

UNL ENGLISH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR

Special Back-to-School Issue!

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for details, or talk to Amber.

Recent Publications and Other Achievements

Darcie Rives has accepted a tenure-track position in American Literature at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Congratulations, Darcie!!

Chris Gallagher's new book, *Reclaiming Assessment*, has been published by Heinemann. The book is based on the research Chris and colleagues (including several graduate students in English) have done on Nebraska's local-control state assessment system. This month, Chris also facilitated a study tour by the Alliance for Public Schools, a national school reform network that includes members of the Forum for Education and Democracy, the Coalition of Essential Schools, the New York Performance Standards Consortium, and others. Activists and journalists associated with the Alliance spent several days in Nebraska learning about the state's approach to assessment and visiting schools.

Wheeler Winston Dixon has published several pieces recently: "Bennett Miller: An Interview," *Post Script* 26.1 (Fall 2006); "Icons of Grief: Val Lewton's Home Front Pictures by Alexander Nemerov," (Review) *Film Quarterly* 60.2 (Winter 2006-2007); "Feedback: The Video Data Bank Catalogue of Video Art and Artist Interviews by Kate Horsfield and Lucas Hilderbrand," (Review), *Choice* (July 2006); "One Hundred Years of Canadian Cinema" by George Melnyk, (Review), *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 24.1 (January 2007).

Amber Harris Leichner's chapbook, *Just This Proof*, is on sale from FootHills Press. Go to

Jack Vespa presented a paper titled "Wordsworth's *Ruined Cottage* and 'the mechanism of poetry'" at the 2006 MLA Convention in Philadelphia, at a special session that Jack proposed and chaired, titled "From Sympathy to Romanticism." Jack reports that "a splendid time was had by all."

Anthony Hawley's group of seventeen poems, "Rothko Chapel Sequence," was recently published by *Conjunctions*. Also, two of his P(r)etty Sonnets appear in the most recent issue of *Lungfull*.

Kwakiutl Dreher presented her paper, "Remembering Little Dottie: Dorothy Dandridge and the Dance of the Black Female Child Entertainer," at the *Blacker Than Thou: Authenticity and Identity in the Diaspora* at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana on December 8, 2006.

Laura White recently published "The Positioning Systems of Persuasion" in *Persuasions On-line* (the Jane Austen journal), "A Response to 'Wodehouse, Parodist'" in *Connotations*, and "The Rejection of Beauty in *Brideshead Revisited*" in *Renascence*; presented "Predicting the End of Harry Potter" at the International Conference on Narrative and two different versions of "Queenly Domestics, Domestic Queens: Queenly Contradictions in Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*" at the Interdisciplinary Conference on Nineteenth-Century Studies and the North American Victorian Studies Association; reprised the Potter presentation at Hastings College for their Sigma Tau Delta group and assorted students and

faculty; and reprised the Alice presentation in a faculty panel on queens and democracy (including Christin Mamiya, Art History, and Ken Winkle, History) for the Nineteenth-Century Studies program.

Melissa Homestead organized, chaired, and presented a comment for an MLA panel on the subject of "Print Cultures in the Atlantic World." The panel was sponsored by the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing. In early January, she traveled to the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts, for a meeting of the selection committee for the Hench (formerly Mellon) Post-Dissertation Fellowship, a fellowship that Melissa held in 2000-1. In both Philadelphia and Worcester, she conducted archival research on early American novelist Susanna Rowson's dealings with publisher Mathew Carey.

Nick Spencer's essay, "Ecosophical Struggle in Neal Stephenson's *Zodiac*," was published in *Tomorrow through the Past: Neal Stephenson and the Project of Global Modernization*. Ed. Jon Lewis (Cambridge Scholar's Press).

Ted Kooser's poem, "New Year's Day," published in *Flying at Night* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985), was featured on the holiday ornament issued by Chancellor Harvey Perlman. The limited edition ornament, the 10th issued by the Chancellor's Office through the Nebraska Alumni Association, is available for \$20 (for Alumni Association members) and \$25 (for non-members).

Fred Link, former chair of our department and Professor Emeritus of English, wrote the textual essay and edited the University of Nebraska Press's edition of Willa Cather's *One of Ours*, the latest volume in the ongoing Cather Edition. Richard Harris supplied a historical essay and explanatory notes for the volume.

Charles Mignon, Professor Emeritus of English, has published "A Process of Discovery: A Proposal to Locate Edward Taylor's Lost Manuscript Volumes" in *Resources for American Literary Study*, Vol. 20 (2006).

Our Far-flung Correspondents

Susan Belasco, on Faculty Development Leave this year, reports that she and her husband Linck Johnson "attended the Bedford, Freeman and Worth Publishers National Sales Meeting in Bonita Springs, Florida (January 4-8) where we gave a formal presentation about The Bedford Anthology of American Literature and participated in several smaller discussions with sales representatives."

Alumni Updates

This update from **Kate Flaherty Zieg** (PhD 2002): Since August, I've been teaching in the Expository Writing Program at the University of Oklahoma. It's a grant-based program where instructors teach freshman writing in a seminar-like setting. Each instructor devises a theme based on his/her area of expertise or interest—our instructors have PhDs in history, folklore, American studies, etc.—I'm not the only English PhD, but I am the only one who studied comp theory! My full-time position involves teaching two seminars with a student-cap of 17, and my theme is the modern monster in film and literature. It's been a great experience so far, and I hope the program will become an actual department (and not just because it would mean better job security!). The only unsettling thing about the job is that the bathroom down the hall from my office is disturbingly similar to the ones in Andrews Hall—same tile floors, same marble stalls, same wooden doors, same smell. I'm just thankful there's no mustard-colored vinyl chaise lounge pushed underneath the windows—that would be a little too creepy—though I suppose that relic may be long gone by this point.

