



THE MIRROR & THE LAMP

Department of English and Journalism at Western Illinois University • Issue 1 • Spring 2014



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A LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

This past year I read a lot. I roamed through a whole set of authors and topics: works by David Foster Wallace, James Ellroy, Daniel Woodrell, Frank Bill, Bonnie Jo Campbell, Jaimy Gordon, and the whole genre of “Country Noir”; works by Mohsin Hamid, Eleanor Catton, Michael Lewis, Kenneth Rexroth, and Hilary Mantel; subjects like human migration, prehistoric art, the history of Maine, the history of European gardening, the 1929 stock market crash, and many, many others.

My point here is simply that I read — I read —

and this past year I have been especially conscious of this big-time commitment to reading that has defined so much of my life.

I have shared this commitment publicly with all of my colleagues in Simpkins Hall. For English and Journalism, this year was the year of reading.

To some this may seem obvious — isn't reading required in our discipline, in this field? Sure, yes, certainly — but reading and a reading life, a culture of reading, are not necessarily the same thing.

I believe that the

kind of reading I am talking of now is a serious commitment.

Though the list above may suggest otherwise, it is certainly not diletantism. It is serious. It is not exclusively pleasurable and it is not exclusively professional.

It is, mostly, work, an intense laborious serious daily commitment.

Let me explain. Every morning I get up as early as I can and I spend at least 1 hour reading.

I have a very specific ritual: I come downstairs, turn the heat up (or the air down), talk to our cat, make some really strong coffee, put on my robe

and slippers and, finally, turn on my reading lamp and sit at my desk to read.

It is quiet. It is often still dark outside. I settle in.

And I read, just read — no writing other than a few notes, no working at the computer, no emailing, texting, or any kind of communication that is not printed on the pages before my eyes.

This is a physical activity as much as an intellectual activity. I do it every morning, no matter what.

I read anything and everything that interests me, and many things people suggest.

But this kind of practice is not unique to me. Most people in our department live like this. Again, let me try to explain.

It is clear that, as a whole, our faculty read deeply this past year. One look at our research activity demonstrates this fact.

This year, faculty members in English and Journalism published a total of 20 scholarly articles, three books, and two edited collections; they presented 30 scholarly papers at national and international venues.

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MUSIC FIRST, SAFETY LAST

The lights fade in the Sandburg Theatre on David Drazin, an acclaimed silent-film pianist.

On Sept. 24, 2013 under the orange glow by the grand piano, David Drazin began to accompany the silent film *Safety Last*.

This 1923 silent comedy, features many terrifying stunts including climbing a building to hanging from a clock tower.

It is also filled with humorous gags. *Safety Last* features Harold Lloyd who plays a boy who switches roles with the stunt artist and has to climb a building.

Harold Lloyd is a heavy-hitting actor in the silent era. He was as well known as Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton, starring in over 200 films.

During the film, David Drazin subtly changed the mood throughout the scenes. He began to paint a musical picture that mirrors the movies ever changing scene from the serious moments to the humors moments.

The moment the film

began the audience was captivated by both the images and the experience of a silent film accompanied by live music.

After the feature screening, Dr. Richard Ness threw an unexpected curve ball to Mr. Drazin.

Soon after *Safety Last* finished Dr. Ness began another classic short *Gertie the Dinosaur* (1914) by Winsor Mckay.

This film features Winsor Mckay as an animator as he brings a dinosaur called Gertie to life with animation. Drazin kept right up, improvising a stride piano style to match.

As the night came to a close, Drazin received a thunderous applause as he had just completed a musical marathon.

By the end of the night, David Drazin was covered in sweat and was ready for a well-deserved break.

After the viewing a reception was held in the Sandburg Lounge where guests were able to ask questions about the music making process.

David Drazin, grew up

in Ohio and specializes various jazz styles such as Harlem Stride, Bebop and Blues.

Drazin routinely plays for blues, jazz, and film festivals, and he has played for numerous organizations from coast to coast. Besides accompanying for silent films he also accompanies for ballet classes.

After moving to Chicago in 1982 he continued to play for ballet companies, but in 1985 he began to play for the Chicago School of the Art Institute for Film.

A key achievement for Drazin occurred when he accompanied *The General* (1926) in 2010 at the National Archives in Washington D.C.

This event had numerous sponsors including the Department of Broadcasting, Department of English and Journalism, Council on Student Activities Funds, and the Visiting Lecture Committee.

Dr. Richard Ness, a professor of Film and Broadcasting, worked extremely hard to bring this event to life.

— Andrew Gerske

cont. from front

Add to this the fact that in the past two years our creative writers have published two novels and, literally, dozens of short stories, poems, and pieces of creative nonfiction. This is outstanding.

And it shows that every single day of the year our faculty read outside of their normal, everyday activities — outside of the everyday, often very demanding work required for their teaching and their service to the University. They read, privately, and with intense seriousness.

Our creative writers, our professional writers, and our literary critics will all tell you this kind of reading, serious hard reading of serious hard books, is the activity that makes their writing possible.

Indeed, in this way, we can think of their writing, all of these publications,

as in large part a record of the authors' own reading life. And this year all of this work became a little more public.

This year, many faculty members tried to share their private reading lives with their students.

So, the department's culture was publicly defined, in part, by a reading group in the Fall that focused on David Foster Wallace's final unfinished novel, *The Pale King*; by a reading group in the Spring that focused on Miguel De Cervantes' masterpiece, *Don Quixote*; and by a communal novel writing group that met once a week at the Jackson Street Pub.

