

UNL ENGLISH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR

Friday, April 20, 2007

Interim editor: Gerry Shapiro

Publisher: Joy Ritchie

"Speaking Truth to people in varying states of powerlessness"

Recent Publications and Other Achievements

Susan Belasco is the speaker for the biannual Graduate Workshop in American Literature at Ohio State University this spring. Her public lecture, "Imagining Toussaint Louverture: The Emergence of Radical Abolition in the United States," will be on April 26 and her workshop on "Walt Whitman's Poems in Periodicals," a part of the Walt Whitman Archive, will be on April 27. The Graduate Workshop at Ohio State is a part of the graduate program in the English Department. Depending on their courses of study, graduate students enroll in either one or two workshops for independent study credit during their degree programs. For more information, visit this website: http://english.osu.edu/newsEvents/events/yr2007/02-07_loverture.cfm

Chris Gallagher is the recipient of the UNL Graduate Student Association 2006-2007 Outstanding Service to Graduate Students Award. Chris also gave the keynote address, entitled "Assessment, Accountability, and Higher Education," at UNL's Inaugural Teaching and Learning Exposition on March 29th.

Tyrone Jaeger was recently awarded a Louise VanSickle Fellowship in Creative Writing. Tyrone has a number of stories and poems appearing in journals this spring and summer: the poem "Spread Your Wings" appears in the 25.1 issue of *Southeast Review*; the story "Flesh Wounds" in the spring issue of *Descant* (Canada); the poems "Letter to You During This Our New Reincarnation," "Specter," & "The Third Flood," in the summer issue of *Indiana Review* (and look for the pod-cast of these poems on the *IR* website); the poem "Neighbor" in *Paddlefish*; and "Aiken's Grief," a novel excerpt from Tyrone's novel, *Dirty*, in *sub-Terrain* (Canada). As well, Tyrone will be heading to Denver to teach three creative writing courses at the second annual Lighthouse Lit Fest.

Ruth Nisse is finishing up her semester as a visiting professor at Duke University. She sends this report to all her friends in the department: "It's been a lot of fun and I was happy enough to miss the miserable Nebraska winter. I delivered a paper on 'Diaspora as Empire in the Hebrew Deeds of Alexander' at an International Conference on Alexander the Great in Medieval Literature at the University of Toronto and have another paper coming up in May at the Fourth International Piers Plowman conference at the University of Pennsylvania. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone in August!"

Farrah Lehman presented a paper, "'The Future in the Instant': New Media, Renaissance Drama, and Theories of Reader Response," at the Renaissance Society of America Conference in Miami last month.

Marco Abel presented his paper, "'Berliner Schule': Re-visions of Mobility in the Age of Post-Wall Globalization," on April 8 in Boston at the annual national conference of the Popular Culture/American Culture Association.

Timothy Schaffert's new novel, *Devils in the Sugar Shop*, was just officially announced as a Book Sense pick for May. (Book Sense is a national marketing effort on behalf of the independent booksellers across the country, and every month they select twenty books to spotlight. Other choices for May include new books by Michael Chabon, S.E. Hinton, Nathan Englander, Susan Vreeland, Jim Crace, and others.) Timothy's short story "The Young Widow of Barcelona" has been adapted into performance by the Blue Barn's Witching Hour theater troupe as part of *Short Fictions & Maledictions*, which traces the development of the American gothic, and also includes pieces inspired by Edgar Allan Poe and Tennessee Williams. *Short Fictions & Maledictions* plays for three weekends beginning April 27. Visit www.bluebarn.org for more details.

Benjamin Vogt presented his paper, "Ecofeminism and Ceremony in Linda Hogan's 'Dwellings': To Heal the Bodies of Earth," at the annual Popular Culture Association /American Culture Association conference in Boston on April 6. (Benjamin notes the "T" subway system is the worst on the planet.)

