

English



Newsletter of the Department of English

University of Oregon

June 2008

***Beowulf* without Footnotes: Senior Medievalist, James Earl, to Retire**

Remarks by Warren Ginsberg, Knight Professor of English and fellow Medievalist, delivered at Professor Earl's retirement reception

I knew Jim Earl before I met him. I had read some of his articles when I was still in the East and Oregon was still part of that narrow brownish strip of other-land which, for New Yorkers, is America west of the Hudson river. But when it started to seem possible my wife Judith Baskin (Professor of Judaic Studies) and I might come here, I got his book. Even before I opened it, I liked what Jim had called it:

Thinking About Beowulf.

Someone who prized thinking enough to highlight it in his title—well, I thought, this is likely to be my kind of guy. Any lingering doubt vanished when I read two things on the first page. The first was Jim's declaration that the principle which unified his book would not be a rigorously developed argument about *Beowulf* but the intellectual pleasure he had found in thinking about the poem over many years. Here, disguised as a modest admission, was a humility topos that threw scholarly expectations straight out the window. Pleasure? In an academic book? How odd a couple is that! The second fetching gambit was not an oxymoron but a word of advice. Jim told his readers that they were about to encounter two introductions. The first was the one he wanted to write, the second the one that his publisher insisted he write. Read the first, Jim said, skip the second.

By the bottom of the second page, I was hooked by the voice that was speaking from the book, a voice I felt I could almost hear, so utterly personal and prepossessing yet unswervingly honest, and absolutely intent on excising anything that might get in the way of the conversation it wanted to have with the reader. This voice, Jim Earl's voice, you began to understand, wasn't just something he had fashioned as an element of style; it was an idea—one of the things he had been thinking about as he



James Earl

thought about *Beowulf*. This voice is itself the explanation of why there are no footnotes in the book. If you're shocked by that—I hope you are shocked by that—I can assure you every Anglo-Saxonist would have been more so. But Jim was willing to risk the shock to make his own dialogue with *Beowulf* a model for the dialogue he wanted his book to initiate. For him, thinking is never simply a private act; it's always an open channel of two-way communication. That's why Jim was everything but flippant when he told his

readers to skip one of his introductions. In fact, in his first formal chapter, he gives two more introductions to *Beowulf*; he's turned writing introductions into a meditation about the introduction as such.

Not that every thought Jim has had is one that makes you wish you had had it first. Part of the fun of reading him is that he's willing to put out ideas that border, let us say, on the loopy. In the book he examines *Beowulf* from various theoretical points of view, among them myth criticism, anthropology, phenomenology, deconstruction and psychoanalysis. As an example of this last approach, Jim gives us his chapter on Heorot as Men's Hall.

Hrothgar's famous court, you remember, towers high; it also has a central fire pit inside it. Well, Jim takes more than a few puffs on Freud's cigar to explain the yin and yang of this construction. Among

continued on page 2

Also In This Issue

- * Insight Seminars
- * Indigenous Literatures
- * Knight Professorship
- * Promise of Reason Conference
- * Reading Groups
- * Senior Instructor Retirements
- * Alex Neel: 19th Cent. Scholar
- * Williams Seminar

Earl

continued from page 1

medievalists his interpretation has become known as Earl's "edifice complex." But even here, I think Jim was making a deeper point. For the Danes, Heorot wasn't something merely lived in; it was part of their being.

Anyway, after I came to know this mind and voice, both of which I really liked on the page, I naturally wanted to see the face that went with them. So I went to the departmental website in search of a picture. How satisfying, if curious, to find, under his name, the handsome, bearded visage of J. M. Coetzee. Only later, after Jim and Steve Shankman recited for me their performance piece, the Johannesburg saga of the coffee cup and tomato juice, did I realize this uncanny resemblance was prescient. At the time, though, the prospect of having Jim as a colleague made me want to come to Oregon even more.

Needless to say, in the flesh Jim turned out to be even better than his book and picture had promised. I have never met anyone more intellectually curious, more passionately devoted to the pleasures of reading and learning, more committed to the idea that the University is the place where those pleasures should be shared. But not just the University. There's no place you go with him without knowing that something about being there with him makes you want to talk about things that matter. Even a haunted 15th c. English manor-house, which my wife, Judy, and I shared with Jim and his wife, Louise Bishop (Associate Professor, Clark Honors College), for a lovely summer week a few years ago. Each night, I could imagine the ghosts themselves huddling about the fireplace to listen as Jim waxed enthusiastic about the glories of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, which he was reading for the first time. That's the image—Jim reveling in the pleasure of a book—I think he'd want us to retain of him as a member of this department, and the best tribute we can give him. He's a tonic, is Jim Earl; I wish he could bottle himself, so that even as he begins to absent himself in retirement, we all might still have handy a pocket-flask of Earl's best, to warm us and remind us, when we need reminding, what we're here for.

"That Villages Were Universities": College for Adults

Jim Earl

Most people read Thoreau's *Walden* when they're in high school or college, when they're still too young to appreciate it. Students have so many other things on their minds that Thoreau hardly stands a chance.

Well, that at least was the case with me. I still have my copy of *Walden* from forty-five years ago. My underlinings tell me I read about half of it, and only half-understood that. I remember turning the pages—that's about all. It wasn't easy at that age to slow down, sit quietly, and listen attentively and respectfully to the

thoughtful, reflective voice of someone long-dead.

After teaching for many years, I've found ways to break through that barrier occasionally. Sometimes you can yank students out of their youth culture and their personal preoccupations long enough to give them a taste of adult genius that might actually last.

Sometimes. But most young people when they open a book decide almost immediately whether they like it or not. If they've been told to read it—and told they should like it—they almost inevitably don't like it. Maybe they're just reacting to the authority of the teacher, or the authority of the author, but in any case they're quick to judgment: the book's boring, or the author's not really very good, or very smart, or very relevant to their world.

I advise them to slow down, withhold judgment for a while, and pay closer attention to the voice of the author—in short, not just to read for pleasure, but to *study*. "Don't tell me what *you* think," I tell them, "tell me what *Thoreau* thinks." Good reading should draw you outside yourself; the books we read aren't always about ourselves. This advice often falls on deaf ears.

I don't mean to criticize the students. I was one myself, and I try never to forget what it was like. When I was young, college life was exciting and *study* was a bad word. Study is just the art of paying attention, and like any art, learning it takes time, practice and patience. As Thoreau puts it,

To read well, that is, to read true books in a true spirit, is a noble exercise, and one that will task the reader more than any exercise which the customs of the day esteem. It requires a training such as the athletes underwent, the steady intention almost of the whole life to this object.

It takes a long time—but for most of us education ends just as adulthood begins, and we stop studying the great books just when we might begin to understand and enjoy them. Many adults will tell you they've read *Walden*, when really, like me, all they did was turn the pages years ago, thinking about other things.

I don't mean to criticize adults, either, just because they're not reading, or rereading, Thoreau. It's not so easy as an adult to find the time, or the peace and quiet, for reading like that—for real study. It doesn't come naturally, after all. It takes "training such as the athletes underwent." So we weren't quite up to it when we were in school, and now we don't have time for it.

Why should we even *want* to work so hard at reading? Because, as Thoreau goes on to say,

There are probably words addressed to our condition exactly, which, if we could really hear and understand, would be more salutary than the morning or the spring to our lives, and possibly put a new aspect on the face of things for us.

That is, not to put too fine a point on it, reading can change your life—for the better—if only you know what to read and how to read it. But where do you learn that as an adult?

* * *

I think the University should finish what it starts. How lucky we are in Eugene, to live in a college town. Many people move here just to be near a university. But look at the relationship between our university and our town. Many people see the University as an ivory tower, out of touch with real people and their real problems. And when the University does reach out, with lectures, plays, or concerts . . . *there's no parking!* Our town-gown relationship is pretty dysfunctional. We rely almost exclusively on the Ducks to hold us together.

With this in mind, a few years ago a group of professors and townspeople started gathering weekly at the Excelsior Café, right off campus. They dreamt of a college town where the college wasn't just for the young. They thought the U of O should be a haven for everyone who wants to learn, not just for those preparing for jobs and careers. They dreamt of an adult college. They took inspiration from Thoreau, who in the same passage from *Walden* that I've been quoting, says,

It is time we had *uncommon* schools, that we did not leave off our education when we begin to be men and women. It is time that villages were universities, and their elder inhabitants the fellows of universities with leisure to pursue liberal studies the rest of their lives.

What a beautiful thought—now that I'm old enough to understand it!

The Excelsior group went on to create the Insight Seminars, the first step toward an adult college at the U of O. Their guiding belief was that many adults are eager to return to college, this time to do it right, with all the advantages of age. Many adults are at long last ready to study, especially "meaning of life" subjects. Here's a mission statement the group wrote:

In middle life the questions addressed by the humanities take on a new reality. Our society offers little guidance for this stage of life, though other cultures consider it a time for thinking and writing, wisdom and understanding, and coming to grips with ultimate questions. This is when we should make time for philosophy, literature, history, religion, art and music—even language study, which exercises the mind! Anyone can dabble in these without a university; but there's no comparison between the random reading most people do and the sort of experience a university provides: the joys of real study and deep learning, with a group of motivated peers, facilitated by experts you can respect.

Over the last five years, U of O faculty have taught forty Insight Seminars on a wide variety of subjects, including Understanding Islam, the Art of Reading, Ancient Wisdom, Great American Films, the Aging Brain, Mahatma Gandhi, Celtic Music, Asian Art, Northwest Landscapes, Philosophy and Retirement, Muslim Spain, *The Iliad*, Shakespeare's *Henry V*, *The Tale of Genji*, *War and Peace*, and many, many more. Some courses are repeated regularly. Last year Bill Rossi of the English

Department taught a course on *Walden*, which is what prompted me to resurrect that old copy of mine. Strange, how all those books I read so long ago are so much more interesting now.

