

UNL ENGLISH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR

Friday, November 30, 2007

Editor: Gerry Shapiro

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"Speaking Truth to people in varying states of powerlessness"

Recent Publications and Other Achievements

Wheeler Winston Dixon has published "Fast Worker: the Films of Sam Newfield," in *Senses of Cinema* 45 (2007) The article covers in detail for the first time the life and more than 250 films of Newfield, arguably the most prolific director of the American sound film.

Nebraska Presence: An Anthology of Poetry, edited by Greg Kosmicki and **Mary K. Stillwell**, has just been published by The Backwaters Press. The anthology, which brings together the state's finest contemporary poets--from A (Adkins) to Z (Zydek), including a boast-worthy number of UNL faculty: **Grace Bauer, Robert Brooke, Stephen C. Behrendt, Pat Hemphill Emile, Tom Gannon, Ted Kooser, Greg Kuzma, Hilda Raz, and Mary K. Stillwell**, and alumni. Visit www.thebackwaterspress.homestead.com to buy the book directly from Backwaters Pres; it's also available at the UNLCampus Bookstore. This 200-page soft-cover anthology makes a striking Christmas gift for residents of any state! A celebratory reading by contributors to *Nebraska Presence* took place on Tuesday, November 13 in Bailey Library, and featured **Robert Brooke, Tom Gannon, Twyla Hansen, Greg Kuzma, Marge Saiser, Karen Shoemaker, Mary K. Stillwell, Lynn Wake, and Rosemary Zumpfe**. A reading of 33 contributors to *Nebraska Presence* took place at the Nebraska Book Fest, October 27th.

Chris Gallagher appeared on two panels at the National Council of Teachers of English conference in New York City. He presented a paper critiquing the notion of educational "accountability" and offering an alternative based on the concept of "engagement." He also served as respondent on a panel focused on the literacy implications of Nebraska's K-12 local assessment model. Nebraska Commissioner of Education Doug Christensen participated on both panels as well.

Carrie Shippers's haunting chapbook, *Ghost-Writing*, is available from Pudding House (or you can save on shipping by buying directly from the author). Carrie also has work in the latest *Sow's Ear Poetry Review*.

Grace Bauer is finishing up her semester's leave, much of which she spent on the east coast, where she read recently at the Ear Inn in New York City as part of their weekly poetry series. Grace's short story, "Billy, Ben & Jerry," appears in the most recent issue of *The Los Angeles Review*.

The play *Short Fictions and Maledictions*, which included **Timothy Schaffert's** adaptation of his short story "The Young Widow of Barcelona," has been nominated for two Omaha Entertainment and Arts Awards: Best Dramatic Play and Best Premiere of a New, Original or Local Script.

In mid-October, **Tom Lynch** presented a paper at the Western Literature Association Conference meeting in Tacoma, Washington, titled "Strange Lands: Representing the 'Strange' in Charles Fletcher Lummis and Arthur Groom." Lummis is an American writer who published a book titled *Some Strange Corners of our Country* in the 1880s, about the American Southwest. Groom is an Australian author who published *I Saw a Strange Land: Travels in Central Australia* in the 1950s. The paper is a postcolonial and ecocritical look at the notion of "strangeness" in anglophone representations of landscape, especially arid landscapes. Also, two of Tom's haiku were published in the recent issue of the journal *Modern Haiku*. Here's one of them:

juniper
dense with pale blue berries--
autumn morning

As this suggests, he's still clearing out a backlog of New Mexico writings.

Upcoming Events

TODAY! November 30: No Name Reading Series: The Alan Yates Special No Name Reading, 4 p.m., Sur Tango Bar et Café, 12th and P streets.

December 1: The Clean Part Reading Series and the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery present a poetry reading

featuring **Cynthia Arrieu-King, Jason Bredle and Jen Tynes**, Sheldon Art Gallery, 7 p.m.

December 3: **Greg Kuzma**, reading from his poetry, 3:30 p.m., Bailey Library. Reception and book-signing to follow.

December 17: *Nebraska Presence* group reading (for more on *Nebraska Presence*, see article on page one) 7 p.m., Crescent Moon Coffee House in the Haymarket, featuring UNL faculty and alums **Grace Bauer, Shelly Clark Geiser, Roy Scheele, Marge Saiser, and Lynn Wake**.

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

[Editor's Note: As a holiday special, we're running a two-for-the-price of one sale this week on American Life in Poetry. It's tastier than anything they have on sale at the mall, folks.]

Column 137

Dill pickles with strawberry jam? Pregnant women are known to go for late night meals like that. And the senses can go haywire. Here Jessy Randall, of Colorado Springs, gives us a look at one such woman.

Superhero Pregnant Woman

Her sense of smell is ten times stronger.
And so her husband smells funny;
she rolls away from him in the bed.
She even smells funny to herself,
but cannot roll away from that.

Why couldn't she get a more useful superpower?
Like the ability to turn invisible, or fly?

The refrigerator laughs at her from its dark corner,
knowing she will have to open it some time
and surrender to its villainous odors.

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Column 139

Man's best friend is, of course, woman's best friend, too. The Illinois poet, Bruce Guernsey, offers us this snapshot of a mutually agreed upon dependency that leads to a domestic communion.

The Lady and the Tramp

As my mother's memory dims
she's losing her sense of smell
and can't remember the toast
blackening the kitchen with smoke
or sniff how nasty the breath of the dog
that follows her yet from room to room,
unable, himself, to hear his own bark.

It's thus they get around,
the wheezing old hound stone deaf
baying like a smoke alarm
for his amnesiac mistress whose back
from petting him is bent forever
as they shuffle towards the flaming toaster
and split the cindered crisp that's left.

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MLA News Reminder!

Planning to attend MLA? Everyone is invited to the annual Cash Bar Reception hosted by our department in cooperation with the University of Missouri Department of English. This is a great opportunity to network with our alumni and other friends and colleagues of our department around the country. **Saturday, December 29 – 5:15-6:30 p.m., Water Tower Room, Hyatt Regency (see page 1860 in the MLA program).**