Hilda Raz was a member of two panels at AWP in Atlanta: "A Celebration of Robert Dana," with David Lynn, Ted Solotaroff, and David Hamilton; and "More Than One Way to Tell a Story," with Stephen Dunn, Rosellen Brown, Lee Martin, and Mimi Schwartz. The *Prairie Schooner* Book Prize Reading at AWP was moderated by **Ladette Randolph**. Hilda and **Aaron Raz Link** have been giving readings from their new book, *What Becomes You*, in Atlanta and in four venues in Lincoln this month, as well as a multi-media presentation on Gender, Transition, and Identity at "Our Voices, Ourselves," a Gender Studies Symposium at Lewis & Clark College, March 8. Hilda has poems in *Cincinnati Review* as well as other places this spring.

Nick Spencer's "Critical Mimesis: JR's Transition to Postmodernity" appears in *Paper Empire: William Gaddis and the World System*, edited by Joseph Tabbi and Rone Shavers, (University of Alabama Press).

Melissa Homestead drove 1600 miles during Spring break, making surgical strikes along the way at libraries in Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin, conducting research on Willa Cather, Catharine Sedgwick, and Susanna Rowson. Melissa will use a Maude Hammond Fling Faculty Travel Fellowship awarded by the Research Council to travel in late May and early June to libraries in New York, Boston, New Haven, Amherst, and Schenectady, where she will do archival research on Sedgwick. While "back East," she will present at the American Literature Association meeting in Boston on Edith Lewis, Willa Cather, and New England, and will present at the Catharine Sedgwick Symposium in Stockbridge, MA, on the publishing and reception history of Sedgwick's novel *Clarence* (1830). In late June, she will travel to France for the International Willa Cather Seminar, at which she will present on Edith Lewis's editorial work at *Every Week* magazine during World War I as a context for reading Cather's *One of Ours*. In July, she will travel to Minneapolis to the annual meeting of the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing to present on Sedgwick's correspondence with editors and publishers.

Kalenda Eaton presented "Kwame at the Crossroads: Hip Hop, Basketball, and the Aframerican Dream in Ngozi Onwurah's 'Hangtime,'" at the 2007 Africa

Conference, University of Texas-Austin held March 30-April 1, 2007. The conference theme this year was "Popular Cultures in Africa." She was joined on the panel by Marie-Chantal Kalisa (Modern Languages and Literature, UNL) and C. Gerise Herndon (English, Nebraska Wesleyan) along with others.

More news from **Kalenda**: she was awarded (but regretfully declined) a Fulbright Fellowship to Dakar, Senegal for the 2007-2008 academic year. The fellow-ship (at Cheikh Anta Diop University) would have allowed her to teach courses in American Literature and Black Women's Literature in the Department of English and also research the history of feminist literature written by Senegalese women. She is interested in how literature, specifically the novel, functions as a gauge of public sentiment and as a historical chronicle of resistance in West Africa. She plans to further this research in the near future.

Wheeler Winston Dixon's critical writings from 1999 to the present, especially his books *Disaster and Memory* (Columbia UP, 1999); *Visions of the Apocalypse* (Wallflower, 2003); and *Film and Television After 9/11* (Southern Illinois) are prominently cited in Stephen Keane's second edition of *Disaster Movies: The Cinema of Catastrophe* (Wallflower, 2007).

Whitney Douglas and **Eric Turley** have been awarded a Karen Dunning Award for a Scholarly Paper or Creative Activity in Women's and Gender Studies. Their project involved their research on the suffrage movement in Nebraska which was used in a larger collaborative endeavor with The Angels Theater Company, the Lincoln YWCA, and a grant from the Nebraska Humanities Council to create the play *Nebraska Next!*, which toured the state of Nebraska in spring 2006. They will be presented their award on April 27 at the Women's and Gender Studies Graduation Reception and Awards Ceremony.

Jackie Cruikshank won a Peter Rollins/Michael Schoenecke travel grant to present her paper, "'Murder in Her Eye:' The Black Female Murderer in The Music of The Harlem Renaissance," at the Popular Culture Association /American Culture Association National Conference in Boston in April.

Derek Driedger's essay, "Writing Isolation and the Resistance to Assimilation as 'Imaginative Art': Willa Cather's Anti-Narrative in *Shadows on the Rock*," has been accepted for publication by *Journal of Narrative Theory*.

