Denver, and the vitality of our journal Quidditas. I encourage you to keep in touch and (to make a pitch) to keep your membership active. Your annual dues help with all our activities. Thanks for your support!

—Thomas Klein, President, Idaho State University

Award Winners Announced!

This July, readers worked hard to select the two best papers—one by a junior and one a senior scholar—delivered at the 2013 conference.

Drum roll please...

The 2013 Breck Award is Tiffany Beechy, Assistant Prof. of English at UC Boulder, for “Spewing Wisdom: Digestive Alchemy of Medieval Poesis.” The reviewers say, “This lucid but sophisticated essay focuses on an intriguing idea—the connection of text, food and flesh in late antiquity and the Middle Ages.” Please join us in congratulating Tiffany.

The 2013 winner of the West Award is Ginger Smoak, Assistant Prof. of History at the U of Utah, for “Imagining Pregnancy: Images of ‘Pregnant Disease Woman.’” The reviewers described it as “well-researched and original” and “an exciting examination of medical illustrations.” Look for her article in the next issue of Quidditas!
In Memoriam:

Michael Walton

At our conferences and elsewhere, he reached out to us, especially our younger members, to nurture worthy scholarship; he always entertained (and sometimes shocked!) us with his wit and humor; regardless of content or period, he was an incisive and amazingly learned and helpful commentator. As a silent benefactor to the Association, only our conference organizers could collectively determine how many of our banquets and receptions were lent a touch of grace and conviviality by the (liquid) gifts he anonymously bestowed on us. Michael, our organization and our conferences will not be the same without you.

Michael Walton, with degrees from the University of Utah (BA 1969, MA 1970) and the University of Chicago (PhD 1979), as well as two years at the University of Utah College of Law, was a scholar's scholar whose work grew from his insatiable love of learning, unprompted by university appointment. He was primary author, often with Phyllis, of four books with a fifth in draft at his death, six chapters, eighteen articles, more than fifty conference papers, three encyclopedia articles, two prefaces, and the editor of two books. The bulk of his work, remarkable always for its clarity, perspicacity, and interest, was in the history of science and medicine from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, but he wrote also on the history of Judaism and Mormonism, and topics in modern medicine, and he was a frequent guest lecturer and instructor in the history of science, medicine, and Judaism.

In addition to the RMMRA, he was member of the Society for the History of Alchemy and Chemistry, Historians of Early Modern Europe, and The Sixteenth Century Society and Conference. As his wife Phyllis said so well, “From his discovery of Plato at the age of twelve, Michael was studying and thinking, always thinking.”

Michael Walton took particular pride and joy in his family, community, and the marine business he and Phyllis owned and operated in Salt Lake City, Walton Marine. As Phyllis wrote, “Our business became at times a blue-collar salon. Our customers loved to fish and run rivers, but they would also read Mike’s articles; some even bought his books. He encouraged everyone to become a better person, and the recurring theme among the comments from his customers, suppliers, and competitors is his honesty. What better tribute could a man have?”

On August 23, 2013, one week after suffering an acute stroke, Michael died at his home. His family and his close friend, Robert Fineman, were with him.

Ave atque vale

Charles Smith, Professor of English
Emeritus, Colorado State University, Fort Collins

Todd P. Upton, Ph.D.,
Independent Scholar,
Littleton, Colorado
Tell Us What's New

For the spring newsletter, we would like to hear from you—publications, conferences, medieval and Renaissance activities you've been involved in. Please send an email to kleithom@isu.edu!

RMMRA 2014 Call for Papers

Peregrinatio pro amore Dei: Aspects of Pilgrimage in the Middle Ages and Renaissance

June 12-14, 2014  (Denver, Colorado)

Pilgrimage to holy sites and shrines was a mainstay of European life throughout the medieval and Renaissance periods, and the journeys to places such as Canterbury, Santiago de Compostela, Assisi, Rome, Mecca, and Jerusalem informed a devotional tradition that encouraged participation from all social classes, evoked commentary by chroniclers, playwrights, and poets, and inspired artistic, iconographic, and literary expressions. Even when the faith-based culture of the Middle Ages began to transform into the more empirical centuries of the Renaissance and Protestant Reformations, pilgrimages were still very much on the minds of writers and geographers.

We invite all approaches, but special consideration will be given to those papers that attempt historical, literary, scientific, archaeological, and anthropological inquiries of pilgrimage, especially in the topics of holy sites and shrines; cults of relics and saints; gender studies; geographical reckoning; theological promotion and dissuasion; mystical and philosophical beliefs; secular versus clerical approaches; travel and communication; intellectual history.

Keynote Speaker:

Alice A. Bauer, M.A. —
“Casting our Own Shadows: Recreating the Medieval Pilgrimage to Santiago Compostela”

Alice A. Bauer is an Affiliate Professor of History at the Metropolitan State University of Denver. She specializes in Early Modern European History, particularly the Sixteenth Century Ottoman occupation of Hungary.

Proposals for panels or abstracts for individual papers should be directed via email (Word, .pdf, or Rich Text) to one of the conference's co-organizers: Kim Klimek (klimekk@msudenver.edu) and Todd Upton (tj_upton@icloud.com).

Abstracts due November 15, 2013.
We’re on Facebook!

Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association

Please note our web address, as it has changed:

http://rowdy.msudenver.edu/~tayljeff/RMMRA/Index.html

Membership Form / Annual Dues 2013-14

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Dues Category:

- [ ] $25.00 Individual Member
- [ ] $30.00 Joint Membership for Civilly Acknowledged Couples

Your partner's name: _________________________________

Remit this form with your check to:

Todd P. Upton, Ph.D.
Treasurer, RMMRA
P.O. Box 270813
Littleton, CO 80127

The Fall 2013 RMMRA Newsletter was composed and assembled by Thomas Klein, President of the Rocky Mountain Medieval & Renaissance Association & Professor of English at Idaho State University. Please direct questions, comments & corrections to: kleithom@isu.edu