All these courses are four weeks long, and meet on weekends or in the evening. This Spring we'll be offering courses on Emerson, on Forgiveness and Reconciliation, and on *Don Quixote*. For more information and registration, call the Insight Seminars office at 346-3475, or check our website, <http://uoinight.uoregon.edu>.

Notes from Department Head Henry Wonham



Henry Wonham

Dear Friends of the English Department, My second year as Department Head has included so many gratifying developments that it is difficult to decide which to call highlights. Certainly one of the most exciting events of the year was the surprise announcement of Warren Ginsberg's appointment as the English Department's first Knight Professor, a distinction conferred on the University's most outstanding senior faculty. Warren returned last year to full-time teaching and research after serving for three years as my very able predecessor. The entire Department takes great pride in his appointment, and I am personally inspired by his example that there can be scholarly life after headship.

There were other major faculty milestones, as well, including the retirements of our distinguished Anglo-Saxonist, Jim Earl, and three senior instructors, Paul Dresman, Joan Mariner, and Margaret McBride. According to my generally unreliable arithmetic, Jim, Paul, Joan, and Margaret have spent a combined eighty-four years on the faculty, and in that time they have taught something approaching 20,000 students. If we estimate (conservatively) that students in English and Composition courses submit an average of 10-20 pages of writing per

continued on page 4

Wonham

continued from page 3

course, then this foursome was responsible for grading anywhere from 200,000 to 400,000 pages of formal written work! Let's hope my math is wrong.

No one can replace this kind of dedication to student learning, but the Department was successful this year in recruiting two promising young Assistant Professors, who will begin breathing new life into our classrooms and our curriculum next fall. Allison Carruth is a recent Ph.D. from Stanford University, where she has written a dissertation entitled "Global Appetites: Literature and the Ecolitics of Food from World War I to the World Trade Organization." Our other new colleague, Lara Bovilsky, comes to Eugene from Washington University in St. Louis, where she is an Assistant Professor specializing in Renaissance and Early Modern British literature. Lara is the author of a forthcoming book, *Barbarous Play: Race on the Renaissance Stage*, which will be published by the University of Minnesota Press later this year. We are very excited about the contributions Allison and Lara will make to the Department, and we look forward to welcoming them to the faculty in September.

One of the most enjoyable and stimulating aspects of the 2008-'09 academic year was the extended visit of Professor Chadwick Allen of Ohio State, a specialist on comparative indigenous studies, who spent the year with us as the Moore Distinguished Visiting Professor. Chad taught an upper-division course on indigenous literatures, and he organized a fascinating two-day event on "Indigenous Literatures and Other Arts," which featured writers, artists, scholars, craftsmen, and performers from indigenous communities around the world. Chad's gracious hospitality and tireless organizational efforts transformed the UO Longhouse, for two days in May, into an international center for scholarly debate on traditional and contemporary indigenous creative practices.

The English Department's Center for Teaching Writing also hosted a major international conference to honor the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of Chaim Perelman's and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca's *La Nouvelle Rhétorique: Traité de l'Argumentation*, a work that has come to represent the revival of rhetoric and its reintegration with philosophy in the twentieth century. Professor John Gage was the driving force behind this ambitious and highly successful event, which brought more than one hundred and fifty scholars from fourteen countries to Eugene for four days of animated conversation and debate.

I could go on and on, but I will end by thanking the Department's many supporters, without whom we would be unable to give students the transformative educational experiences they deserve. To cite one example, beginning in 2010, we have arranged to make it possible for English majors to take part of their regular coursework with a UO English faculty member in the Bloomsbury neighborhood of London, blocks from the British Library and a short

walk from the British museum. The challenge is going to be making this opportunity affordable to undergraduates, many of whom struggle with loans and part-time jobs simply to cover regular tuition expenses. Our hope is that support from English alumni and friends of the Department will allow us to subsidize this incredible learning experience for students who might otherwise never have the chance to connect their extensive reading of English literature with the actual sights, sounds, people, and living history of Britain.

As many of you know, we rely on the generosity of donors to support a wide variety of initiatives, from the creation of small classes for senior English majors to the funding of modest prizes for distinguished undergraduate work. All of these initiatives are critical to maintaining the academic excellence of literary studies at the University of Oregon, and none of them would be possible without generous support from the Department's friends and alumni. For this, my colleagues and I are sincerely grateful.

I look forward to another productive and challenging year in 2008-'09, and I invite you to stop by the main office in 118 Prince Lucien Campbell Hall if you are visiting campus.

Sincerely,
Henry B. Wonham

Annual Giving reminder: If you should receive a letter or telephone call from UO Annual Giving and decide to make a contribution to the University, consider designating the English Department as a recipient of your gift. Such gifts make a great difference in what the department can do to enhance educational opportunities for our students and provide valuable research and instructional resources for our faculty. If you wish to make a contribution now, please make your check payable to the University of Oregon Foundation, designated for the Department of English, and send it directly to the UO Foundation at 1787 Agate Street, Eugene, OR 97403.

Thank you!

Moore Distinguished Professor Hosts “Indigenous Literatures and Other Arts: A Symposium and Workshop”



Chadwick Allen

During the 2007-2008 academic year, Professor Chadwick Allen, Associate Professor of English at Ohio State University, served as the fourth Barbara and Carlisle Moore Distinguished Visiting Professor. Professor Allen received his Ph.D. in Comparative Cultural and Literary Studies from the University of Arizona. He has been a Fulbright fellow in the Department of Maori Studies at Auckland University in New Zealand and received a senior Fulbright research award to New Zealand in 2005. His first book, *Blood Narrative: Indigenous Identity in American Indian and Maori Literary and Activist Texts* (2002), is a comparative study of self-representation produced by New Zealand Maori and American Indians between World War II and the early 1980s, a period of demographic upheaval, important political activism, and unprecedented literary production for Indigenous peoples in both settler nations. Allen has published essays on postcolonial theory, the discourse of treaties, Indigenous aesthetics, and popular representations of US frontiers. He is currently at work on two book projects. The first, tentatively titled *Trans-Indigenous Literary Studies: Cases for Comparison*, explores possible methodologies for developing comparative Indigenous literary studies in English. The second, with the working title *When Tonto Was a Half-Breed: Forgotten Histories of The Lone Ranger's Indian Companion*, maps the development of the popular Indian character Tonto over nearly eight decades of production in every medium—radio, comics, prose fiction, live performance, television, film, the internet—against changing federal Indian policies.

While serving as the Moore Professor this year, Allen taught a combined undergraduate and graduate course on “Global Indigenous Literatures,” in which students

studied contemporary Indigenous writing, music, film, and web sites from the US, Canada, Hawai'i, Australia, and Aotearoa/New Zealand. He lectured in the English department on his current research projects, and participated in the Comparative Literature Program's series on television studies. As part of an effort to build Native American and Indigenous Studies at UO, Professor Allen organized “Indigenous Literatures and Other Arts: A Symposium and Workshop,” held on campus at the Many Nations Longhouse May 2-3, 2008.

This two-day symposium brought together a diverse group of scholars, artists, students, and community members to investigate the potential relationships between the field of Indigenous literary studies and the practice and study of other Indigenous arts—including dance, music, and performance; architecture; painting, carving, and photography; basket making, weaving, and beadwork; and film and video production. Rather than a typical conference or plenary format, the symposium included three Keynote Conversations (staged conversations between an artist and/or arts scholar and a writer and/or literary scholar) and two Workshops (each led by designated Workshop Leaders). Through these staged conversations and hands-on workshops, participants investigated complex questions about how we understand the tensions between politics and aesthetics, audience and innovation, situated improvisation and the continuity of custom. To foster conversation between specific events on the program, participants were invited to share coffee breaks and meals together.

The symposium began on the afternoon of Friday, May 2, with an official welcome into the Many Nations Longhouse by the longhouse steward, Gordon Bettles (Klamath), and with an official welcome onto the university campus by Assistant Vice Provost in the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Tom Ball (Klamath/Modoc). Allen then introduced the symposium's focus on developing new theories and new methodologies for studying Native American and global Indigenous literatures through serious and sustained engagement with other Indigenous arts and arts scholarship. The day's program began with a conversation about potential intersections between Indigenous literatures and performance studies, staged between Tanya Lukin Linklater, a choreographer, performance artist, and writer from the Alutiiq Nation of southwestern Alaska, who will begin graduate studies at the University of Alberta in fall 2008, and Deanna Kingston, Associate Professor of anthropology at Oregon State University, who is of King Island Inupiaq Eskimo descent and studies Inupiaq singing, dancing, and stories. Next, Gail Tremblay, an alumna of UO's Creative Writing Program and well-known poet, weaver, installation artist, and art critic of Onondaga and Micmac ancestry and a Professor at Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, led a workshop focused on the possible intersections among

continued on page 6

Symposium

continued from page 5

Indigenous literatures and other arts practices. After a catered dinner in the longhouse, the day's program was completed by a screening of experimental films and still images produced by a range of Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) filmmakers and artists, introduced and presented by Michelle Raheja, Assistant Professor of English at the University of California-Riverside, who is of Seneca descent and studies Indigenous literatures and film, and Susan Bernardin, Associate Professor of English at SUNY-Oneonta, who studies the crossings of Indigenous visual and verbal texts. The screening set up the next day's workshop on possible intersections between Indigenous literary and visual studies.

