

# UNL ENGLISH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR

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Editor: Gerry Shapiro

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"Speaking Truth to people in varying states of powerlessness"

## Recent Publications and Other Achievements

In the context of the fall 2007 UNL lecture series, "Architecture in 18th and 19th Century Historical Fiction," **Marco Abel** gave the introduction to the first speaker, Professor Ian Christie of Birkbeck College, University of London, on September 10.

**Michael Page** presented a paper entitled "Revolution on the Moon: The Influence of Breuer and Williamson's *The Birth of a New Republic* on Heinlein's *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*" at the Science Fiction Research Association Conference held in Kansas City, July 5-8, where he also participated in the Campbell Conference (being held in conjunction with the SFRA) roundtable discussion on "Jack Williamson, Robert Heinlein, and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," which included such SF luminaries as Frederik Pohl, James Gunn, and Robert Charles Wilson. Following these events, he spent July 9-20 at James Gunn's Intensive Institute on the Teaching of Science Fiction at the University of Kansas. His 205 syllabus from a few years back now appears at AboutSF.com in their archive of science fiction teaching materials.

**Amy Goodburn** and **April Lambert's** article "Teacher Advocacy in English Education" appears in *Closing the Gap: English Teachers Address the Tensions Between Teacher Preparation and Teaching Writing in Secondary Schools*. The volume is part of the Literacy, Language, and Learning series from Information Age Publishing.

This news from **Guy Reynolds**:

It's been a busy time for Willa Cather scholarship. At the end of June a group of us had to experience the bitter hardship of the 11th International Cather Seminar, held in Paris (the Sorbonne) and Provence (an eighteenth-century *abbaye*), France. It was brutal, but somehow we got through. **Guy Reynolds**, **Melissa Homestead** and **Chuck Mignon** served as Seminar Faculty/Fellows, and gave presentations. Other UNL presenters included **Sabrina Ehmke** and **Andy Jewell**, and our former PhD student **Josh Dolezal** also contributed. Later in the summer the Press released *Cather Studies 7: Willa Cather as Cultural Icon*, edited by **Guy Reynolds**, and including essays by UNL figures **Josh Dolezal**, **Erika Hamilton**, and **Mike Schueth**. Former poet

laureate Robert Pinsky provided a prefatory commentary, and the volume stands as a monument to **Susan Rosowski's** work for the Cather seminar in 2003, where the essays originated. Earlier in the summer the Press also published the Cather Scholarly Edition of the early novel, *Alexander's Bridge*. Former departmental Chair **Fred Link** provided the excellent textual scholarship for the volume, but the book should be seen as yet another testimony to the diligent work of the whole editorial team: **Beth Burke**, **Chuck Mignon** and **Kari Ronning**.

**Susan Belasco** contributed "The Cultural Work of National Magazines," a chapter in *The Industrial Book, 1840-1880*, volume 3 of *A History of the Book in America*, published this summer by the University of North Carolina Press.

**Benjamin Vogt's** poems "Portraiture at Blanks' Photography – Weatherford, 1978" and "Rural Kiss–Oklahoma, 1944" were reprinted in *Poemeleon's* formal poetry issue (Volume 2, Issue 1).

**Fran Davis** reports that in May, he and his wife, Sally Cobau, had their third child, Samuel Japhy. They're all happy and well. Also in May, Fran was awarded a Wheeler Fellowship from UNL-Graduate Studies for the 07-08 academic year.

**Anthony Hawley's** essay on Jackson Mac Low, "Startings," appears in the most recent issue of *Octopus* ([www.octopusmagazine.com](http://www.octopusmagazine.com)). You can read new poems of his in *The Tiny* (New York, NY) and *26* (Oakland, CA).