From **Sherrie Flick** (MA 1996): After moving to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Sherrie Flick (M.A. 1996) tried to find her people by starting the Gist Street Reading Series. Now in its fifth year, it brings in writers from all over the country and

offers homemade bread and pastries each month as well as a packed house (www.giststreet.org). In 2004, Sherrie's chapbook of flash fiction, *I Call This Flirting*, was published by Flume Press, Chico State. She has short-shorts appearing in several anthologies in 2006: *Flash Fiction Forward* and *Sudden Fiction*, both out with Norton, as well as *Best American Flash Fiction of the 21st Century* edited by Tom Hazuka and Mark Budman (this one will be distributed in China). She just finished writing the catalogue for National Geographic/Time-Life photographer Lynn Johnson's latest exhibition: HATE. It explores the impact of hate crimes on American culture.

From **Sarah Staples** (MA 1991): After 10 years teaching at the private boarding school in Hershey, PA, my husband and I moved back to Lincoln to be near family and the slower pace of the Midwest. I am a teacher at Norris high school, just south of Lincoln in Firth—yes, we are the “tornado” school and will celebrate our 2 year anniversary of the destruction of our school on May 21st. The school is back 100%, and we are even opening a new middle school in the fall. I teach juniors and seniors; three of my classes are accredited through SCC, two of which will transfer college credits anywhere, really—and the other class is AP Language and Comp. I enjoy teaching the college classes to the seniors—and I do get quite a mix of writing levels. I am just completing my 14th year of teaching high school kids, if you can believe it. High school has a great energy to it, and I enjoy helping the seniors prepare for life after graduation. I drill their writing to the bone—rewrite after rewrite—but I do think we have a great deal of fun along the way. When I retire from competing and when my husband gets settled in a principal's job (hopefully), then my plan is to do the PhD I've been putting off—so, perhaps I'll see you soon!

New York Times Subscriptions

Faculty/staff subscriptions to the *New York Times* are available for the spring semester at a cost of \$26.40. The subscription begins on January 8 and continues every day classes are in session and the first day of finals week. The weekends are not

included. Andrews Hall is a distribution point. Papers are delivered early in the morning and distributed to subscribers in their mailboxes. If you are interested in subscribing, see Elaine Dvorak for a subscription form.

American Life in Poetry By Ted Kooser, U.S. Poet Laureate, 2004-2006

While many of the poems we feature in this column are written in open forms, that's not to say I don't respect good writing done in traditional meter and rhyme. But a number of contemporary poets, knowing how a rigid attachment to form can take charge of the writing and drag the poet along behind, will choose, say, the traditional villanelle form, then relax its restraints through the use of broken rhythm and inexact rhymes. I'd guess that if I weren't talking about it, you might not notice, reading this poem by Floyd Skloot, that you were reading a sonnet.

Silent Music

My wife wears headphones as she plays
Chopin etudes in the winter light.
Singing random notes, she sways
in and out of shadow while night
settles. The keys she presses make a soft
clack, the bench creaks when her weight shifts,
golden cotton fabric ripples across
her shoulders, and the sustain pedal clicks.
This is the hidden melody I know
so well, her body finding harmony in
the give and take of motion, her lyric
grace of gesture measured against a slow
fall of darkness. Now stillness descends
to signal the end of her silent music.

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Nebraska, Lincoln. This column does not accept unsolicited poetry.

December Graduates

Congratulations to these recent graduates in our department:

PhD:

Young Seon Won (advisor: Robert Stock)

MA:

Heather Green (advisor: Hilda Raz)

Sarah Santoyo (advisor: Stephen Buhler)

Upcoming Events

Monday, January 22 – 3:30 Bailey Library:
Job Candidate, Daniel Keller, “Reading in the Attention Economy”

Wednesday, January 24 -- 3:30 City Union:
College of Arts and Sciences “Emergency” Faculty Meeting regarding the revision of the Comprehensive General Education Plan (this is a very important meeting to consider the College Faculty recommendations to the Planning Committee. If there is no quorum, we will be unable to vote.)

Thursday, January 25 – 3:30 Bailey Library:
Job Candidate, Prof. Frankie Condon, “In this House of Hope: Writing Centers, Race, and Racism.”

Wednesday January 31 – 7:30 Bailey Library:
The Medieval-Renaissance group will sponsor the first of four spring lectures on Muslim/Christian/Jewish relations 1100-1700. **Professor Stephen Burnett** will lecture on "The Response of Jewish Scholars to Christian Criticism and the Goals of Early Modern Censorship." He will explain how two Jewish scholars of the 17th Century got their

polemical answers published within the strictures set up by Christians to prevent the publication of works regarded as attacking Christianity. The lecture is free and open to the public. There will be refreshments, even!

A Note From the Interim Editor

Several years ago when I edited this newsletter there was a column called “Pet Dream Analyst,” which afforded readers the chance to report dreams they’d had about their pets. An anonymous pet dream analyst sifted through the wreckage of these dreams and offered interpretations, some of them pithy, others (to be blunt about it) not very helpful. Those of you who were in the department at the time will remember that this column, which began as nothing more than a trifle, soon bloomed into a major portion of the newsletter, taking up valuable space that might otherwise have been used to report significant publications, conference presentations, and upcoming events.

Since taking over as Interim Editor I’ve been urged to re-start the “Pet Dream Analyst” column, and I’m willing to give it a test run, but only as an occasional diversion from the more sober and significant work of the newsletter. So I now invite you to send in accounts of any dreams you’ve had about your pets. Keep these accounts short if you can. I am in contact with the pet dream analyst (who insists on remaining anonymous), and over the course of this semester, as space allows, the “Pet Dream Analyst” column will make its appearance once again.