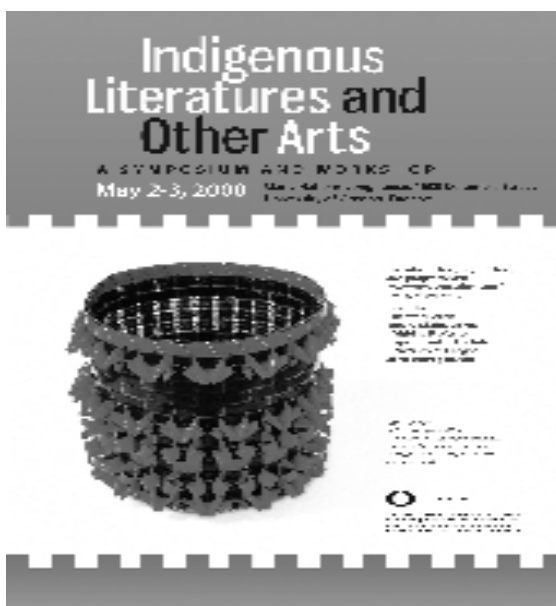
The symposium continued on Saturday, May 3, beginning with a conversation on possible relationships among Indigenous literatures and the built world, staged between Craig Howe, a trained architect and anthropologist and an enrolled member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, and Allison Hedge Coke, an award-winning poet and writer and an Indigenous activist of Cherokee, Huron, and Creek descent, who holds the Reynolds Chair in Poetry and Creative Writing at the University of Nebraska-Kearney. Following lunch in the longhouse, the program continued with a workshop on Indigenous literatures and visual studies led by Raheja and Bernardin. The official program concluded with a conversation on the intersections between the production of Indigenous literatures and the practices of the museum, staged between Jo Diamond, a Lecturer on Maori art history at Canterbury University in Christchurch, Aotearoa/New Zealand, who belongs to the Ngapuhi (a Maori *iwi* or tribal group), and Alice Te Punga Somerville, a Lecturer in English and Maori Studies at Victoria University of Wellington, who is of Te Atiawa descent and who studies comparative Indigenous literatures. After brief closing remarks in the longhouse by Allen, participants were

invited off campus to a closing event held in the lovely setting of Sweet Cheeks Winery.

The primary purpose of the symposium was to generate conversation across disciplines about Indigenous literatures, arts, and scholarship, and to foster ongoing collaboration. "Holding the symposium on the UO campus and in the Many Nations Longhouse was a crucial component for fostering both innovation and comparison," Allen said. He also emphasized the importance of "demonstrating to the UO community what Native American and Indigenous Studies could look like here, in this place—grounded in the Indigenous local, radiating outward to forge relationships across Oregon and the Northwest region, across the continent, and across the Pacific." Allen noted that "the University of Oregon has not yet realized its potential to be a leader in this still-emerging field, but with a few well-placed hires, it could become a center for Indigenous studies. And, really, it ought to be. There is so much good energy here, and so much possibility."

Invited guests, outside participants, and local attendees were unanimous in their praise of the innovative structure of the symposium, the Longhouse as a setting for an academic event, the high quality of the scholarship on display, and the University's generous hospitality. Bernardin summed up her feelings this way: "It was an intense, amazing experience . . . transformational all the way around." Tremblay described the presentations as "brilliant and thought provoking" and emphasized that, unlike so many academic gatherings, the symposium had been imbued with "kindness." Similarly, Hedge Coke described the event as "full of life. So utterly generous." On her blog, Kingston wrote that "This symposium was like a wolf in academic clothing . . . on the outside, it looked like a normal academic gathering. But it took place at the Many Nations Longhouse Some, if not most, of our conversations revolved around colonialism and how that affected indigenous communities. As you can imagine, this sometimes brought up tears." Elizabeth Bohls, Associate Professor of English and Director of Graduate Studies, said that "As a non-specialist, I learned a great deal I was especially impressed—really blown away—by the closing conversation between Jo Diamond and Alice Te Punga Somerville, perhaps the most orchestrated or performed of the conversations that I saw and yet with an emotional spontaneity that added force to the questions they raised concerning production and display—and theft—of Maori culture." One of the UO students who attended the symposium said that "the work everyone is doing was so very interesting, and I am hoping their vibrancy and invigoration will be lent to my future work." Another student added, "I am proud our program would treat our guests in this way."

Professor Allen hopes to orchestrate a collaborative essay among the keynote participants that explores the process of creating and staging the "Indigenous Literatures and Other Arts" symposium and workshop.



Warren Ginsberg becomes the First Knight Professor in English



Warren Ginsberg

Philip H. Knight Professorships are awarded to full professors in the College of Arts and Sciences who have demonstrated an extraordinary level of achievement over a sustained period of time and have had impacts in their fields of study that go well beyond the existing high expectations for full professors on campus. Evidence for these achievements includes recognition by professional organizations for outstanding contributions to the field or other endorsements by the academic community.

Warren Ginsberg joined the English Department in 2000. He was a 1999-2000 Guggenheim Foundation Fellow and has achieved international distinction as a writer of highly influential critical works.

At a Department meeting this October, Professor Wendy Larson, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, announced that Professor Ginsberg had been selected for a Knight Professorship. Dean Larson began her statement by noting, "Professor Ginsberg presents an outstanding record of accomplishments in the Humanities. The impact of his work is truly extraordinary." To evidence that distinction and influence, Dean Larson read passages from reference letters of external referees:

"To put it briefly, I consider Prof. Ginsberg to be one of the most distinguished medievalists of his generation. His many and varied contributions to the field of medieval literary study have earned widespread recognition among his peers for their meticulous scholarship, theoretical sophistication, acute close readings of complex texts, and—beyond these important qualities—for their sensitivity to the human situations which mold language and are in turn shaped by poetic and rhetorical traditions."

"Professor Ginsberg seems to me in every way deserving of a named professorship. Not only has he produced a body of scholarship that provides ample

justification in itself, but he has done more than his share of important administrative work, and done it exceptionally well. He has remarkable tact, and a tolerance for the foibles of the academic ego that have made him a prevailing force for good in some very difficult administrative situations. He is a wonderful citizen of the academy as well as a wonderful scholar."

Based on the enthusiastic assessment of the external referees and the recommendation of the CAS committee, Dean Larson announced, "It is with great pleasure that I present Warren Ginsberg with an official appointment as a Philip H. Knight Professor of Humanities." Professor Ginsberg's students and colleagues in the English Department share Dean Larson's pleasure, applaud the College of Arts and Science for its wisdom, and congratulate Warren for this well-deserved honor. Bravo!

Beyond the Classroom: Reading Groups Enrich the English Department's Intellectual Life

On the fourth floor of PLC, seven English graduate students and one undergraduate gather for the February meeting of the Critical Theory Reading Group. This month they have gathered to investigate *A Thousand Plateaus* by contemporary French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. As they navigate the famously abstruse *Plateaus*, the participants are lively and engrossed, answering one another's questions, even drawing diagrams on the room's whiteboard. As the diagrams grow more abstract, an attendee turns to a newcomer in the group: "I promise this isn't some weird Dungeons and Dragons thing."

Critical Theory is one of eight reading groups currently active in the UO English Department. Organized by faculty and graduate students, these extracurricular groups gather regularly to discuss texts of mutual interest, to collaborate on research projects, and to socialize with peers and colleagues. Attendees often mention the insight and enjoyment that conversation outside of the classroom can afford and praise the reading-group vogue as an important aspect of the Department's intellectual life.

The groups are not based on a standard template; while some are centralized and meet monthly, others are more loosely organized and meet when schedules allow; some groups attend to participants' current research, while others focus on primary texts. Although the meetings tend to attract English faculty and graduate students, faculty and graduate students from other departments and disciplines also attend; even ambitious undergraduates may occasionally join a group. In all cases, however, the groups offer participants a unique space for intellectual debate, exchange, and collaboration, a space more

continued on page 8

Reading Groups

continued from page 7



Theory Reading Group

informal and collegial than that the classroom typically affords.

Shane Billings, a doctoral student in English who attends the Critical Theory Group, describes his fellow theory junkies as hoping to attract participants for whom theory is not a primary research interest. They aim to discuss theory not only for its own sake, but also to explore its practical applications to literary texts and other disciplines. Neither prior knowledge of critical theory nor even completion of the month's reading selections is a prerequisite for attendance—the group welcomes anyone who may want to come to hear participants' insights.

Attendees of the Modernism Reading Group likewise invite newcomers and those who want to sit and listen. Organized in 1997 by Professors Karen Ford and Paul Peppis, who continue to coordinate the gatherings, the Modernism Group is one of the best-attended in the Department. Professor Peppis describes his involvement as “one of the highlights of my intellectual life.” Sarah Stoeckl, a second year Ph.D. student who has attended the meetings this year, enjoys and learns from what she calls the “respectful and good-spirited debating” among participants. This year, texts were as varied as T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Cleanth Brooks's *The Well-Wrought Urn*, and short stories by Irish novelist Elizabeth Bowen. In previous years, the group has discussed poems by H.D., Wallace Stevens, and Claude McKay; fiction by Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, and William Faulkner; drama by Bertoldt Brecht, W. B. Yeats, and Luigi Pirandello; classic criticism by Hugh Kenner, William Empson, and I. A. Richards; and newer criticism by Janet Lyon, Raymond Williams, and Rita Felski. At their October 2007 gathering, the Modernist aficionados analyzed Sergei Eisenstein's classic silent film, *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), in conjunction with the cinema enthusiasts of the Film and Media Reading Group.

Coordinated by graduate student Drew Beard, the Film and Media Group supplements its viewings of films and other media forms with critical essays, such as Jim

Collins' “T.V. and Postmodernism.” The Film and Media Group is looking to expand its participation and activity, which next year will include a series of film screenings accompanied by faculty and student lectures. Scheduled to begin in the fall of 2008, the series will span the academic year and be entitled “Directed by Steven Spielberg.” Spielberg films, “although categorized as blockbusters and critically marginalized accordingly,” Beard explains, “are starting to be reappraised by film scholars, particularly in terms of aesthetics.” The group hopes the series will highlight “critically marginalized work.” The Spielberg screenings and accompanying lectures, which will include “Jurassic Park” and “Close Encounters of the Third Kind,” will be free and open to the public.

Helping Beard organize the Film and Media series is Carter Soles, a doctoral candidate currently completing a dissertation on the American independent film director Keven Smith, famous for his “slacker films.” In addition to his scholarly work on film, Soles is a comic book enthusiast who last year joined another English doctoral student, Kom Kunoosyng, to found the Comics Reading Group. Most of the texts the group discusses are superhero comics that portray “post-modern” superheroes, such as Alan Moore's classic series, *Watchmen*. Participants may read contemporary scholarship on comics, but mostly the group focuses on recent comics, such as Charles Burns's *Black Hole*, Brian K. Vaughan's *Pride of Baghdad*, and Jessica Abel's *La Perdida*. Epitomizing the current turn among literary scholars toward studying cultural forms in addition to literary texts, the participants in the Comics Reading Group concur with Soles that the “new phenomenon of the critical study of comics” enriches scholarly research and enlivens intellectual dialogue.

