

UNL ENGLISH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR

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"Speaking Truth to people in varying states of powerlessness"

Recent Publications and Other Achievements

Whitney Douglas has been named as the recipient of the UNL Graduate Student of the Year Award, given by the UNL Graduate Student Association. Whitney was recognized for her outstanding teaching, scholarship, and service to UNL and the community as she has extended her research into the community through activities with RSACC and with the Angels Theater Company. In the English Department, Whitney has served as Associate Coordinator of Composition, and she has assisted in a major curriculum development project in Women's and Gender Studies by proposing a new course on Feminist Activism – a course she's now teaching for the first time. Congratulations, Whitney!

Zachary Schomburg's first full-length book of poems, *The Man Suit* (Black Ocean, Boston), is now available for purchase from the publisher (www.blackocean.org), Amazon and SPD (www.spdbooks.org). Reviews of the book are forthcoming in several publications this month, including *Publisher's Weekly*. He will be reading on an upcoming reading tour in Wichita, Maryville, Chicago, Minneapolis, Missoula, San Francisco, and Cincinnati. Today, April 6, marks the book's official release day and Zach's 30th birthday. Congratulations, Zach! And Happy Birthday!

Jonis Agee's forthcoming novel, *The River Wife*, due out in July from Random House, has been named a Main Selection of the Book of the Month Club. Congratulations, Jonis!

Wheeler Winston Dixon delivered a guest lecture on "Creativity in the Sciences and the Arts," in Stephen Ragsdale's and Patrice Berger's team-taught Honors Class 198H, March 21, 2007. Wheeler also recently published a review of *Pornography: Film and Culture* (Rutgers University Press), edited by Peter Lehman, in *Choice*.

Wynne Summers has accepted a tenure-track position with Southern Utah University in Cedar City, Utah. Congratulations, Wynne!

Ted Kooser has made a number of appearances recently, including a reading at Washburn University in Topeka, a week's residency at Denison University in Ohio, a reading at Ohio Wesleyan, a reading at Fremd High School in Palatine, IL., a reading and workshop at the Santa Barbara Writers Conference, a reading at Utah State in Logan and a reading at Iowa Wesleyan.

Amanda Gailey (PhD 2006) has taken a tenure-track position as an assistant professor of English at the University of Georgia. She'll be contributing to the department in both digital humanities and American literature. Congratulations Amanda!

Anthony Hawley recently traveled to California to read from new work and from his book, *The Concerto Form*, at the Beyond Baroque Literary Arts Center in Los Angeles and at the Canessa Park Gallery in San Francisco. Also, his review of Chuck Stebelton's *Circulation Flowers* appears in the most recent issue of the St. Mark's Poetry Project Newsletter (NYC)

Marco Abel curated the "Retrospective of Contemporary German Cinema: The 'Berlin School'" from March 23 – April 5 at the Ross. The event included 12 films and was attended by two German directors, Benjamin Heisenberg and Christoph Hochhäusler, whom Marco hosted for 5 days each. Both directors enjoyed their interaction with the audience and repeatedly emphasized that the quality of the Q&A sessions was considerably higher than what they've used to from most other festivals at which they've presented their work. Both directors also attended Marco's German Filmmakers class to discuss their work, and their sense of German cinema in general, with students. Marco wants to thank everyone who took the time to attend one or more of the films, as well as Danny Ladely who initially invited him to put

this event together. The Omaha City Weekly published in its March 28, 2007 issue an in-depth article on the event by Michael Joe Krinak, which you can access online at <http://www.omahacityweekly.com>

Daryl Farmer's essay, "Bicycling the Cowboy State," was published in the Winter issue of *The Laurel Review*.

Marco Abel published the critical review essay, "Own Your Lack! New Lacanian Film Theory Encounters the Real in Contemporary Cinema," in the current issue of *South Atlantic Review*.

Timothy Schaffert's novel *The Singing and Dancing Daughters of God* is a nominee for the Omaha Reads citywide book club sponsored by the Omaha Public Library. Anyone can vote (and as often as they'd like) between now and April 20 at www.omhareads.org.

Ken Price reports that the *Walt Whitman Archive*, hosted for more than a decade at the University of Virginia, is now hosted at the University of Nebraska. (The url remains the same: whitmanarchive.org) Coinciding with this move to a new server, the *Whitman Archive* is releasing significant new material: **Susan Belasco** has edited with the assistance of **Elizabeth Lorang** an entire section devoted to nearly 160 poems Whitman first published in 48 different periodicals. Matt Cohen (Duke University) has helped develop a new section on translations of Whitman's poetry by editing and providing an introduction to the first full Spanish translation of *Leaves of Grass*. Other work on translations is now in progress. Finally a new and much improved search engine provides better access to the growing amount of material on the site.

Gwendolyn Foster published her essay, "New York Class-Passing Onscreen in the 1930s," in the anthology entitled *City that Never Sleeps: New York and the Filmic Imagination*, published by Rutgers UP. The chapter is about class, romance, and mobility in such films as "My Man Godfrey," "Manhattan Melodrama," and "Gold Diggers of 1933." Gwendolyn's book, *Class-Passing: Social Mobility in Film and Popular Culture* (SIUP, 2005) is about to go into a second printing.