**Kelly Grey Carlisle** has an essay in the Fall issue of *Subtropics*.

**Timothy Schaffert's** novel *The Singing and Dancing Daughters of God* was chosen as the title for Omaha Reads, the citywide "one book" reading promotion sponsored by Omaha Public Library. Omaha Reads runs now through Nov. 30, with a number of related events including screenings of a short film inspired by the book, various panel discussions, and a lounge night.

**Zachary Schomburg** read from his book of poems, *The Man Suit*, two weeks ago at Pegasus Books in Berkeley and the Richard Hugo House in Seattle. In Seattle, he led a

workshop co-sponsored by *Cranky Magazine* and *Poets and Writers* entitled "Monster Attacks and Flash Floods of Lava: Turning a Poem on Itself." Also, The Man Suit, was the #1 selling book of poems at Small Press Distribution during the month of August.

**Janet Harkness**, Professor of English and Director of the Survey Research and Methodology Program at UNL coordinates The International Workshop on Comparative Survey Design (CSDI), an annual meeting of researchers committed to advancing methodology used in cross-cultural research. At the meeting in Chicago at the end of March, hosted by the University of Illinois at Chicago, Dr. Harkness was author and co-author on several papers. Sue Ellen Hansen and Janet Harkness presented "Where do comparative questions come from and should they come from somewhere else?" Janet Harkness, Tzu-Yun Chin (UNL PhD), Yongwei Yang (UNL PhD), Ipek Bilgen (UNL PhD), Ana Villar (UNL PhD) and Wei Zeng (SRAM MS) and international colleagues presented on "Developing Scales in Multilingual Studies." Kristen Miller, Gordon Willis and Janet Harkness presented on "Using Cognitive Testing Techniques to Examine Question Comparability." Peter Mohler, Beth Ellen Pennell and Janet Harkness presented on "Survey Translation Management Technologies" and, together with ISR and UNL graduate assistants and colleagues, Dr. Harkness presented on the CSDI Guidelines Initiative for cross-cultural surveys. In April Dr. Harkness convened a meeting of the organizing committee for the international conference to be held in Berlin in June 2008: The International Conference on Survey Methods in Multinational, Multicultural and Multiregional Contexts. Janet chairs the organizing committee and is chief editor of the book to accompany the conference. The Survey Research Laboratory at the University of Illinois, Chicago graciously hosted the meeting. At the annual general assembly of the 42-country International Social Survey Programme in May in Taipei, Taiwan, Janet coordinated the Methodology Committee and the Translation and Question Design work group meetings. She also presented a paper at the ISSP Research Session on "Developing Answer Scales in Cross-National Contexts" and gave an invited talk at the Taiwan Academy of the Sciences on "Question Design and Adaptation." In May and again in July Dr. Harkness attended meetings of the Central Coordinating Team of the European Social Survey (ESS) in London, England. The first meeting was related to EU infrastructure projects funded by the EU, the second was in order to consult on the development of new modules for the 2008 ESS. At the European Survey Research Association Conference in Prague, Czech Republic June 25-29, Dr. Harkness facilitated the organization of seven thematic sessions organized by CSDI colleagues (see CSDI above). Together with UNL PhD candidate Ana Villar, she organized a session on translation and presented an overview paper entitled "Survey Translation: Come of Age?". She also co-authored a paper on Question Design with Sue Ellen Hansen of U of Michigan and Manuel de la Puente of the US Bureau of the Census. Also in June, she was an invited participant at a World Health Organization World Mental Health Initiative internal workshop in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The invitation

came through Dr. Harkness' involvement in a translation assessment project for the study. In July, Dr. Harkness presented a paper on "Cross-national Challenges for Question Meaning" at a US State Department invited conference in Washington on conducting surveys in foreign countries.

**September 21: The No Name Reading Series**, featuring **Dave Madden** and **Carrie Shippers**, 4 p.m., Sur Tango Bar, 12<sup>th</sup> and P. (See additional information about the No Name Reading Series below.)