After a hiatus, the Contemporary Poetry Reading Group, founded in 2004, has begun meeting again. Maggie Evans, a new graduate student in the Department this year, has joined with doctoral students and past coordinators Bennett Smith and Corbett Upton to recruit participation from graduate students in English and Creative Writing. The group has read work by a range of poets of the last 50 years, including Sylvia Plath, Amiri Baraka, Rita Dove, Seamus Heaney, Mary Oliver, Robert Penn Warren, Amy Clampitt, Philip Larkin, Rosanna Warren, Carolyn Forché, and Louise Gluck, to name a few. Though the meetings generally focus on volumes of poetry, the group also discusses hybrid forms, such as Anne Carson's verse novel, *Autobiography of Red*. When asked why he participates in the group, one member cited the enjoyment, excitement, and insight that can come from the “low-key,” non-classroom environment.

The Mesa Verde Reading Group, devoted to the study of Literature and the Environment, is one of the oldest in the English Department. According to Professor Louise Westling, a long-time participant, “the group was created by graduate students back in the mid-1990s. It is difficult

to locate the official date, because the group has always been informal and organic, without any designated leaders but instead volunteers taking up particular activities.” Over the years, Mesa Verde has sponsored a variety of interdisciplinary colloquia for faculty and graduate students, where papers are read and discussed. Work-in-progress presentations have also been offered, as well as film showings and regular reading group activities. One of its oldest, most valued traditions is the yearly Mesa Verde retreat each December at Odell Lodge at the top of the Willamette Pass, where students and faculty discuss seminar papers, literary texts, eco-theoretical issues, or curricular questions and spend time hiking, communing, and cross-country skiing. The group’s current coordinator, doctoral student Rachel Hanan, emphasizes the diversity of topics and participants, which results in part because of the subject matter’s appeal to a range of disciplines. Mesa Verde focuses on environmental literature and ecocriticism, but their discussions also consider scientific and political texts; this disciplinary diversity regularly attracts attendees from Environmental Studies, Philosophy, Comparative Literature, and even Biology. This year the group has read literary texts, including Andrew Marvell’s “The Garden” and the poems of W. H. Auden, and recent critical texts, including Donna Harroway’s *When Species Meet*, Timothy Morton’s *Ecology Without Nature*, and Mark Johnson’s *Meaning of the Body*. This May, Mesa Verde sponsored its annual colloquium, “Fertile Fields: New Directions In and Around Ecocriticism,” in which graduate students Rachel Hanan, Chris McGill, and Stephen Rust showcased their recent work in eco-formalism, animal studies, and ecocriticism and film,

Rachel Hanan also coordinates the Renaissance Reading Group. For almost two years, Renaissance enthusiasts have met to interrogate texts, share their recent research, and workshop each others’ writing. The collegial, collaborative nature of their work is in large part what attracts students to the group, which Hanan describes as a welcome interruption in the sometimes

isolated life of a doctoral candidate. Hanan’s inspirations for participating in the group are to discuss and deepen her comprehension of texts she enjoys and to spend time with her peers. This year the group has read Shakespeare’s *Rape of Lucrece* and *Venus and Adonis*, poems of Thomas Wyatt, Thomas Nashe’s *The Unfortunate Traveller*, George Gascoigne’s *The Adventures of Master FJ*, Thomas Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedy*, Ben Jonson’s *Bartholomew Fair*, and recent criticism by two of the Department’s Renaissance professors, Ben Saunders and George Rowe.

This spring, doctoral students Britta Spann and Rachel Hanan have revived a Latin Reading Group. According to Spann, in the past most participants were beginners: “the small group and casual atmosphere” were “well-suited for people who wanted to learn the language but didn’t want to commit to a formal class.” But in its newer incarnation, a “small (but dedicated) group” includes intermediate and advanced level Latin students who have found a congenial and collegial environment to explore their shared obsession with the classics in the original tongue. After reading Erasmus’ *De Copia Verborum*, they have moved on to Book 6 of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, which recounts Aeneas’s gripping journey to the underworld.

As new graduate students and faculty join the Department, bringing with them new interests and ambitions, the proliferation of reading groups seems likely to continue. Whether they dwell on ancient Latin or contemporary comics, these groups enliven the intellectual life of the Department by providing a space to share ideas without the otherwise constant pressure of evaluation, grades, and formal writing assignments. Students and faculty need a time and a place simply to talk about books, films, poems, plays, and other media that are constantly changing the landscape of literary studies. For more than a decade, this vibrant array of reading groups has played a major role in creating and sustaining the collegial, collaborative spirit of the UO English Department.

The Newsletter of the University of Oregon English Department

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Three Senior Instructors to Retire: Paul Dresman, Joan Mariner, and Margaret McBride

Three of the English Department's most experienced and devoted senior instructors are preparing to retire from full time teaching. Between them, Paul Dresman, Joan Mariner, and Margaret McBride have over 66 years of teaching experience at UO; they have collectively taught as many as 18,000 students. Join us in paying tribute to these exceptional teachers and citizens for their years of service.



Paul Dresman

Paul Dresman came to teach at the University of Oregon in 1988 from Beijing Teachers' University in China and the University of California at San Diego, where he obtained a Ph.D. in English and American literature (a dissertation on the nature and use of history in the poetry of Edward Dorn). He did undergraduate work and earned a Master's Degree at San Francisco State University with a thesis on the bay area poets (Kenneth Rexroth, Philip Whalen, Gary Snyder, Lew Welch) and their relation to nature. During his time in San Francisco, he attended readings by many of the figures of San Francisco poetry renaissance, and he was also a Conscientious Objector during the Vietnam War, doing two years of alternative service.

Initially, Dresman taught mainly composition at the University of Oregon, and he later moved into various courses on American and 20th Century Literature. In recent years, he innovated three versions of English 399: "Contemporary American Writing," "Beat Poets and Writers," and "1922," a course on literary modernism. He also created and taught a course in the Humanities Program, entitled "Western Versions of China."

For the past seven years, Dresman has anchored the Department's offerings in Twentieth Century Literature and Writing 312: "Principles of Tutorial Writing," a course that prepares outstanding English majors to serve as Writing Associates (peer tutors) and Reading Assistants (graders) for the Department.

Dresman's scholarly interests are interdisciplinary, and he overlaps scholarship with creative work in poetry and poetry translation. Since the 1970s, he has co-edited literary and arts journals—*Crawl Out Your Window*, *Big Rain*, and *helicóptero*—the last a bi-lingual journal with Chilean poet Jesús Sepúlveda that involved several graduate students and some faculty members from the Department of Romance Languages over a period of six years. A volume of poetry translations was published in a bi-lingual edition by Cuarto Propio Press in Santiago, Chile, in 2006. Dresman's poetry, short fiction, essays, and reviews have appeared in numerous literary journals, anthologies and chapbooks. A book of selected poems, *The Silver Dazzle of the Sun*, appeared in 2004. A significant scholarly essay regarding the representation of Native Americans in the work of Edward Dorn was published in the volume *Internal Resistances* (University of California Press, 1985), and an essay of cultural criticism, "Astoria, Astoria, and the Complications of American Wealth," came out in *Square One* (University of Colorado, Boulder) in 2003.

Looking back over his years in the English Department, Dresman has fond memories of serving on several committees, chairing or being part of several Honors theses, and participating in the Multicultural Center's middle-school students of color program. His most gratifying memories, however, center on teaching: "Those moments of interaction when the class produces original insights into the work or the passage in question. I have learned much from my students," he says, "and they have also provided me with a paid excuse to continue my enthusiasm for literature, the deep-hearted center of the English classroom."

After retirement, Dresman plans to spend more time writing, reading, and traveling to Mexico to keep up Spanish with his wife, an English as a Second Language instructor at LCC, Christine Seifert. This summer, their youngest son, Evan, a history major at UO, will be married to a current graduating senior of the English Department, Christa Benson.

After a 20-year child-rearing hiatus, **Joan Mariner**



Joan Mariner

returned to her college studies to complete a Bachelor's Degree at UO in 1984. She then taught for two years in a high school program for students at risk of dropping out of school, and in 1987 returned to UO and earned a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction. After completing her M.A., Mariner saw a posting for Instructors of Developmental Writing (WR 040 and WR 049) at UO. She interviewed with John Gage, then Director of Composition, who knew and admired her undergraduate work, and was hired in the fall of 1989. She has been teaching composition ever since.

Mariner's concentration has always been on teaching composition to underachieving students. Her Master's Synthesis focused on school dropouts. While teaching high school, she learned strategies that were successful at remediating student skill deficiencies. Those strategies worked with university students as well. "Good thinking," she explains, "is the primary component of good writing. The strength of our composition program is that it teaches critical thinking as it reinforces clear written expression. Critical thinking is not modeled frequently in popular culture, to put it mildly, and students ... need to understand why 'In my opinion' is not persuasive, and why abuse of their opposition is not part of academic discourse. It is gratifying how quickly they can grasp these distinctions once they understand the strength of joining an academic discourse community." For a fuller articulation of the ideals and practices Mariner has developed over her years of teaching, consult her book, *Thinking and Writing Persuasively: A Basic Guide* (Allyn & Bacon, 1994), co-authored with former UO writing instructor, Candace Montoya.

One gets a vivid sense of Mariner's devotion to her students from her descriptions of them: "One of my first students was a refugee from Cambodia. Her papers for WR 049 always came in with multiple drafts, the first written in Cambodian. By the time she received her well-earned A, she frequently had seven or more drafts. About two years after she finished WR 122, she asked if I would be willing to read a manuscript of her experiences under the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. That was the first step that led to a series of difficult challenges that she weathered before the publication of her memoir, *When Broken Glass Floats* (Norton, 2000). Chanrithy Him lost her parents and four of her eight siblings in the Killing Fields of Cambodia, and she exemplifies the strength of the human spirit not only to survive adversity, but to use it as a motivation to excel as well."