More about **Ken Price**: at the Society for Textual Scholarship meeting in New York City, Ken moderated two panels. One featured recent and current UNL PhD students: **Amanda Gailey**, "The Campbell House Project: Editing Texts in a Culture-Mapping Environment"; **Brett Barney**, "Getting on the Map: Textual Editors in the Digital Environment"; and **Elizabeth Lorang**, "Digitizing Periodicals and Representing the Textual Environment." A second

panel featured Matt Cohen, "Whitman on Edge: Digitizing Manuscript Marginalia" and **Elizabeth Lorang**, "Editing Whitman's Poems in Periodicals." (**Ted Genoway's** talk on editing Whitman's correspondence fell victim to an early spring snow storm.)

And while we're at it: **Ken** was also interviewed for an upcoming documentary film on Whitman that will be broadcast on PBS as part of "The American Experience" in January.

Arra Ross has a poem, "Sundays" forthcoming in *The Spoon River Poetry Review* and a story, "The Zebras of Nebraska and the Wild Plum Jelly" forthcoming in *Alimentum, The Literature of Food*.

Gerry Shapiro's story, "All Along the Watchtower," appears in the current (Spring 2007) issue of *The Cincinnati Review*.

Julia Schleck delivered a paper at The Renaissance Society of America's annual meeting in Miami last month. Her paper, "The Facts of the Matter: Reading Early Modern English Travel Accounts," was part of a panel entitled "True and Exact Accounts: Travel, Science, and Literary Discourse."

Upcoming Events

TODAY, Friday April 6: Jehanne Dubrow and Kelly Grey Carlisle, reading from their work, as part of the **No Name Reading Series**, 4 p.m., Sur Tango Bar and Grill, 1228 P Street.

Tuesday April 10: Dr. Thomas K. Dean, Director of the Iowa Project on Place Studies, speaking on "Objecting, Subject, Ethic, Affect: Dimensions of Understanding Place." 3:30 p.m., Bailey Library. Co-sponsored by the Plains Humanities Alliance, the Center for Great Plains Studies, The Department of English, The Department of History, The Department of Anthropology and Geography, and the Environmental Writing and Criticism Group.

Wednesday April 11: Julia Schleck, 7:30 p.m., Bailey Library, delivering the last in this year's Medieval/ Renaissance Studies series of lectures, "Muslim/ Jewish/Christian relations, 1100-1700." Julia's lecture, titled "Reports of War and Terror," is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served.

Thursday April 12: Steve Stern, fiction writer, author of several novels and collections of short fiction, reading from his work. 7 p.m., Great Plains Art Gallery, 12th and Q Street. Reception and book-signing to follow. Steve Stern's novels and short fiction collections have garnered many awards, among them two National Jewish Book Awards for Fiction and a Guggenheim Fellowship. Literary critic Harold Bloom has written that Steve Stern's fiction marks "a return to the Yiddish sublime." His reading is co-sponsored by the Harris Center for Judaic Studies, the Creative Writing Program, and *Prairie Schooner*.

Thursday April 12: Keynote Address, Blacks in Film Festival 2007. 6 p.m., Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center. The festival, titled "**Race Identity Revolution: Blacks in Film 1969-2006**," will run from **April 12 to April 15**. The festival is sponsored by African American and African Studies Program (AAASP), an auxiliary program of the Institute for Ethnic Studies and the Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center (The Ross) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The festival will showcase six films representing black experiences in the United States, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Africa. The festival begins with the Blaxploitation tradition featuring *Superfly* (1972) and *Foxy Brown* (1974); and, continues with films addressing revolutionary and post-colonial movements: *Sugar Cane Alley* (1983), *Burn!* (*Queimada*) (1969), *Flame* (1996), and *Twelve Disciples of Nelson Mandela* (2006). Featured keynote speakers and festival facilitators are Jeffrey C. Wray, (MFA), Assistant Professor of English and Co-Chair of the Film Studies Department at Michigan State University and film director, Tama Hamilton Wray. They will deliver a keynote address entitled "Past and Future Directions in Black Cinema and Film Studies" and screen *China* (2003), an independent film produced by them. Full details of the festival, including a registration form, hotel accommodations, film synopses, and guest speaker biographies, can be found at the festival website www.aaasfilmfestival.com. For additional information please call 402-472-1816 or 402-472-3299.

Saturday and Sunday, April 14-15: Julia Schleck, singing with the Chamber Singers and members of the Dance Department at UNL in a staging of **Gian Carlo Menotti's "The Unicorn, the Gorgon, and the Manticore, Or the Three Sundays of a Poet."** 7:30 p.m. both nights, at Mabel Lee Hall (the main dance venue on campus). Julia reports that "the piece is a kind of modern day masque, with an allegorical story line critiquing the shallowness of society and its

incomprehending cruelty (as compared to artists). It's got the wittiest lyrics/ libretto that I've ever had the pleasure to sing, and we've been working hard to make our diction quite clear so that everyone can catch the jokes (it's in English)."