What a great time to be in the Department of English and Journalism. What a great advance in our public culture in Simpkins. What a great year of reading.

— Mark Mossman

WHAT IS ENGLISH AND JOURNALISM READING?

At the end of the Fall 2013 Semester, The Mirror & The Lamp asked everyone in English and Journalism what they read this semester, and what they plan to read over the winter break.

Here is what English and Journalism had to say:

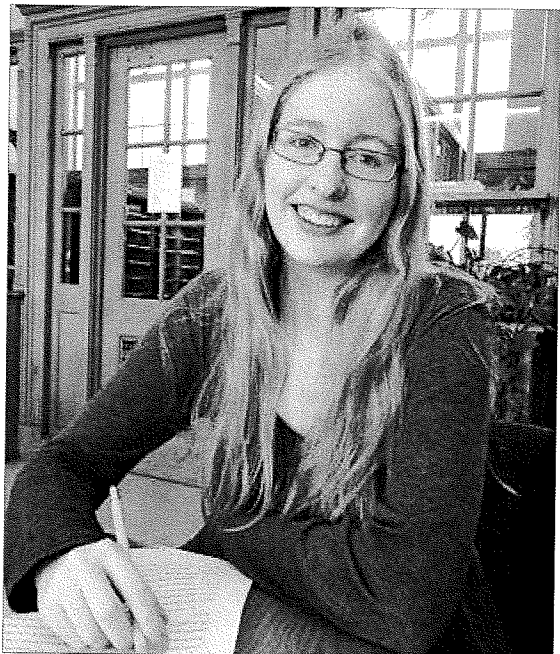


I am currently reading *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, by José Esteban Muñoz. This study, which draws on Frankfurt School Marxism to contest the political pessimism characterizing much of contemporary queer theory, is relevant to a critical book I am completing, *Modernity Beside Itself*.

One of the books I plan to read over break is Jeanette Winterson's *The Daylight Gate*. This tale of a witch trial, told by a literary stylist of the first order, a vibrant contemporary lesbian voice, just might be as dark as my all-time favorite novel, Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood*.

— Merrill Cole

A PATH THROUGH THE ENGLISH GRAD PROGRAM



Nicole Hagstorm Schmidt is currently a graduate student at Western Illinois University as well as an English 180 teacher for undergraduate students.

She is well known among the students in the graduate program and thought of fondly by the professors in Simpkins Hall.

After receiving her bachelor's degree in English in 2009 at Truman State University, Hagstorm pursued her childhood dream of becoming a master's student.

Schmidt knew early on she wanted to obtain a master's degree, "I first idly wanted to pursue a graduate-level degree when I was around twelve years old. I put 'Dr.' in front of my last name and thought it sounded incredibly cool," she said.

"When I first entered college in 2005, I assumed that I would end up pur-

suing an MAE for secondary English education.

One education class was all I needed to determine that secondary education was not for me, though it did give me a new appreciation for my K-12 instructors."

An obvious sign to change her career path, Schmidt officially chose to pursue a graduate degree in 2012 after she had been out of school for three years.

"It was one of those things where I realized that literary study (discussion, teaching, writing) were large parts of what gave my life meaning and so I threw myself into preparation," Schmidt said.

"I also discovered that research is next to impossible when you don't have access to databases or regular contact with people who know whether or not you're making stuff up. I met with Dr. Amy Mossman (the

graduate director at the time) in July of 2012, and idly joked that I would be happy to start grad school that fall if they still had spots available."

"Two weeks later, I was sitting in TA training with some of the smartest and most talented individuals I have ever met." That began Schmidt's journey into the Western graduate program.

Once accepted, Schmidt was struck with feelings of "impostor syndrome," and felt she didn't belong in such a challenging curriculum.

After familiarizing herself with the program, Schmidt was quickly blown away by the students and faculty involved in the program.

"Honestly, I was really intimidated by how smart and confident my cohort was," Schmidt said.

"As to the department, I have to say that there is a wealth of scholarship, professional development, and support here that I don't think I would have been able to find at another school."

As Schmidt's relationship with the program grew, she was surprised at the level of professional development available (conferences, committee opportunities, research) that became more apparent as the program went on.

Schmidt wanted to share some tips with students who are considering graduate school.

She addresses our readers with: "For traditional students considering graduate school in the humanities (whether that be an MA, PhD, or MFA), I would strongly advise taking some time off after earning the bachelor's degree.

That extra period of time will make it more clear that advanced study is something that you actually want or need, and not just a diversion tactic."

Outside of using this time for self-evaluation and introspection, Schmidt has other advice for prospective students

students to use their professors as resources.

When asking Schmidt about her experiences in the classroom, her enthusiasm was hard to ignore. "Like most instructors I've talked to, I love to be in the classroom and I love interacting with my students," she said.

"The most interesting things that have happened this semester include a lesson where students had to sell various products, ranging from a Journey's Greatest Hits CD, a package of beef-flavored Ramen, and a banana costume."

She is also very proud of the fact that several of her students have won awards for the writing they have done in her class.

Aside from her presence in the classroom, Schmidt is also known around campus for her work as the former co-president of the English Graduate Organization (EGO).

As for her plans after graduation, Schmidt is happy to report that she has been accepted to several PhD programs in English Literature for the coming fall, including The University of Arizona, York University, SUNY Buffalo, Florida State, and Texas A&M.