**September 21: Nebraska Presence: The State of Poetry**, a poetry reading featuring Lucy Adkins, Twyla Hansen, Sarah McKinstry-Brown, Roy Scheele, Michael Skau, and Fredrick Zydeck, 6:30-8:00 p.m., Sheldon Memorial Gallery, 12<sup>th</sup> and R Street.

**September 25: English Department Meeting**, 3:00 p.m., Dudley Bailey Library. Come to say *adiós* to Professor Ignacio Guijarro-Gonzalez, who's leaving soon to return to the University of Seville in Spain.

**September 25: "From Cineplex to Niche-Market: Adapting Shakespearean Tragedy,"** 7:30 p.m., Dudley Bailey Library, Andrews Hall, Room 228. In honor of Flatwater Shakespeare's ongoing production of *King Lear*, UNL's Medieval and Renaissance Studies Program and Department of English are hosting a presentation devoted to recent updates and "redates" of the play. **Steve Buhler** will be sharing excerpts from three adaptations: Uli Edel's *King of Texas*, featuring Patrick Stewart; Don Boyd's *My Kingdom*, with Richard Harris as a Liverpool crime boss; and Kristian Levring's *The King Is Alive*, with Shakespeare's play staged by tourists stranded in an African desert.

## EGSA Update

**EGSA** thanks everyone who voted in the recent election for department committee members, and congratulates those who were selected by their peers to sit on these committees:

**Rebecca Bednarz**, Teaching & Research Committee

**Luis Rivas**, Chair's Advisory Committee

**Laura Madeline Wiseman**, Grade Appeals Committee

Also, congratulations to **Tamy Burnett** for being selected as the English department's representative to the Graduate Student Association.

The semi-regularly scheduled EGSA Happy Hours will continue in October. Stay tuned to this newsletter and your email inbox for further details.

Your EGSA representatives

**Alison, Carrie, Dave, Julie, Krista, Leslie, Lupe, Mike, Sandy**

## The No Name Reading Series Strikes Back!

The no name reading series will be back in full swing on **Friday, Sept 21st, 4 pm at Sur Tango Bar and Cafe, 12<sup>th</sup> and P Street downtown**, and we just wanted to invite everyone in the department to come out and join in on the fun. The clever and brilliant **Dave Madden** and the brilliant and clever **Carrie Shippers** will be our first featured readers for the Fall semester with many more brilliant-clever and clever-brilliant writers to follow in the coming weeks. We would greatly appreciate it if you would mention no name to your classes and anyone else who you think might be interested. We are looking forward to an exciting year of readings in both the Fall and Spring.

Cheers,

The No Name Reading Series Committee: **John Chavez, Krista Ferguson, Emily M. Danforth, Amy Jirsa, Kelly Grey Carlisle, Rachel May, Joel Tomfohr, Cody Lumpkin**

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

North Carolina poet, Betty Adcock, has written scores of beautiful poems, almost all of them too long for this space. Here is an example of her shorter work, the telling description of a run-down border town.

### Louisiana Line

The wooden scent of wagons,  
the sweat of animals--these places  
keep everything--breath of the cotton gin,  
black damp floors of the icehouse.

Shadows the color of a mirror's back  
break across faces. The luck  
is always bad. This light is brittle,  
old pale hair kept in a letter.  
The wheeze of porch swings and lopped gates  
seeps from new mortar.

Wind from an axe that struck wood  
a hundred years ago  
lifts the thin flags of the town.

American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation ([www.poetryfoundation.org](http://www.poetryfoundation.org)), publisher of Poetry magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Poem copyright (c) 1975 by Betty Adcock. Reprinted from "Walking Out," Louisiana State University Press, 1975, with permission of Betty Adcock, whose most recent book is "Intervale: New and Selected Poems," Louisiana State University Press, 2001. Introduction copyright (c) 2006 by The Poetry Foundation. The introduction's author, Ted Kooser, served as United States Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 2004-2006. We do not accept unsolicited manuscripts.