Another student was referred to Mariner as one with profound learning disabilities: "Those who had read his test results offered little hope that he would be able to function as a university student. His first paper seemed to affirm that assessment. Every sentence in the first paragraph began a new idea with no transitions to link them together. There were frequent spelling errors, and little or no punctuation guided the reader. I sat down with him, and we talked through his ideas. We worked through

that draft three times before it was complete. He was encouraged by that success, and his writing improved dramatically from that point on. At the end of the term, his reflective essay said in part, 'I used to think that I could not write. Note the past tense.' That man has now graduated with a degree in Economics after completing four years as a first string football player." Mariner shares these recollections of her former students, she explains, "because they demonstrate the value of not giving up on people. When students are given the support they need to meet university expectations, most repay that effort by becoming graduates that this university can look on with pride."

As she looks back on her years of service to students, the English Department, and the University, Mariner has some words of advice and exhortation. Having taught as many as 14 composition courses in an academic year, Mariner has strong opinions on the treatment of instructors. "Since the university cannot afford to hire enough tenured faculty or enroll enough graduate student teaching fellows to cover the required, time-consuming composition classes," she urges, "the English Department should be at the forefront of efforts to provide reasonable pay and job security for the instructors hired to teach these basic classes essential to a solid foundation for entering university students."

Mariner's views on the teaching of Writing at UO are no less passionate. She calls for the formation of a Developmental Composition Program. Without such a program, she explains, "faculty members are going to find themselves spending more time teaching remedial material, failing more of their students who could have succeeded with better writing instruction, or lowering standards to be within reach of most students. None of these options is acceptable." The solution lies in finding effective strategies "for providing the skills that so many students lack." This is not just a question of effective education, Mariner argues: "It is a question of how to uphold high standards in a fair and equitable manner for all students. Surely, intelligent people can find answers to this question." Joan Mariner's students and colleagues applaud her intelligence, honesty, and commitment, and a career of work bettering the lives of students.

Margaret McBride received her M.A. from the UO English Department in December of 1975. Having taught high school in Texas before receiving her degree, she returned to the high school classroom for three years in Oregon after earning her MA. In early 1981, she was hired to teach WR 123: "Research Papers," and has been teaching courses in composition and literature at UO every term since then. This spring, McBride announced her plans to retire from full-time teaching after 27 years, though she will continue teaching on a part-time basis for the next couple of years before taking full retirement.

When asked to describe the hallmarks of her teaching style, McBride replies, "My philosophy for teaching

continued on page 12

Retiring Instructors

continued from page 11



Margaret McBride

focuses on encouraging the thinking processes of my students, on giving them practical knowledge and skills they can use in their everyday lives, and on encouraging their life-long interest and self-confidence in the content areas. I view myself as an enthusiastic participant in my students' discovery of themselves, their cultural and social environment, and their language." In recognition of her dedication and success at achieving these goals, she was named UO Writing Teacher of the Year in 1994.

McBride has particular teaching expertise in Business Writing and Science Fiction. In her nearly three decades on the faculty, she has taught developmental writing, the regular freshman classes of Writing 121 and 122, advanced essay writing, research papers, freshman seminars on science fiction and mythology, and 300 level classes on Gender and Sexuality in Science Fiction and Fantasy, Science Fiction Aliens, and Classic Science Fiction. She is a member and frequent panel participant and paper presenter for the International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts, the Science Fiction Research Association, and WisCon (a feminist science fiction conference in Madison that has been going on for more than 30 years.)

McBride has taken particular pleasure from the Freshman Seminars she has taught on science fiction and mythology, in which she asks students to role-play as characters from the books they are reading and answer questions from each other and from McBride. "The students are so clever at extrapolating from the fiction to what those characters would think about other issues," she explains. McBride is also proud of her collection of more than 70 cartoons using Frankenstein motifs that she regularly shares with students in the Freshman Seminar.

Service to the various communities in her life is another source of pride for McBride. In the UO Writing Program, she has often worked with writing apprentices and served on panels for the annual composition and writing conference for Graduate Teaching Fellows. She was the first instructor to be elected to the English

Department's executive committee, the Department Council, and was elected four times. She has served on the UO Freshman Seminars Advisory Board for three years. She has given lectures on Business Writing for campus groups, as well as audiences at local hospitals. She has given talks about science fiction for the Eugene Library, for Eugene's yearly Reading in the Rain events, for local senior citizen groups, and for Newport's Library Foundation. Twice she has talked about science fiction by people of color as part of Eugene's Martin Luther King Day events.

McBride's greatest honor, she explains, was being invited to serve as chair of the 2004 James Tiptree, Jr. Award committee, a committee that also included the renowned Oregon fantasy writer, Ursula K. LeGuin. The Tiptree award is given to science fiction and fantasy that "expands and explores gender and sexual roles." That year the award was given for the first time to a novel not originally published in English, *Not Before Sundown* (Peter Owen, 2003), by Finnish author Johanna Sinisalo. As Chair, McBride had the pleasure of awarding Sinisalo the prize in person at a conference in Boston. Margaret McBride's students and colleagues take great pleasure in saluting her years of devoted service.

The Promise of Reason brings scholars of rhetoric to campus from around the world

What makes a good public argument? Answers range from "anything that works," to "logically valid reasoning," to "civil dialogue." Chaim Perelman was a 20th century Belgian philosopher who built a comprehensive theory of argumentation on the principle of justice in order to defend reasoning against those who claimed it could not be applied to questions of value. His theories were published in *The New Rhetoric*, co-authored with Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, a work which has come to represent a major contribution to rhetorical theory.

In May, 2008, the English Department helped to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the publication of *The New Rhetoric* by hosting an international conference on the UO campus. The Promise of Reason Conference, sponsored by the Center for Teaching Writing in the English Department, drew 140 scholars to Eugene for four days of papers and panels devoted to the study of argumentation. The participants represented a range of disciplines, including rhetoric, philosophy, law, communications, and forensics, and they came from all over the United States and the world. International participants represented Israel, Germany, Belgium, Sweden, Spain, France, Italy, Brazil, Chile, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Canada, Taiwan, and Korea.

The topics discussed at the conference included Perelman's theory of argumentation applied to controversies in world politics, inter-cultural social conflicts, legal and scientific arguments, ethical persuasion, and reasoning about religious belief.

James Crosswhite, currently the English Department's Director of Composition and a Perelman scholar, said that this conference would set the agenda for studies of argumentation for the next decade, and many scholars attending the conference agreed that it was the most successful scholarly event in their experience. Plans are underway to publish special issues of the journals *Philosophy and Rhetoric* and *Argument and Advocacy* based on papers given at the conference, as well as an edited volume of essays. John Gage, who is Director of the Center for Teaching Writing, was the principal organizer of the conference, along with Crosswhite and David Frank from the Robert D. Clark Honors College. They will be co-editing these publications and maintaining a website which will contain videos of conference keynote addresses.

Other members of the English Department and several graduate alumni gave papers at the conference. Steven Shankman gave an opening address on Perelman's work on the principles of universal justice that led to the founding of UNESCO in 1945. Anne Laskaya and Carolyn Bergquist spoke on the contributions of Olbrechts-Tyteca to Perelman's work. Kathleen Horton discussed the issue of reasoning in Vatican statements held to be indisputable. Suzanne Clark gave a presentation on argumentative techniques in film. Michael Bybee, a former UO Instructor now teaching at St. John's College in Santa Fe, spoke on intercultural communication. Michael McCann, a current UO graduate student in Comparative Literature, compared Perelman's theories to those of Kenneth Burke. Among the former UO English Ph.D.s in rhetoric who returned to Eugene to give papers at the conference were Ralph Batie (OIT), Linda Bensel-Meyers (University of Denver), Ann Dobyns (University of Denver), Bill Gholson (SOU), Brad Hawley (Emory University), Martin Jacobi (Clemson University), Margaret Johnson (Idaho State University), Julia Major (University of Washington), Laurence Musgrove (St. Xavier University), Sean O'Rourke (Furman University), David Sumner (Linfield College), and Kenneth Wright (James Madison University).

A highlight of the conference was a banquet address by Noemi Perelman Mattis, the daughter of Chaim Perelman. She spoke about her father's career as a philosopher and of his work during WWII in the Belgian underground resistance. He organized committees of intellectuals to resist Nazi propaganda, and his theories of argument developed in part as a response to the failure of analytic philosophy to offer counter-arguments to the rising tide of fascist rhetoric. She described too her own life as one of the Jewish children hidden during the war.

Other keynote addresses were given by prominent rhetoric scholars. Barbara Warnick (University of Pittsburgh) discussed the rhetorical principles embedded in *The New Rhetoric*, Christopher Tindale (University of Windsor) described the reception and use of Perelman's ideas by philosophers, Jeanne Fahnestock (University of Maryland) spoke on Perelman's theory of style, Francis J. Mootz III (Dickinson School of Law at Penn State University) applied Perelman's ideas to legal reasoning, Alan Gross (University of Minnesota) used Perelman's concepts to address visual rhetoric, and Michael Leff (University of Memphis) addressed the use of *ad hominem* argument in ethical terms.