Laura Madeline Wiseman has poems in the recent issues of *Red Cedar Review*, *Wavelength*, *Meat Journal*, and *Tar Wolf Review*.

Dave Madden has a piece called "Prime Tie" in the latest issue of *The Creator*, an international journal of design published out of Barcelona. It was a collaboration with Pittsburgh-based artist Brett Yasko, and can be read online at <http://www.creator.info/CREATOR/EN/TheCreatorStudio/NumeroActual/Hours/Home.htm>

Barbara Tracy was an invited speaker at the S.U.N.Y. (Stony Brook) Women's Studies Colloquium "Cultural Sites of Critical Insight: Coming Full Circle" on March 15, which focused on "Philosophy, Social Theory, and Aesthetics of the Cultural Productions of Native/African American Women." Barbara presented "Standing at the Crossroads: African American/Native American Cultural Convergences."

Vanessa Steinroetter gave a presentation, "Navigating between Admiration, Fear, and Ridicule: The Sea Captain as a Character in American Nautical Fiction of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," earlier this month at this year's Public Culture Association/American Culture Association conference in Boston.

Carmel Lee Morse was a co-recipient of the Karen Dunning Women's and Gender Studies Award for Graduate Students for her collection of poetry and images entitled "Branches."

Razia Sultana Khan presented "Microcredits, Economics and Women: the Story of the Grameen Bank" at the No Limits Conference, which was held from March 30-31 at UNL. She also read her short story "Proxy," at the same conference.

Earlier this month at the National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies Conference in San Jose, California, **Eduardo Blanco** (M.A. Student), **John Chavez** (PhD Student), **Amber Harris Leichner** (PhD Student), **Ramon Guerra** (PhD Student), and **Laura Madeline Wiseman** (PhD Student) presented a multi-genre panel titled "'Silence-Death': Film and Detective Fiction as an Act of Recovery in *Desert Blood: the Juarez Murders* and *Senorita Extraviada: Missing Young Woman*."

The abstract of **Cindy Olson's**, *Runaway Horses*, has been accepted for November 2007 M/MLA's Association for the Study of Literature panel session: "Writing the Plains, Writing the Biome: Environ-

mental Literature Across the 49th Parallel." The panel includes scholarly and creative work. Cindy will read a small excerpt from her novel, which is set in the Platte River Valley, near Ogallala, Nebraska.

The **Blacks in Film Festival 2007**, which ran recently at the Ross Media Arts Center, was a fabulous success, thanks to the tremendous organizational efforts of **Kwakiutl Dreher** in collaboration with Dawne Curry and Jeannette Jones of the History Department. Sponsored by the African American and African Studies Program of the Institute for Ethnic Studies, it drew sponsors from several of sources both within and outside the University, brought speakers and panelists from Michigan State University, Creighton University, Wesleyan University, the University of Nebraska at Omaha, as well as UNL, of course, and attracted audiences from both the University and the community. The films were very well received, and the panels were most stimulating. Many congratulatory messages have come to AAAS and to Kwakiutl and her collaborators. You might want to add yours when you see her.

– Oyekan Owomoyela
Ryan Professor of African Literature

Congratulations to **Ramon Guerra** and **Leslie Ianno**, who have won this year's Junior Staff Teaching Awards!

Ken Price recently gave talks at the University of Buffalo, Case Western Reserve University, Soka University of America, and Duke University on textual scholarship, the Whitman Archive, Self and Society in the American Renaissance, and the foundations and future of American literary scholarship in an online environment, respectively. He also served as a panelist reviewing grant applications at NEH and then stayed on for a two-day meeting at NEH for directors of digital centers.

Amy Goodburn, **Debbie Minter**, **Joy Ritchie**, and **Barbara Couture** gave presentations at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in NYC last month. Their panel "Composition and Postsecondary Leadership" addressed the recent phenomenon of composition teachers/scholars moving into departmental and institutional leadership positions.

Upcoming Events

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

TODAY – Friday April 20: A Very Special No-Name Reading! 4:00 p.m., Sur Tango Bar and Grill, 1228 P Street.

Monday, April 23: W.W. Norton Book Fair! You've barely "digested" the offerings from the April 17 book fair, and here comes another one. W.W. Norton will display its wares in Bailey Library from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. today, with sandwiches from Doozey's for lunch. Yum.