"I have had multiple funded offers and am frantically (but happily) trying to figure out where is the best fit for me," she said.

Schmidt is a passionate, creative, and inspiring student who has the drive to achieve anything she strives to do.

— Abigail Tichler

I first idly wanted to pursue a graduate-level degree when I was around 12 years old.

— Nicole Hagstorm Schmidt
GRADUATE STUDENT

— make contact with faculty members in that field.

"It's the professors who really understand the field and can tell you specifically what kinds of things you should be doing to prepare," Schmidt said.

"An MFA's preparation is very different from a MA's in journalism, for example. They will also know how to catch the typical mistakes in an application. It also preps you for the inevitable critiques that will come."

Schmidt also reminds

WHAT BOOK SHOULD YOU READ BEFORE GRADUATION?

To Kill a Mockingbird. They (students) should read it because it exemplifies everything that is great about American Literature.

It is a perfect example of not only telling a story, but also pointing out all that is wrong and right about humanity and what we could become as people.

— Daniel Kopping

THE ENGLISH MINOR: HOW IT HAS ENHANCED MY EXPERIENCE AS A LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES MAJOR

Upon commencement of my first semester at Western Illinois University-Quad Cities (WIU-QC), I found myself unprepared—the areas of study that would consume much of my time, money, and focus for the following two to three years were still undetermined.

As the Liberal Arts and Sciences student advisor and I met in his office, he charged me with the daunting task of pinpointing which three academic domains would comprise my paired minor emphasis degree.

Embracing the unique opportunity to choose three minors in place of one major would satisfy my desire for a comprehensive intellectual awareness – the single definitive standard personally placed on my education.

Eventually, I selected Communications and Psychology to constitute two-thirds of the program, leaving the last third to float around my head with dozens of other options.

I initially doubted the positive impact of an English minor, but my

advisor's attestation to its value persuaded me otherwise.

Having maintained the decision to include English in my collegiate career for nearly two years, I've noticed its enhancement not only of my other minors, but of the skills fundamental to my individual fulfillment apart from academia.

Implicit in its name, the Communications minor is centered on building students' ability to portray and exchange information proficiently.

The skill to effectively communicate information has proven its utility to be ubiquitously relevant. In my experience, successful management of private, academic, and vocational life is often dependent on communication.

Incidentally, among the skills learned under an English minor's guidance is the competency to compose the expression of ideas, opinions, and other thoughts in an organized and logical manner.

Although my topics of interest may vary from subject to subject, the organizational competence I've

acquired through WIU-QC's English program clearly transfers to my communications minor.

Additionally, its extensive coverage of diversified literature and other subject matter cultivates an awareness of different communication styles and their respective merits.

While English supplements my communications minor by way of organizational instruction, it enhances my psychology minor by mandating the analysis of various literary works.

Literature depicting human identity saturates the realm of written work, so its prevalence among my English classes is expected.

The connection between psychology and English is apparent in this regard, but I find the practice of building an argument about said identity to be most useful in completing psychology coursework.

Though not identical, the processes are similar – ideas, as hypotheses, are tested through analysis and sufficient evidence is obtained to support a literary assertion as it is to support

a treatment proposal, for example.

However, my English minor lends its versatility to focus other than Communications and Psychology.

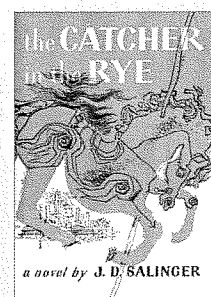
Generally speaking, the experiences I've had in its context have improved my critical thinking skills and enhanced my mental flexibility and creativity, all of which have proven to benefit each facet of my life at one point or another.

Further, these qualities lay a firm foundation for the myriad of occupational endeavors available to be pursued.

From Communications and Psychology to my experiences outside of academia, the English minor has strengthened each area of study as well as directly impacting other components of my life.

Ironically, the subject that I originally had little interest in has become the most enjoyable part of attaining my degree. It continues to supplement my intellectual activity and progresses the fulfillment of personal arenas separate from my degree program.

— Caitlen O'Day



I think everyone should read *Catcher in the Rye* at least once.

We are given this narrator, Holden, who questions everything and everyone around him.

He is such a unique character and people either hate him or love him, it really depends on who you are.

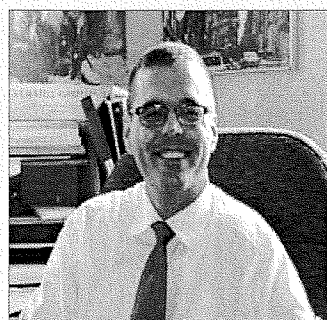
He judges people and it leaves you thinking about your daily life and thoughts and while reading this you think about the type of person you are.

At the end of the book we realize this entire piece is about a loss of innocence and that really connects with college students who are about to enter the real world.

We should re-evaluate who we are and what we are doing and think about the morals and things we were taught growing up.

It is just a fascinating, classic novel that everyone should read.

— Amy Fogarty



Currently, I'm reading *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men* by David Foster Wallace.

I have been reading the work of David Foster Wallace and thinking about the work of David Foster Wallace and writing, just a little, about the work of David Foster Wallace for the last eight months, and my

goal now is to read all of his work by the end of the Spring term, and have an article on his work written by the end of summer 2014.

One book I am going to read over break is *The Luminaries* by Eleanor Catton. I try to read all of the Man Booker Prize winners, and this is the winner for 2013.