A unique feature of the conference was the introduction of Master Classes, in which undergraduate and graduate students from across the U.S. sent in papers and competed for scholarships to attend the conference, where they met with the scholars whose work they studied

continued on page 20

Alex Neel, Scholar of Nineteenth-Century British Literature and Visual Culture, Joins the Department



Alex Neel

A scholar of nineteenth-century British literature and visual culture, Alexandra Neel joined the UO English faculty in the fall of 2007 after completing her Ph.D. at Princeton University, where she was teaching in the Department of English and the Program for the Study of Women and Gender. Her work focuses on the exchanges between illustrated travelogues of polar exploration and literary works, ranging from Captain Cook's *Second Voyage* and Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* to Scott's *Last Expedition* and Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*. She has published articles on photography and Virginia Woolf; her most

continued on page 14

Neel

continued from page 13

recent article, “‘A Something-Nothing out of its Very Contrary’: The Photography of Coleridge,” appeared in a special issue of *Victorian Studies* and explores how Coleridge, through his critique of associationist philosophies, imagines the possibility of photography before its invention (1839). Currently, Neel is working on a book-length project, “Winter’s Tales: Literary and Photographic Explorations of Antarctica and the Arctic,” as well as an essay on Charles Dickens’s engagement with slavery in *Our Mutual Friend*. At UO, she has taught courses on the Victorian novel, fiction, and a seminar on the relationship between photography, literature, and theory.

On Mindfulness and Meter: The Williams Seminar in Poetry

In 2006, the Williams Council named English Professor Karen Ford a Williams Fellow with a multi-year grant for the improvement of undergraduate education. Ford developed the Williams Seminars in Poetry, a series of small seminars focused on poetry to be taught once a year for ten years. Her philosophy was to offer small classes that approach the study of poetry with rigor and originality and provide educational experiences not typically available to undergraduates. Ford began the series last year with a seminar on “Poetry and Everyday Life,” which combined readings, analysis, and writing assignments related to the theme of “everyday life” with visits from poets known for their attention to quotidian experience. As part of the course, students assembled and edited a volume of poetry that each could use in her or his own everyday life; the editions required a substantive introduction, textual editing apparatus, and the poems.

This spring, Lisa Freinkel, Associate Professor of English and Director of the Program in Comparative Literature, taught the Williams Seminar on “Poetry and Buddhism.” In each weekly three-hour session, Freinkel and fifteen senior English majors convened to interrogate Buddhism and its poetic manifestations across two thousand years and two continents. Explaining why she chose this topic for the Williams Seminar, Freinkel explains, “In the verses he wrote as he was dying, the 18th-century Zen hermit and poet, Ryokan, tells us that: ‘showing its front side / and its back side / a maple leaf falls.’ In this course we investigated poetry and Buddhism as two sides of the same falling maple leaf. In other words, we considered each as one side of the same human experience of life’s precious, transitory nature.”

More specifically, Freinkel’s seminar studied what she calls “a counter poetic tradition,” focused “on emptiness and transience instead of eternal perfection.” Students began the course by reading the great poetic text

of emptiness: the Buddhist “Heart Sutra” (originally composed in India about 1700 years ago). Other readings in Buddhist poetry and philosophy followed: the “Harmony of Sameness and Difference” and “Precious Mirror Samadhi” sutras; essays by the 13th-century Japanese Zen Buddhist sage, Eihei Dogen; and poetry of the hermit Ryokan. The focus then migrated to modern North America, considering poets explicitly influenced by Buddhism, such as Gary Snyder, Jane Hirshfield, and poet/songwriter, Leonard Cohen, as well as non-Buddhist poets whose work illustrates a distinctly occidental understanding of emptiness, including Emily Dickinson, William Carlos Williams and Wallace Stevens.

Freinkel typically teaches Renaissance literature, so the Williams series has afforded her the opportunity to explore interests outside her usual focus. She was inspired to undertake the course based on her interest in Buddhism and a desire to expose students to the numerous connections she finds between contemporary American



Lisa Freinkel in class

poetry and the Buddhist lyric. Her students discovered that the seemingly incongruous readings on the syllabus—Buddhist poetry of over a thousand years old alongside twentieth century American poetry—in fact resonate strongly with each other. This combination of ancient East with contemporary West allowed Freinkel and her students to experience poetic expressions of the “emptiness” that is so crucial to the Buddhist ethos and thereby approach through poetry the Buddhist concept of universal interconnectedness.

As with all capstone seminars in English, the course was demanding, with a heavy reading load, challenging discussions, and rigorous written assignments. But Freinkel’s students appreciated the seminar’s demanding nature. Kyle Hughes, a senior English major with a particular interest in creative writing, judged Freinkel’s high standards for students tough but rewarding, making him feel that his ideas were worth exploring. Class

continued on page 20

English Department Notes Faculty News

Chadwick Allen, Moore Distinguished Visiting Professor, published a number of articles and book chapters this past year: "Sight in the Sound: Seeing and Being Seen in *The Lone Ranger* Radio Show," *Western American Literature* (Summer 2007); "Rere Kç/ Moving Differently: Indigenizing Methodologies for Comparative Indigenous Literary Studies," in both *Journal of New Zealand Literature*, Special Issue: Comparative Approaches to Indigenous Literary Studies (2007), and *Studies in American Indian Literatures* (Winter 2007); "Indigeneity Inside and Outside the Metropolitan Conversation," in *Conciliation and Reconciliation. Vol. 2: Art and Literature in the Pacific*, ed. Maryvonne Nedeljkovic (L'Harmattan, 2008); and, with Alice Te Punga Somerville, "An Introductory Conversation," *Journal of New Zealand Literature*, Special Issue: Comparative Approaches to Indigenous Literary Studies (2007). (See the related story on Professor Allen and the Symposium and Workshop he organized this spring on Indigenous Literatures and Other Arts.)

Instructor **Miriam Gershow's** first novel, *The Local News*, is being published by Spiegel and Grau, a new imprint of Doubleday, in February 2009.

Lisa Gilman, Assistant Professor of English and Folklore, has an article, "Complex Genres, Intertextuality, and the Analysis of Performance," forthcoming in the *Journal of American Folklore*.

Warren Ginsberg, Knight Professor of English, published an article, "Troilus and Criseyde and the Continental Tradition," in *Approaches to Teaching Troilus and Criseyde and the Shorter Poems*, eds. Tison Pugh and Angela Weisl (MLA, 2007). In addition, five of Professor Ginsberg's

reviews of scholarly books were published in leading journals of Medieval Studies and Comparative Studies, *Speculum*, *Comparative Literature*, and *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*. (See the related story on Dr. Ginsberg's award of a Knight Professorship of Humanities.)

Sangita Gopal, Assistant Professor, is the co-editor, with Sujata Moorti, of *Global Bollywood: The Transnational Travels of Hindi Film Music*, forthcoming from the University of Minnesota Press. A discussion of the volume was held in April at Temple University, where Professor Gopal presented the book's argument followed by the comments of respondents Sumita Chakravarty (of the New School) and Pallaby Chakravarty (of Swarthmore College). This spring, the Williams Council awarded Dr. Gopal a grant to develop a new course on "Cinema in the Muslim World."

Anne Laskaya, Associate Professor, published an article, "Lesbians and the Middle Ages: Where Might We Go From Here?," in the "Society for the Study of Homosexuality in the Middle Ages Newsletter" (Spring 2007).

David Li was promoted to full Professor.

Emeritus Professor **Glen Love** published, "'Exit, Pursued by a Bear': H. L. Davis Rewrites His Last Novel," in the 50th Anniversary Issue of *Northwest Review* (Fall 2007) and "Environment and Us: On Being Interdisciplinary" in *Oregon English Journal* (Spring 2008).

Ernesto Javier Martinez, Assistant Professor of Women's and Gender Studies, Ethnic Studies, and English, has an article, "Dying to Know: Identity and Self-Knowledge in Baldwin's *Another Country*," forthcoming in *PMLA*.

Priscilla Peña Ovalle, Assistant Professor of English, Film, and Media, published a book chapter, "Framing Jennifer Lopez: Mobilizing Race from the Wide Shot to the Close-Up," in the collection, *The Persistence of Whiteness: Race and Contemporary Hollywood Cinema*,

ed. Daniel Bernardi (Routledge, 2007).

Paul Peppis, Associate Professor and Associate Department Head, published two essays: "Forster and England," in *The Cambridge Companion to E.M. Forster*, ed. David Bradshaw (2007); and "Schools, Movements, Manifestos," in *The Cambridge Companion to Modernist Poetry*, ed. Alex Davis and Lee M. Jenkins (2007). Professor Peppis has also been appointed to the editorial board of the newly-founded online *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies (JMPS)*, hosted by the Penn State University Press and supported by the Modernist Journals Project.

William Rossi, Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies, published an article, "Performing Loss, Elegy, and Transcendental Friendship," in *The New England Quarterly* (June 2008), while the 3rd edition of his Norton Critical Edition of Henry D. Thoreau, *Walden, Civil Disobedience, and Other Writings*, is being published by W. W. Norton as one of their celebrated Critical Edition series.

Associate Professor, **Ben Saunders's** book, *Desiring Donne: Poetry, Sexuality, Interpretation* (Harvard, 2007), was one of four nominees for the Frances Fuller Victor Award for General Nonfiction at this year's Oregon Book Awards.

Gordon Sayre, Professor, completed his term as University Senate President and published, with his co-authors Carla Zecher and Shannon Dawdy, an article entitled, "A French Soldier in Louisiana: The Memoir of Dumont de Montigny," in *The French Review* (May 2007).

Steven Shankman, Professor and UNESCO Chair in Transcultural Studies, Interreligious Dialogue, and Peace, was elected Chair of the Committee on Intercultural Studies of the International Comparative Literature Association. He was also named Poet of the Month by *Poetica Magazine* for January 2008 on the basis of his "Three Poems After Rembrandt": "Cain Slays Abel," "Abraham Sends Hagar and Ishmael

continued on page 16

Faculty News

continued from page 15

Away,” and “Noah’s Ark.” *Poetica Magazine* also published his poem, “The Road to Bauska” (November 2007). His book, *Other Others: Levinas/Literature/Transcultural Studies*, is forthcoming from SUNY Press and his edited volume, *Intercultural Approaches to Epic and Other Higher Narratives*, is forthcoming from Pearson Education (New Delhi); the volume includes his essay “Prosaic Profundity: *The Dream of the Red Chamber* and *Clarissa* as Higher Narratives.” His essay “Pope’s Homer and the Shape of His Poetic Career” appeared in *The Cambridge Companion to Pope* (2007). Another essay, “Deep Listening in Auschwitz: The Birth of the Author in Primo Levi’s *Se questo è un uomo* [If this is a man],” appeared in *Research in the Humanities and Sciences through Buddhist Life Perspectives* (2007). Professor Shankman also gave three major addresses in the past year: at an international conference on “Plato and Platonisms” at the University of South Carolina, he gave a plenary address on “Ghosts and Responsibility: The Hebrew Bible, Confucius, Plato”; at a conference on “Shin Buddhist Thought and Contemporary Philosophy” in Portland, OR, he gave a plenary address on “(m)Other Power: Shin Buddhism, Levinas, King Lear”; and at Penn State University, he gave a keynote address entitled “Eruptions of the Ethical Baroque” as part of their “Moments of Change” series on the seventeenth century.