Monday, April 23: Gregory Rutledge, lecturing on "What's *Loving* Got To Do With It: Embodied Dissents to 'The Impassable' in Octavia E. Butler's *Kindred*," 3:30 - 5 p.m., City Campus Union (room to be posted). This lecture is part of the Institute for Ethnic Studies Scholars Colloquia series.

Monday, April 23: Grace Bauer and Ember Schrag, reading from their poetry, 7:30 p.m., Crescent Moon Coffee House in the Haymarket. Grace will be reading from her two recent books of poems; Ember, an undergraduate major in our department, will read will from a series of poems written as part of a UCARE project she's completing this semester under Grace's supervision.

Tuesday, April 24, John Unsworth, Candidate for Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, speaking on "The Value of a liberal arts education in the 21st century," 3:15 - 4:30 p.m., City Campus Union (room to be announced). Dr. Unsworth is Dean and Professor, Grad. School of Library and Information Sciences and Professor of English, Univ. of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign.

Tuesday, April 24: EGSA-sponsored department social, 3:30-5:00 p.m., Dudley Bailey Library. Join your colleagues in celebrating the end of another great semester! We hope to see you and your favorite dish there!

Tuesday April 24: Ellen T. Pappozzi, Professor of Horticulture, lecturing on "The Art in Horticulture-

Plants in Paintings and Literature," 7:30 p.m., Bailey Library. This is the last event of the year for the Medieval/Renaissance Group.

Wednesday April 25: English Department Literary Contest Award-winners, reading from their work, 3:30 - 5 p.m., Bailey Library. Come hear the best work of our undergraduate and graduate poets, fiction-writers, and essayists. Refreshments will be served.

Friday April 27: English Department Awards Celebration, 2:00 - 3: 30 p.m., Bailey Library. Even *more* refreshments will be served.

Wednesday, May 2, 3:00 - 4:30 p.m (NOTE EARLIER TIME): Final department meeting of the semester.

From the Chair

Chancellor Harvey Perlman has named **Gerry Shapiro** to a Willa Cather Professorship at UNL on the basis of "a demonstrated record of distinguished scholarship/creative activity." The College of Arts and Sciences has also selected Gerry as the 2007 recipient of the College Award for Outstanding Research and Creative Achievement in the Humanities. This award was established to recognize faculty members who have made significant contributions to their field during the past five years and to celebrate their achievements. Congratulations, Gerry!!

Robert Brooke and **Tom Gannon** have both received 2007 College Distinguished Teaching Awards in honor of their outstanding teaching and dedication to student learning. These are well deserved awards!

Mary K. Stillwell has received a research grant from the University of Nebraska Foundation to work on "*Bright Lights Flying*": *An Introduction to the Poetry of Ted Kooser*, the first full-length study of the life and work of the nation's 13th and our very own poet laureate. The grant will provide release time from teaching to focus on completing the manuscript. Congratulations, Mary K.!

You can join in applauding our colleagues and students for their achievements at the College of Arts

and Sciences Convocation at 3:00 this Friday (Today) in the City Union. I also encourage everyone to join in the Department Awards and Recognition Celebration on Friday, April 27 to celebrate the many achievements of students and faculty this year.

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

Editor's note: we're running a "double-header" in this last 2006-2007 issue of the department newsletter, both in honor of the advent of this year's baseball season (baseball, that most literary of all spectator sports, if only because its glacial pace allows one the luxury of scribbling pithy notes while still carefully observing the game) and in recognition of the fact that we've fallen behind in reprinting the wonderful poetry columns from Ted's project. So here are two of Ted's latest offerings.

American Life in Poetry, Column 107

Naomi Shihab Nye is one of my favorite poets. She lives in San Antonio, Texas, and travels widely, an ambassador for poetry. Here she captures a lovely moment from her childhood.