Tuesday April 17: Book Fair! From 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., we'll host a book fair unlike any in recent Andrews Hall history: Not one but *three* publishers (count 'em!) -- Bedford St. Martins, Houghton Mifflin, and Longman Publishing -- will fill Bailey Library with their wares, computer displays and a lunch buffet from La Paz. You may not know yet what you're teaching in the fall, but you know what you **want** to teach, so come whet your pedagogical appetite and enjoy some excellent Mexican cuisine.

Wednesday April 18: The annual *Plains Song Review* reading, reception, & gallery show, 6:30 p.m. at the Great Plains Art Museum, 12th and Q. Authors will read from their work, and the Center for Great Plains Studies will present the Christine Pappas Award for Best Work by a University of Nebraska undergraduate. Volume IX of *Plains Song Review* will be available for sale at the special rate of \$5. For more information, visit: www.unl.edu/plains or email **Shoshana Sumrall** at ArtisticDeli@aol.com.

Thursday April 19: Dr. Nancy Welch (Ph.D. from our department), Professor of English at the University of Vermont, giving a scholarly talk, "Living Room: Teaching Public Writing in a Privatized World," 3:30-5:00 p.m., Bailey Library.

Thursday April 19: Elena Dykewomon, discussing and reading from her work, 7 p.m., Great Plains Art Gallery, 12th and Q Street. A reception and book-signing will follow. Dykewomon is the author of *Beyond the Pale*, an historical novel which begins in a Russian shtetl and follows its protagonist to Manhattan's Lower East Side. The *Village Voice* reviewer called it "One of the most compelling novels I have ever read," while Arlene Istar Lev praises Dykewomon's "use of language and her finely-honed story-telling," stating that the book "represents the best of historical fiction." This event is sponsored by the Committee for GLBT Concerns, the Creative Writing Program, and *Prairie Schooner*. For more information or if you want to be involved with Dykewomon's visit, contact **Barbara DiBernard** at bdibernard2@unl.edu.

Thursday April 19: John Keeble, winner of the 2006 *Prairie Schooner* Fiction Prize and author of a

number of books, reading from his fiction, 7:30 p.m., Bailey Library. This event is sponsored by *Prairie Schooner*, the University of Nebraska Press, and the Creative Writing Program.

Thursday, April 19, Ladette Randolph (Ph.D. from our department), editor of the anthology *The Big Empty: Contemporary Nebraska Nonfiction Writers*, leads a group reading of contributors to the anthology as part of the John H. Ames Reading Series, Bennett Martin Public Library, 136 S. 14th Street, 7:30 p.m.

Friday April 20: Nancy Welch, reading from her short story collection, *The Road to Prosperity*, 12:00-1:00 p.m., Bailey Library.

News From the Nebraska Summer Writers' Conference

Preparations for the **2007 Nebraska Summer Writers' Conference** are well under way, with registrations coming in every day from around the world. (Twenty-three states so far, and even one from London!) We've got faculty coming from all over as well: Ron Hansen, Li-Young Lee, Dorianne Laux, Stephen Dunn, Jim Shepard, Sara Gruen, Lee Martin, Judith Kitchen, Stan Rubin, Leslie Adrienne Miller, Joe Mackall, Sonia Pabley, Emma Sweeney, Jane von Mehren, as well as local writers **William Kloefkorn, Sean Doolittle, Brent Spencer** and our own **Hilda Raz** and **Timothy Schaffert**.

Many of our weekend and week-long workshops still have openings. They're filling up quickly, however, so if you'd like to take a workshop with one of our award-winning writers, let me know ASAP. Also, we could still use some volunteers to help in preparation and execution. Let me know by email if you're interested in helping out.

The Conference runs this summer from **June 16-22**, with readings and panels that are free and open to the public. Look for our poster around the halls of Andrews in May, or feel free to call or email with questions.

– **Dave Madden**, Assistant Director
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American Life in Poetry By Ted Kooser, U.S. Poet Laureate, 2004-2006

One of the ways a poet makes art from his or her experience is through the use of unique, specific and particular detail. This poem by Rick Snyder thrives on such details. It's not just baseball caps, it's Tasmanian Devil caps; it's not just music on the intercom, it's James Taylor. And Snyder's poem also caught my interest with the humor of its flat, sardonic tone.

How Are You Doing?

As much as you deserve it,
I wouldn't wish this
Sunday night on you--
not the Osco at closing,
not its two tired women
and shaky security guard,
not its bin of flip-flops
and Tasmanian Devil
baseball caps,
not its freshly mopped floors
and fluorescent lights,
not its endless James Taylor
song on the intercom,
and not its last pint of
chocolate mint ice cream,
which I carried
down Milwaukee Ave.
past a man in an unbuttoned
baseball shirt, who stepped
out of a shadow to whisper,
How are you doing?

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