Assistant Professor, **Cynthia Tolentino**’s book, *Subjects of Interest: Race, Professionalization, and U.S. Empire*, will be published by the University of Minnesota Press in fall 2009.

Louise Westling, Professor Emerita, published, “Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty: Ecopoetics and the Problem of Humanism,” in *Culture, Creativity and Environment*, ed. Fiona Beckett and Terry Gifford (Rodopi, 2007).

Associate Professor and Director of the UO Folklore Program, **Daniel Wojcik**’s essay, “Pre’s Rock: Pilgrimage, Ritual, and Runners’ Traditions at the Roadside Shrine for Steve Prefontaine,” was published in *Shrines and Pilgrimage in the Modern World: New Itineraries into the Sacred*, edited by Peter Jan Margry (University of Amsterdam Press, 2008) and was highlighted in the *Oregon Quarterly* (Summer 2008). His article, “Outsider Art, Vernacular Traditions, Trauma, and Creativity” was published in *Western Folklore* (Winter 2008), and he has two articles forthcoming: “Avertive Apocalypticism: Using Spiritual Techniques to Avert Worldly Catastrophe,” in the *Oxford Handbook of Millennialism*, ed. Catherine Wessinger (Oxford University Press); and “Marian Apparitions, Visionary Technology, and Traditions of Miraculous Photography,” in *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*. In winter 2008, he organized and presented the film series, “Apocalypse, Culture, Cinema” in conjunction with his course, “Apocalypse Culture,” supported by a grant from the UO Humanities Center. In spring 2008, he organized a series of events (films, lectures, and discussions) on the topic of “Track Town Traditions and the Culture of Running,” supported in part by a grant from the College of Arts and Sciences. He was awarded a summer research grant from the UO Office of Research and Sponsored Programs for his project on “outsider” and visionary art, and he was appointed to the Membership Committee of the American Folklore Society.

Henry Wonham, Professor and Department Head, published an article, “Mark Twain’s Last Cakewalk: Racialized Performance in *No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger*,” in *American Literary Realism*.” He also has a chapter on Henry James’s *The Golden Bowl* forthcoming in the

Clearwood Books anthology, *A Critical Companion to Henry James*.

Graduate Student News

Drew Beard presented two papers: the first, “‘If These Walls Could Talk’: Set Design and Soap Opera Realism,” at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies conference in Philadelphia; the second, “Living Dangerously: Revisiting the Female Antagonist of the Prime Time Soap Opera,” at the Console-ing Passions Conference in Santa Barbara.

Ulrick Casimir has accepted a tenure track Assistant Professor position at Prairie View A&M University in Texas. He presented a paper, “Erasure and ‘the Marginal Milieu’: Revisiting Perry Henzell’s *The Harder They Come*,” at the 2008 SCMS conference in Philadelphia.

Teresa Coranado has accepted a tenure track Assistant Professor position at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside.

Rachel Edford published an article, “The Elegance of the Elegant Universe: Unity, Beauty, and Harmony in Brian Greene’s *Popularization of Superstring Theory*,” in the journal *Public Understanding of Science* (2007).

Larissa M. Ennis received an Oregon Humanities Center Fellowship; as part of this fellowship, she presented a Humanities Center Work-In-Progress talk, “Father Figures and Broken Hearts: The *Godfather* Saga as Paternal Melodrama.”

In summer 2007, **Janet Fiskio** traveled to Desemboque, Mexico, to interview the esteemed conservation scientist, Gary Paul Nabhan, for her dissertation. She also participated in the mesquite harvest of the Seri community. In September, she co-organized the annual UO Composition Conference and has been serving as Assistant Director of Composition this year. She presented the paper, “Becoming Non/Human: Toward an Ecohermeneutics,” at the

Nature Matters conference in Toronto in October. During fall and winter, she served as the graduate representative on the search committee for a Literature and Environment candidate in English, and this year she has been on the local organizing committee for the conference "Thinking Through Nature." She received a Graduate Research Fellowship from the Oregon Humanities Center, a John and Naomi Luvaas Fellowship from UO, and a summer research grant from CoDaC (the UO Center on Diversity and Community). She published a book review this spring and has an essay forthcoming in the fall, "Gary Paul Nabhan's Dialogical Science," both in the journal *Environmental Philosophy*.

Andrew Grace has an article, "Landscape and Identity in Finnish-American Poetry," forthcoming in the *Journal of Finnish Studies*.

Rachel Hanan presented "The Bond of Law: Perjurous Hyperbole in *Love's Labour's Lost*" at the Shakespeare Association of America Conference in Houston, Texas. She presented "A Sense of Place in Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*: A Matter of Metaphor" at the Nature Matters Conference in Toronto, Canada. She was awarded an Ernst Dissertation Fellowship from the UO English Department, a Charles A. Reed Graduate Fellowship from the UO College of Arts and Sciences, and an Everett Del Monte Scholarship from the UO College of Arts and Sciences. Rachel is also getting married in July.

Marcus Hensel was awarded one of the two runner-up prizes in the Medieval Association of the Pacific's 2007 Founders' Prize competition. The award, for the best papers presented by graduate students at the annual meeting, was for a paper entitled "You Are What You Eat: Grendel, Diet, and the Making of a Monster."

Tamara Holloway has accepted a tenure-track position as Assistant Professor at Columbia Basin College in Pasco, WA.

Kom Kunyosying will present a paper, "The Geek as Melodramatic Hero in Charles Burns's *Black Hole*," at the 2008 Comics Arts Conference, during the San Diego Comic-Con International in July.

Jacqueline Pollard presented a paper, "'Where the Tower Was Traced Against the Night': T. S. Eliot's Wasted Churches," for the seminar "Siting Heritage and Memory" at the annual Modernist Studies Association conference in Long Beach, CA.

Sarah Jaquette Ray presented "Endangering the Desert: Ecology, Security, and Immigration," at the Modern Language Association annual conference in Chicago and again at the Pacific Northwest American Studies Association Conference in Walla Walla, WA. She presented a work-in-progress talk on her dissertation for the Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality Studies. She presented "Negotiating Ecological Legitimacy" at the Thinking through Nature conference in Eugene in June 2008, and her article, "Endangering the Desert: Ecology, Security, and Immigration" has been accepted for publication in *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and the Environment*. She has another article, "Risking the Body in the Wild: The 'Corporeal Unconscious' of American Adventure Culture," forthcoming in the *Journal for Sport and Social Issues*. Sarah was awarded a 2008-2009 American Association of University Women Dissertation Fellowship and a 2008-2009 Research Grant from the UO's Center for the Study of Women and Society.

Ashley Reis read selections from her creative work entitled "Wyoming Poems" at the Annual Western Literature Association Conference in Tacoma, WA.

Stephen Rust presented two papers: the first, "Penguins, Politics, and Performance: *March of the Penguins* and *Happy Feet*," at the Society of Cinema and Media studies conference in Philadelphia; the second, "Reimagining Eden: Murnau and Flaherty's *Tabu*," at the Film Studies Association of Canada

conference in Vancouver, B.C. Stephen also presented on film and ecocriticism as part of the English Department's annual MesaVerde colloquium.

Tristan Siple was elected for a three-year term to the MLA Delegate Assembly as a regional delegate representing the Western US and Western Canada. He presented a paper at the Thinking Through Nature: Philosophy for an Endangered World conference this June at UO. He has had another paper accepted for the Biennial ASLE-UK conference at the University of Edinburgh.

Sarah Stoeckl presented, "An Authenticating Hand: Willa Cather, Gertrude Stein, and the Right to Write About War," at the Western Literature Association conference; the paper has since been accepted for publication in the "Willa Cather Newsletter and Review." Her essay, "'With His Doxies Around: Queering Alan Ayckbourn's 'A Chorus of Disapproval,'" is currently appearing in the online, graduate student publication *Watermark*.

Kelley Totten (Folklore) received a UO Graduate Student Research Grant for her project, "Performance and Visual Representation in Craftswomen's Souvenir Production"; the grant will enable her to undertake a research project next fall in the Central Highlands of Peru where she will explore women's artistry, innovation and agency in creating souvenirs for tourists.

Brenna Wardell received a Unitus Community Credit Union Scholarship and a UO University Scholarship.

Jason Whitesitt delivered a paper entitled "Of Aufyrs and Pownys: Chess, Caxton and the Sovereignty of King Mark" at the 14th Annual ACMRS Interdisciplinary Conference in Arizona. The paper has been solicited for inclusion in the 28th volume in the series, *Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, published by the

continued on page 18

Alumni News

continued from page 17

Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies and Brepols Press.

Lesley Wallace Wootton

presented "Painful Radicalism: The Retreat to Middle-Class Domesticity in Alcott's Work," at the Pacific Northwest American Studies Association meeting in Walla Walla, WA. She also won a UO Humanities Center Research Fellowship.

Erin Young was awarded a Risa Palm Graduate Fellowship from the UO College of Arts and Science.

Alumni News

After earning his M.A. in Folklore at UO (1998), **John Baumann** continued his studies in folklore and religion in the Religious Studies Department at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he received his Ph.D. He is now an Assistant Professor in the Departments of Religious Studies and Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh. He is chair of the Religion and Ecology Session of the Upper Midwest American Academy of Religion Meeting, and teaches widely in the areas of North American religious practice and religious/environmental ethics.