Supple Cord

My brother, in his small white bed,
held one end.
I tugged the other
to signal I was still awake.
We could have spoken,
could have sung
to one another,
we were in the same room
for five years,
but the soft cord
with its little frayed ends
connected us
in the dark,
gave comfort
even if we had been bickering
all day.
When he fell asleep first
and his end of the cord
dropped to the floor,

I missed him terribly,
though I could hear his even breath
and we had such long and separate lives
ahead.

Reprinted from *A MAZE ME*, Greenwillow, 2005, by permission of the author. Copyright (c) Naomi Shihab Nye, whose most recent book of poetry is *You and Yours*, BOA Editions, Ltd., 2005. This weekly column is supported by The Poetry Foundation, The Library of Congress, and the Department of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This column does not accept unsolicited poetry.

American Life in Poetry, column 106

By describing the relocation of the moles which ravaged her yard, Washington poet Judith Kitchen presents an experience that resonates beyond the simple details, and suggests that children can learn important lessons through observation of the natural world.

Catching the Moles

First we tamp down the ridges
that criss-cross the yard

then wait for the ground
to move again.

I hold the shoe box,
you, the trowel.

When I give you the signal
you dig in behind

and flip forward.
Out he pops into daylight,

blind velvet.

We nudge him into the box,
carry him down the hill.

Four times we've done it.
The children worry.

Have we let them all go
at the very same spot?

Will they find each other?
We can't be sure ourselves,

only just beginning to learn
the fragile rules of uprooting.

Poem copyright (c) 1986 by Judith Kitchen, whose most recent book is the novel, *The House on Eccles Road*, Graywolf Press, 2004. Reprinted from *Perennials*, Anhinga Press, 1986, with permission of the author. This weekly column is supported by The Poetry Foundation, The Library of Congress, and the Department of English at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. This column does not accept unsolicited poetry.

Pet Dream Analyst

Dear Pet Dream Analyst,
Last night I dreamed that my dog went to the groomer and came back wearing lipstick-red polish on the pads of his feet. Very chic, a new fad in dog grooming. What does this mean?

– Chic Pet Dreamer

Dear Chic Pet Dreamer,

I have never heard of applying colored polish to the foot pads of dogs, but it sounds like an excellent idea for the pet grooming industry, which suffers from meager profits. This may be one of those rare dreams which is inspired and marketable. So Henry Ford dreamed one night of a black boxy automobile and Colonel Sanders of a cholesterol enhanced chicken. Now I am not a business guru, but I suspect franchising is the best way to go with this dream. On average the groomers could charge \$25 per paw and you could get a 10% licensing fee.

You could also market a line of high-profit polishes, perhaps endorsed by designers and movie stars like Karl Lagerfeld and Katie Holmes. There could be Do-It-Yourself Kits for the thrifty minded, marketed on late night TV and through discount stores. If we expand the market to include cats, who care more about being chic than dogs (or at least their owners do), then we are talking 140 million animals or 560 million paws, which at \$25 per paw is a lot of money. And the polish would need to be renewed every three to six months. I grow giddy just thinking about it.

Dear Readers:

Several of you have asked why I remain anonymous, whereas I ask myself why I do the column at all, since I am providing without remuneration a service for which I ordinarily receive \$120 an hour. In large part I do the column for this publication's editor pro tem, Gerry Shapiro, who has utilized my services often and whom I regard as a friend, as much as a client can be a friend. I think of the condo on St. Kitt's as "Gerry's place" and would invite him for a visit, if it were not against the professional ethics of the AAPDA. I wish I could tell you some of Gerry's dreams, which are humdingers, but that would also be unprofessional.

When I question the expanded magisterium represented by this column, I remind myself I did not become a Pet Dream Analyst for the money, but to help my fellow humans and select members of the animal kingdom. However, signing my name might seem like advertising for custom, an AAPDA no no. I have authorized Gerry to disclose my name to anyone who needs a private consultation (although I should advise that, in accord with AAPDA guidelines, I expect the fee for the first hour in advance).

– The Pet Dream Analyst

If you are going to be out of town this summer and would like to have your office mail forwarded to you, please fill out this form and give it to Elaine Dvorak in the main office. Thanks!

Your name: _____

Your summer address:

-

-

When will you be leaving town? _____

When will you be returning? _____

Forward all mail, or just first class?

-

Any special instructions?