— Mark Mossman



Currently I'm reading:

The Corrections by Jonathan Franzen. 1) I haven't read any Franzen before, but his name often comes up in connection with David Foster Wallace, whose essays I love.

So I'm interested in thinking of these two authors alongside each other. 2) My sister recommended it.

Over break I plan to read from *Best American Essays, 1996*. 1)

There's a great essay in the 1996 collection about Elvis Presley that I want to reread in anticipation of a winter or spring pilgrimage to Memphis/Graceland.

— Jacquie Wilson-Jordan

THE LIFE OF A DOUBLE MAJOR



Elizabeth Dunn is double majoring in English and Art.

She is a Centennial Honors College student, a member of Kappa Pi (an honors art fraternity) and a member of Sigma Tau Delta (an English honor society).

She has done numerous art work for Sigma Tau Delta and is an active participant in many of the events, including presenting an essay at the society's convention in Portland, Oregon in 2013.

She also works in the Archives and Special Collections Department in the Malpass Library as well as the Art Gallery.

On top of all of that, she also writes for *The Western Courier*.

But, who is the girl behind these great accomplishments?

Dunn is an Omaha, Nebraska native. She wanted to leave the comfort of her own home and experience something new.

First, she attended school at Benedictine University in the Lisle/Naperville area to be

close to Chicago; however, after two years there she thought her education was becoming a bit stifled. She further spread her wings and landed in Macomb, to attend Western Illinois University.

Attending college and focusing on one subject is hard enough on many students, but Dunn rose to the challenge and wanted to double major in both English and Art.

"Throughout school I decided I was best at writing and reading," Dunn explained.

Her love for literature made her certain she wanted to pursue that into a degree.

However, her studios-drive didn't stop there.

After taking a general-education art class, Dunn realized she was hooked.

"I don't know how to fully describe the feeling but art consumed my life," Dunn said.

She explained she started to sketch daily and even began doodling and creating pieces while she was in class. "I became obsessed," Dunn said.

Becoming an Art major has been one of the best decisions she has made.

English and art correlate with one another in that they both require creativity and imagination.

It is no surprise that Dunn possesses both of these qualities being that she grew up in a creative atmosphere.

Her grandmother was an artist; her art reflected her eastern European lifestyle Dunn explained.

"Her art could be described as folk art and I think bits of her style shines through my work," she said.

Right now Dunn is focusing on printmaking, the primary form being silkscreen. "Silkscreen (printmaking in general) is exciting because there are so many techniques and you have an edition of work at the end, instead of only one piece," she explained.

"Sometimes when I create a silkscreen print I feel overjoyed."

As for her love of literature, that didn't come from a family-oriented trait.

Dunn expressed her love for fantasy fiction because she loved being involved in a world beyond her imagination and becoming invested in characters that she previously had no attachment to.

"I guess that is what fascinates me, the fact that I am temporarily part of someone else's world," she said.

Double majoring adds more stress than one might imagine. "I think splitting my time between the two can be very difficult."

"Art is more about developing ideas and conveying them through your chosen medium, which required you to spend plenty of time in the studio while English is more heavily invested in written assignments and reading texts."

However, Dunn doesn't see this as negative, but instead finds this as beneficial.

"It is amazing to have multiple ways to express yourself, your opinions, and your feelings, which is why I love being a double major," she said.

Dunn admitted to enjoying reading and

writing outside of her schoolwork. Another passion Dunn holds is a love of classical film. She explained the first classic film she saw was *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* starring Elizabeth Taylor and Paul Newman.

"I was so moved by their performances that I knew I had to keep watching," Dunn said.

Her preferred classic film genre ranges from 1935-1955. Dunn's nickname, Bette, pays homage to her favorite actress Bette Davis. "I think there is beauty, class and talent in classic film that will forever be unrivaled," Dunn said.

After graduating from Western, she plans on receiving her MFA in printmaking and eventually wants to become an art professor.

Dunn will continue to keep her writing alive and hopes to find a publication to write for.

Attending Western has been a positive move on her life. "I am really thankful to be receiving my education from Western," Dunn said.

— Amy Fogarty

A SHADOW OF A DOUBT



Somehow I snuck my way into a graduate program halfway through the school year and nobody's noticed yet that I don't actually belong here.

I've been told over and over again that what I'm feeling is normal and it's called "Impostor Syndrome." I don't like the sound of that.

I'd prefer to think of myself as a Secret Study Agent, ducking under laser beams and using suction cups on my feet to gain entry into classrooms. A collegiate Catwoman.

Cue the theme to *Mission Impossible*

Her name is Julie Kaiser. She's five-foot-four of academic guile. Some say she can change her appearance at will (while others say it's just L'Oreal #7).

Her ingenuity gives her access to top-secret locations inside Malpass Library and Simpkins Hall.

She moves through crowds of grad students, blending in and gaining their trust. No one would ever suspect that she, a seemingly normal 20-something woman, is in fact, a secret study agent.

Record scratch

Okay. It's not the coolest of daydreams, nor is it the most accurate.

I do actually have an acceptance letter and the assurance of about two people that I am a

fully registered student.

Why, then, do I still have this dark shadow of "The Impostor" looming over me? He follows me wherever I go, whispering in my ear.

I'll be doing just fine sitting in class when all of a sudden I hear, "You don't actually know what Michel Foucault said in "Death and the Labyrinth." "Stop nodding your head" or "Hey! You know what book you should bring up in class? *Fifty Shades of Grey*. That's TOTALLY academic."