Gary Bodie (Ph.D., 2007) presented a paper at the Medieval Conference in Kalamazoo, MI, and has accepted a tenure-track Assistant Professor position at Northwestern State University in Louisiana, where he has been working as a Visiting Assistant Professor.

Suzanne Bordelon (Ph.D., 1998) was recently granted tenure and promoted to Associate Professor in the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies at San Diego State University. Her book, *A Feminist Legacy: The Rhetoric and Pedagogy of Gertrude Buck*, was published in 2007 by Southern Illinois University Press in its Studies in Rhetorics and Feminisms series.

Stephanie Callan (Ph.D., 2007) has accepted a three-year visiting position as lecturer and Assistant Director of Composition at the University of Nevada, Reno.

Revell Carr completed his M.A. in the UO Folklore Program and then received a Ph.D. in ethnomusicology in 2006 at the University of California, Santa Barbara. As a post-doc he worked as music supervisor for the English Broadside Ballad Archive at UCSB, an NEH-funded project, digitizing the Pepys ballads. In August 2007, Dr. Carr was hired as a tenure-track assistant professor of ethnomusicology in the School of Music at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where he is now teaching courses in folk and popular music and directing UNCG's first American traditional music ensemble. Much of his work continues projects started at the UO, including an essay on disaster songs in *Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore*, and a forthcoming history of sea chantey recordings in the *Journal of American Folklore*. Last year he was an invited speaker at Unbroken Chain, a public symposium on the Grateful Dead at the University of Massachusetts.

Laird Christensen (Ph.D., 1999) has published two collections of essays in 2008. The first, *Teaching About Place: Learning from the Land*, was co-edited by Hal Crimmel and published by the University of Nevada Press in March. The second, *Teaching North American Environmental Literature*, co-edited by Fred Waage and Mark Long, will be published in September by the Modern Language Association, and includes an essay by Professor Emeritus Glen Love. Christensen is associate professor of English and Environmental Studies at Green Mountain College, where he is founding director of the college's environmental studies graduate program. His poems and essays have appeared in a number of anthologies, as well as in journals such as *World Literature Today*, *Wild Earth*,

Northwest Review, *Whole Terrain*, and the *Utne Reader*.

Richard Collins (B.A., 1976) has become Chair of Arts, English and Humanities at Louisiana State University, Alexandria. After graduate school at University of California, Irvine, Dr. Collins taught at LSU in Baton Rouge, in Romania as a Fulbright scholar, and at the American University in Bulgaria. After returning to the U.S., he spent a decade at Xavier University in New Orleans, where he was Rosa Mary Professor of English and edited the *Xavier Review*, several issues of which focused on the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. He is the author of *John Fante: A Literary Portrait* (Guernica Editions, 1999), a study of the Italian-American novelist and screenwriter John Fante, as well as articles on Victorian literature, on Greek and Romanian poetry, and, most recently, on Zen in literature and film.

Robert Glenn Howard (Ph.D., 2001) is currently Associate Director of the Folklore Program and Associate Professor of Folklore, Rhetoric, and Religions Studies in the Department of Communication Arts at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He is the editor of the journal *Western Folklore*. His writings have appeared in *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, *Journal of American Folklore*, *New Media and Society*, and the *Journal of Media and Religion*. His research focuses on the intersection of human agency and the performances of both communities and identities when they are mediated by network communication technologies. His publications explore topics ranging from networks of pet Websites, to the emergence of new religious movements online, to the development of theoretical frameworks that can account for the dispersed and informal power of vernacular expression as an alternative to institutions. If you would like to contact Rob, you can email him at rgh@rghoward.com or

check out his most current research and teaching at <http://rghoward.com>.

Patrick Jackson (Ph.D., 2007) has accepted a tenure-track Assistant Professor position in 20th Century Transatlantic literature at Columbus State University in Georgia.

Roxanne Kent-Drury (Ph.D., 1998), Associate Professor, English, at Northern Kentucky University, has been appointed director of English graduate study and has implemented a new graduate program.

Michael McGriff (B.A., 2003) was the 2007 winner of the Agnes Lynch Starrett Poetry Prize—one of America's most distinguished awards for a first book of poetry—for his collection *Dismantling the Hills*. McGriff's manuscript was selected from several hundred entries and was published by the University of Pittsburgh Press in the fall of 2008. The poems focus on a blue-collar Oregon lumber town, much like McGriff's birthplace of Coos Bay. He uses a broad range of styles—from the strictly narrative to the expansively meditative, from the grounded to the surreal. Currently a Stegner Fellow at Stanford University, McGriff also earned an M.F.A. from the University of Texas at Austin, where he was a James A. Michener Fellow in Poetry and Fiction. He has been awarded a Ruth Lilly Fellowship from the Poetry Foundation. His poetry and translations have appeared in *Agni*, *Poetry*, *Field*, *Northwest Review*, *Crazyhorse*, and *Poetry Northwest*. A limited-edition collection of poems, *Choke*, was published by Traprock Books in 2006.

Michael Payne (Ph.D., 1969), John P. Crozer Professor of English Emeritus, Bucknell University, had the pleasure to be a student or teaching assistant at UO with Professors Christof Wegelin, Thelma Greenfield, Kingsley Weatherhead, and Glen Love. Soon after joining the Bucknell University faculty in 1969, Payne became the Director of Bucknell University Press, which gave him the opportunity to publish books by all four of his former UO

Professors, as well as books by some of his former graduate student colleagues, Arthur Amos and Tom Hines. He also knew well Waldo McNeir, who was his beloved dissertation advisor, and Kester Svendsen, with whom he took three courses on Milton. Last spring, Payne retired after 37 years at Bucknell. His most recent books are *Reading Theory: An Introduction to Lacan, Derrida, and Kristeva* (Blackwell, 1993), *A Dictionary of Cultural and Critical Theory* (Blackwell, 1997), and *Reading Knowledge: An Introduction to Barthes, Foucault, and Althusser* (Blackwell, 1997); he is the editor, with John Schad, of *life.after.theory*. (Continuum International, 2004). During his retirement, Payne is working on a second edition of *A Dictionary of Cultural and Critical Theory* and pursuing a graduate degree in psychoanalysis from the University of Sheffield in the U.K. He lives in Lewisburg, PA, where he does volunteer work with Head Start children.

Alice Persons (B.A., 1973; M.A., 1976) has a small poetry press in Maine, Moon Pie Press, which has published 36 books by poets from all over. Seventeen of the poets' poems have been read on The Writer's Almanac on National Public Radio. Her website is at: www.moonpiepress.com

Dan Shea (Ph.D., 2007) has accepted a tenure-track position as Assistant Professor in Victorian literature at Austin Peay State University in Tennessee.

Jeannie Banks Thomas (Ph.D., 1992) is now a Professor of English and Folklore and Director of the Folklore Program at Utah State University. Her work focuses on gender, legend, and material culture. Her publications include *Naked Barbies, Warrior Joes, and Other Forms of Visible Gender* (Illinois, 2003); *Featherless Chickens, Laughing Women, and Serious Stories* (Virginia, 1997), winner of the Elli Köngäs-Maranda Prize; and *Haunting Experiences: Ghosts in*

Contemporary Folklore, with Diane Goldstein and Sylvia Grider (Utah State, 2007).

Judy Long Wenger (B.A., 1972, M.Ed, 1981) was awarded the 2007 Eugene Arts and Letters Bishop Award for the promotion of the arts to Eugene students for nearly thirty years. Born in Eugene, a descendent of the Zumwalts who settled in Eugene with Eugene Skinner, she returned home after five years teaching in Australia. She began teaching middle school English and drama in Eugene District 4j in 1979 and has taught at Roosevelt Middle School since 1983. Besides teaching yearbook and many language arts classes, she teaches Shakespeare and directs the "Roosevelt Bard Fest" with Richard Leebrick where three plays are performed in repertoire.

Nicolas Witschi (Ph.D., 1998), Associate Professor, English, at Western Michigan University, is serving as Co-President of the Western Literature Association during 2008.

NOTICE

Jack Foster (Ph.D., 1970) and **Rob Garratt** (Ph.D., 1972) are organizing a reunion of English Department graduate students (M.A.s, M.F.A.s, and Ph.D.s) from the 1965-1975 period, to be held on the third Saturday of June, 2009. Those interested in attending should email: garratt@ups.edu or jwfoster@interchange.ubc.ca.

Williams Seminar

continued from page 14

discussions were collaborative and collegial; students posed questions not only to Freinkel, but to one another as well, working together to clarify difficult points and encouraging one another as they grappled with mind-stretching concepts. Students were encouraged to learn and teach: over the term, every student presented a close reading of a chosen poem to the class; these presentations served to initiate each session's discussion.

In keeping with the philosophy of the Williams series, students in Freinkel's seminar participated in educational experiences that went beyond reading and writing. On the first day of the quarter, a Zen meditation teacher visited the class to instruct them in basic meditative practices; the session prepared students for the Contemplative Practice assignment, which required them twice a week to engage in an activity of their choosing that promotes mindfulness. Some students stayed with meditation, while others opted for less traditional practices in contemplation, such as sewing, rock climbing, playing golf and writing poetry. The interactive component of the class evidenced Freinkel's desire to provide students with an educational experience that continues outside the classroom. These

contemplative practices, like the poems the students read in the seminar, she believes, are germane to the lives of students, positively impacting their daily experiences. Supported by the generosity of the Williams Council, Professor Freinkel and her students collaborated together on an innovative journey between poetry and Buddhism, meter and mindfulness.

Promise of Reason

continued from page 13

in small seminars during the conference. This was seen by the students and their Master Class Teachers as a rewarding way to enable students to experience a scholarly conference as well as to become part of a larger research community in their fields of study.

Gage, Crosswhite, and Frank reported on the success of the conference and renewed a dialogue among many of the participants by speaking the following week at the Rhetoric Society of America conference in Seattle. They reviewed the conference's many contributions to rhetorical studies and spoke on aspects of Perelman's work in relation to the teaching of writing and debate.




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