I've gotten to a point where I've started Googling "Impostor Syndrome" just to see if there's a bounty out for him. (There's not, in case you were wondering.)

The only take-away I have from this hunt for information is that I'm not alone, having found ten pages of O's in "Goooooooooooooogle" and 214,000 unique hits.

So many people in the world feel the effects of The Impostor in their lives, and for some it just never goes away.

The issue I $\frac{3}{4}$ and thousands of others $\frac{3}{4}$ feel is that we consider ourselves inadequate. We look at our situation and think, "My god, I'm just making this up as I go and people actually believe me."

I can't tell you how many times I've said

something in class or wrote a line in a paper that was met with approval and my instinct was to say "Seriously? I lucked out again?"

And while this instant shock is starting to fade as I grow more confident in the fact that I might actually know what I'm doing, it does pop back up with a vengeance from time to time.

How in the world are we supposed to survive years of this gnawing sense of inadequacy without succumbing to it?

At what point does The Impostor win? Most importantly, how does he win? I imagine he sneaks up on you when you're writing a paper and tells you there's no point.

Don't bother trying. It won't matter what you do, because it will never be good enough. And those who are willing to believe the lie give up. They have given themselves to The Impostor.

For now I've been keeping him at bay by reminding myself that I'm not alone. Even as an undergrad, I never felt like I was a part of my department, yet here at Western I'm finding a close-knit family of students and faculty all working towards the same goal.

The support of those around me, whether or

not they realize how supportive they've been, has been the difference between facing this challenge head-on or turning tail.

Never in my life did I think I would meet professors who would aid me in an academic pursuit of comic books and video games.

I was sure I wouldn't make a single friend who would encourage my geeky need to become a human thesaurus.

Every moment I spend reflecting on how absolutely incredible my next couple of years here will be, The Impostor shrinks just a little more.

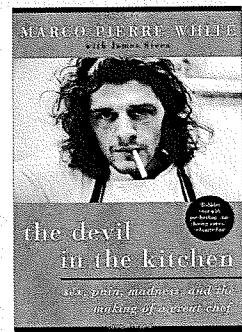
I won't let him win. Even if at times I feel like I'm floundering, that's the purpose of education.

It isn't supposed to be easy. I should be challenging myself whenever and wherever I can.

I know that one day, all my effort will pay off. I also know that I am meant to be here because I am willing to face the challenges ahead of me. If I were an imposter — if I were a fraud, a sham, a charlatan — then frankly, I wouldn't have gotten as far as I have.

And it's my determination to keep doing what I'm doing which gives me comfort during long nights of heavy reading and slapdash essays.

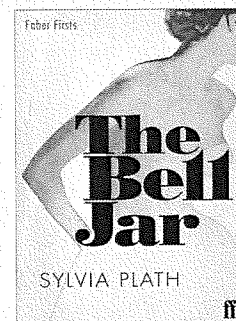
— Julie Kaiser



I'm currently reading the book *The Devil in the Kitchen* by Marco Pierre White.

It's a chef's memoir and I typically enjoy reading what could be categorized as "food porn."

I don't know how many other people would say the same, but if you have a passion for both food and books, it makes the most sense to combine the two.



I would say at least every female student should read *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath before graduation.

It shows what a serious effect all the rigors of life can have on a person and the fact that you need to develop a way of dealing with it all or you're going to go literally crazy.

It's important that students realize that sometime before they get out into the "real world."

— Natalie Shinn

I'M NOBODY — WHO ARE YOU?

I'm Nobody! Who are you? Are you – Nobody – too? Then there's a pair of us! Don't tell! they'd advertise – you know!

How dreary – to be – Somebody! How public – like a Frog – To tell one's name – the livelong June

– To an admiring Bog!
— Emily Dickenson

Who is that woman sitting alone? I am not your typical fresh-faced, eager college student experiencing academia for the first time.

I do not have that excited amazement wondering what life has to offer. I don't even have a peer-group my age. I probably graduated high school with the parents of my classmates.

I have daughters who are closer in age and have more in common with the people seated around me in the classroom.

Why am I here? I have found empowerment and self-worth studying English at Western Illinois University.

I chose an English major my first semester at WIU-QC. Having spent the past twenty years married and raising children, I felt unaccomplished, unappreciated, and worthless.

Sitting in my first English class I felt out of place and nervous.

Looking around the room I found not one person with whom I could identify.

I was ready to give up my dream of a degree in the first week of class, facing the fear of ostracism.

Then I found the literature. In that first English class I read

Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* and recognized my life.

Without mental stimulation I, like Jane, was destined for a destructive emotional break.

The journal entries of Jane's growing depression and resulting social fear was a concept I related to wholeheartedly.

That short story, read in a Gothic-themed introduction to fiction course, reminded me why I so badly wanted this degree.

My age and life experiences allowed me to interpret and make arguments a young student would not understand.

I learned about literature. I spoke about literature. I shared my opinions and personal interpretations of literature.

I was given an opportunity to discuss my thoughts on Edgar Allen Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" and someone actually listened. My opinion had value.

I wrote a paper which explained that opinion, and used quotes from the fiction as evidence of my interpretation.

It was then I realized the function and purpose of an English major and recognized something I absolutely appreciated. I felt a whole new world opened for me.

As a non-traditional English major I not only juggle the many reading and writing assignments for my class load but also a job, children, housework, and have recently ended a twenty-two

year marriage.

For an older non-traditional student (above age 45) comes the additional stress of time.

Seeking an English degree, with my sights set on the advanced graduate level and teaching adult education, becomes a race against the clock.

The constant concern of, "by the time I graduate I'll be...(whatever my reply)" creates an added pressure to succeed.

Being late to the game does not offer room for repeating classes. Being an older college student I have to follow a plan-of-action; and reaching my goals on deadlines becomes the driving force.

I have wasted too much time as it is and can't afford to frivolously interrupt my education once again.

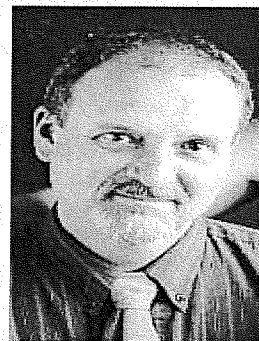
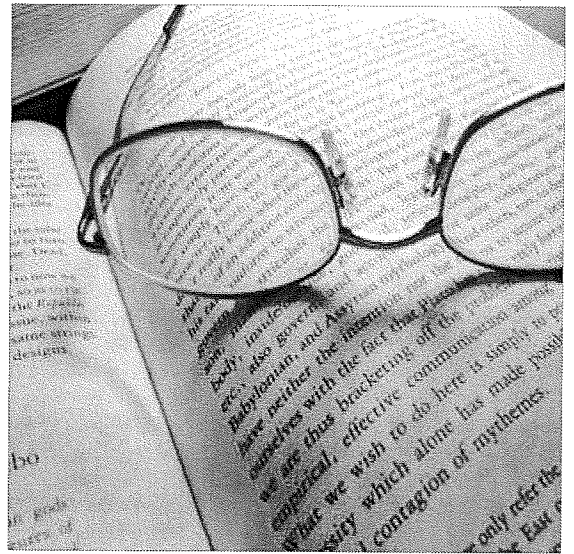
I have little patience with the younger students treating their educations lightly. I wish I had their youth to do over.

I am the oldest student in class. I sit in the front to absorb every word spoken. I am excited to answer questions and share my opinions because for years I was denied a venue to express myself at all.

I write papers I take pride in, which are submitted on time, if not early, because I am committed to my deadlines. I'm not sitting in class to make life-long friends, or look for a love interest.

I am there for the education. I am a no-nonsense, older, non-traditional English student.

— Di Ann Vulich



I am currently reading *Diablo III: Signature Series Guide* by Doug Walsh, Rick Barba, and Thom Denick.

I am reading it to enhance my gaming experience with the Playstation 3 version of *Diablo III* and, I hope, to increase my chances of sending all the fiends and demons back to Hell where they belong.

During the semester break, I plan on reading *Bad Monkey*, the most recent novel by Carl Hiaasen. I really enjoy Hiaasen's combination of humor, hard-boiled detective (although few of his protagonists are actually detectives), and mystery writing styles.

—Rick Clemons



I am currently reading William Gaddis's amazing novel *The Recognitions*.

It is a dizzying meditation on art, authenticity, and the meaning of mimesis in our everyday lives. One of the greatest novels of postwar America!

Over the break, in spite of all my better judgement, I will read John Updike's disgusting novel, *Rabbit is Rich*. Sometimes, reading what inspires real hatred can lead to passionate writing. More soon about Gaddis, Rabbit, Franzen and more.

—David Banash

SPECIAL COLLECTION JOB SHADOW: A REFLECTION

About two years ago, I made the conscious decision to declare myself as an English major for my undergraduate degree.

More recently, I made the decision to continue my education at some point by applying to a grad school in a Library and Information Science (LIS) program.

I have been working as a used bookstore employee for a little over five years, and also as a page at local public library.

It is pertinent to mention I enjoy reading, as well as the aesthetics of a book: how it is created, bound, printed, how the cover of a book is designed and chosen, etc.

Based on my adoration for the physical book itself, I have been researching my future LIS degree in special collections.

Like many others, I want to be sure this is what I want to pursue because I'll succeed at it, not because I have a hobby and this happens to be a career field related to books.

I previously heard how difficult breaking into this specific field can be, especially now that the Internet seems to have

changed the course of archiving and retrieving information, leaving me to wonder whether or not there would be jobs left by the time I finished grad school. I had this specific idea that a special collections librarian's job was to take care of old texts: mend, archive, shelve.

Everything that I was researching essentially told me this was the job and those were the tasks, plain and simple.

With the help of a required project assigned in a professional development course, I reached out to the University of Iowa's special collection department, in hopes that I might be granted some form of an interview, and maybe even a kind of job shadow, so that I could see for myself if this was what I really wanted to do with my future.

Luckily for me, I was given the opportunity to shadow Iowa's special collections librarian, Patrick Olson.

On December 10th, I was invited by Olson to come and explore Iowa's special collection department, starting by sitting in on a staff meeting bright and early.

Mostly awake, I was warmly welcomed by the staff, and was able to listen to them chat about redecorations to come in the department, items recently purchased from an auction from Mildred Wirt Benson's estate, and paintings and photographs they discovered in boxes belonging to Chef Louis Szathmáry II (the University of Iowa has an entire collection of cookbooks and recipe pamphlets which were previously in his ownership; the collection is named in his honor). It was in this meeting when I began to think, "What in the world is happening right now?"

To them, these were their everyday surroundings and encounters, and to me, they were definitely topics I could write home about.

After the meeting wrapped, it was time for my tour of the collection in its entirety.

Olson showed me shelves upon shelves of miniature books, manuscripts of Romantic Poets, European devotionals, the world's largest Leigh Hunt collection (plus original pieces of a fireplace from his home in England), film reels, artist's books, and so on.

Later we left the collection so Olson could film a YouTube video with another special collections librarian, Colleen Theisen, who is also in charge of the department's outreach field.

She manages Iowa's special collection Tumblr page, as well as their Twitter account, among other things. I couldn't help but think, these people are the coolest.

After having a huge fangirl moment; Olson and I finished the tour and headed back to his office so I could observe a special collections librarian in action and do some interviewing.

A few phone calls were made regarding auction purchases and a possible donation of a large artist's book collection.

This is where collection development comes in.

A library's special collection can be a fairly equal distribution of donations made outside the library community, purchases made internally, and trades between other libraries' collections.

Most of the time, donations come in based on not so happy circum-

stances, i.e., a death, lack of space, or disinterest in items that have fallen into the laps of those who have no need or desire for them.

In terms of how decisions are made on what to purchase for a collection, the basis can be made on the strengths found within the library's original collection.

For example, if a library has a vast medieval manuscript collection when it is first created, then more medieval manuscripts will be added to the collection over time.

This allows that specific library to become well known for that specific collection.

After discussing how to develop a collection, we began to talk about the digitalization of special collections. The University of Iowa itself has been partaking in this inevitable trend, having created a website called "DIY History," which allows for keyword searches on manuscripts that have been processed and scanned for availability.

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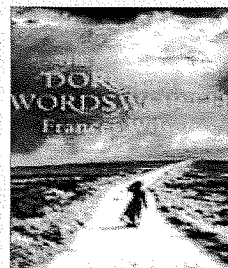
Actors Anonymous by James Franco. Why? James Franco makes me laugh.

And, I really had to see what craziness he was allowed to publish. The horribleness of it does not disappoint. I'm also reading *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier.

What I'm reading over break? Fun stuff: *Morrissey's Autobiography* and *Coreyography* by Corey Feldman.

I'm reading these because I'm somewhat obsessed with the celebrity memoir so I always have at least one in my reading pile. Plus, how can you not want to read a memoir by someone (or their ghostwriters) who feels the need to use their own name in the title.

— Rebekah Buchanan



I am currently reading: *The Ballad of Dorothy Wordsworth: A Life*, by Frances Wilson.

This was the prelude and is the follow-up to a summer of reading bios of English Romantic poets — Coleridge, Byron, and of course Dorothy's brother — as well as Dorothy's Alfoxden and Grasmere Journals.

What will I read over winter break? Maybe I'll just watch early *Doctor Who* and knit.

— Judi Hardin

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I asked both Olson and Peter Balestrieri, the department's processing librarian, the question I myself have been receiving more recently: "What do you think will be the outcome of digitization — will it hurt or harm special collections and libraries in general?"

Both agreed it can be beneficial. It is nice that some rare and valuable texts can easily be found online in a quick search, and more often than not, it brings awareness to the existence of the special collections and where the items are originally kept.

Neither Olson nor Balestrieri believe the Internet is going to be the end all be all of libraries, mostly because of how sensitive computer files and software are to being erased and lost, and because of developments in technology.

Next, Olson had a box he allowed me to open

as part of the job shadow. It contained beautiful pea green satin covered book.

Lining the front and back covers were hand stitched embroidered outlines sewn along the edges in dark colors, along with scalloped shells on the front cover, and a flaming heart sewn with red and gold thread on the back cover.

The edges of the pages were gold leafed and still very vibrant, as was the rest of the book.

Given permission to hold it, I flipped through the pages, seeing that the printed text was still dark, and in French. The book was very well taken care of for being a 17th century French devotional.

I was holding a book that was hundreds of years old, like it was a delicate porcelain teacup from my grandmother's china cabinet.

I more than likely had this terrified look on my face, but it was the most

precious thing I had ever held in my entire 22 years.

As soon as I handed the book back to Olson, and collected myself, he, Balestrieri and I began talking about the necessary steps to take in order to obtain a career in the special collections field.

Working or volunteering in a library is a necessity, more so than a perfect GPA (although that helps too.)

Having the knowledge of the library field is crucial in program acceptance, as well as down the career path.

Internships are also a must because of the hands-on experience gained when working in a specialty field.

In doing all of these steps, contacts are developed, and connections can be made in one's favor when important decisions come along in job placement.

Olson and Balestrieri spoke back and forth

about the importance of these resume builders before they looked at me and asked, "Are we overwhelming you?"

I was overwhelmed. I was overwhelmed with reassurance and validation, something I needed in order to rise out of the "what am I going to do with my life" phase that most people my age are currently experiencing, and into the "I am so ready to get started on my life" phase.

The advice and suggestions they gave me have become invaluable, though to them it may not seem that way, and I may be a tad dramatic, but it's true.

I would have never thought that a special collections department had so many people involved within it.

Each librarian I met had a specific role whether it was community outreach, collection development, managing archives, etc. I learned that an LIS degree

does not limit to one specific area of a library, that there are many positions that need to be filled in order for an entire department to work.

This can definitely be said for a special collections specific LIS degree, as I have witnessed it. It goes far beyond the mending, archiving, and shelving of books.

This experience was the push I needed to start working tirelessly towards a goal I believed was unachievable, and I can't thank them enough for it.

I plan on doing more research on the schools I am interested in attending, finding out what internships may be available to me over this coming summer locally, and starting the application processes for my top choices a little earlier than I normally would, in order to ensure I'm developing my adult career the way I want it to be.

— Clair Larson

EXTRA-CURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

My résumé is full. Too full — I can't fit any more lines on one page, but I am still trying.

And that's not a bad thing; and I am not bragging. I am fortunate. I am blessed.

Upon returning to post-secondary education after a ten-year hiatus, I was simply looking to finish my Bachelor of Arts degree, get my diploma, and move on to the next stage of life, whatever that was going to be.

Little did I know that I would be drawn out of myself and into experiences outside of the classroom that I could not have imagined.

There was once a girl who was fortunate enough to have a professor who saw potential in her that she had no idea how to find on her own.

For most of her first semester — in spring 2011 — she sat there not answering questions for fear of ridicule or shame. But she had things to say — great things — and her eyes lit up at every question asked.

Her brain fired rapidly with thoughts and ideas brought to light by every new passage of literature read.

It was upon seeing the light and the fire that her professor began to challenge that shy girl to come out of her corner, to come out and face her fears. And slowly, she did — to great effect.

Fast-forward a year. We are now in the spring semester of 2012. This is a big semester for the shy girl in the corner, who now is the moderately-shy girl in the

middle row.

She now answers most questions, and voluntarily engages herself in class discussion. She has even been coerced into presenting an academic paper at the school's approaching Environment Summit.

In truth, she is actually a bit excited — terrified, but excited. The day for the presentation comes and she is definitely nervous, sweating — she might run.

But she does not. She takes her place at the front of the classroom along with the rest of the panel. She finds out she will present first. She... is...going...first. Panic.

And then she starts speaking, the nervousness melts away, the excitement takes over, she thrives on the interaction with the crowd—

she is hooked on public presentations forever.

"That one big step, thrusting myself into a terrifying and unknown world of verbal expression and ever-glaring stares, was a life-changing event for me. It opened a whole new world of involvement outside of the classroom.

The options were endless, though admittedly I was compelled to keep chasing them in the challenge to find an end that did not exist.

In the same spring semester in which I participated in my first presentation, I took a position as the president of the WIU-QC campus English student organization, IDEAS (Interdisciplinary English and Arts Society).

Yes, I started right out

of the gates with the top position, and the most responsibility. I loved every minute of the experience.

I found that a leadership role suited me well. I held two consecutive terms as IDEAS president, learning and growing from the experience.

I also took on a presidential position with another off-campus club, and was reelected for a second term the following year.

In semesters to follow, I voluntarily wrote for the *River's Edge* Newspaper, and took on the position of QC Liaison for Sigma Tau Delta English Honor Society's Phi Delta Chapter (WIU's chapter).

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This past fall of 2013 I humbly accepted the position of QC Editor for the department's new magazine, *The Mirror and The Lamp*.

I have submitted a number of papers to a variety of journals, and accepted invitations to publically present critical literary essays at two consecutive Sigma Tau Delta annual conventions, each gifting me its own invaluable experience.

I also was sure to seek out and participate in internship opportunities that gave a broad and "real-life" perspective of the things we were being taught in the classroom.

—Leann Weiss

UNCONFERENCE

According to Bill Thompson, "An UnConference, if you have never come across the term, is a relatively new, and increasingly popular, way of getting together to discuss topics of mutual interest with low barriers to participation and a high degree of spontaneity.

Essentially, people come together under a broad rubric (like 'Reading and Writing at WIU') and then propose topics they are interested in talking about. The idea is, interest generates discussion.

A vote is taken and the most popular topics are those that get discussed.

Participants break up into small groups according to the topic they are interested in — and ideas get shared and generated."

Thompson organized an UnConference this fall on reading and writing, and faculty from across the university came to discuss issues and share their experiences.

In one of the first sessions, participants discussed the problems and difficulties faculty see

Now, nearing graduation in May and the closing of my undergraduate career, I am again looking to the future — to the next stage of life.

That future is now much brighter than I could have once envisioned it to be. It is a future that no doubt involves further leadership opportunities and a wide world of possibilities that push the boundaries of career and community involvement."

So what is the not-so-shy girl standing in front of the room saying?

Get involved. Jump in — risk it. I promise you will not regret it. I certainly don't — and neither does my resumé.

where students are not actively engaged. Bradley Dilger from English and Journalism observed, "what is so difficult to get students to see is that their own interests are what should drive them along.

That if they concentrate on their own passions, the whole of their education will improve."

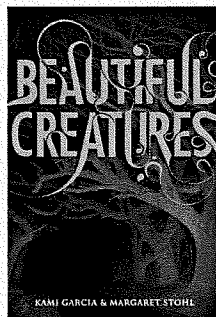
One of the best things about the UnConference format is that it allows faculty from across the campus, who might not otherwise meet, to engage in conversation, breaking down disciplinary boundaries for a few hours.

Attendees included Larry Andrew from Computer Science, Erin Taylor from Political Science, and Courtney Blankenship from the School of Music.

At the Unconference, a small but energetic group discussed professional development issues, encouraging student intellectual culture outside the classroom, students' sense of the ownership of their writing, and other like topics.

—David Banash

WHAT ARE UNDERGRADS READING?

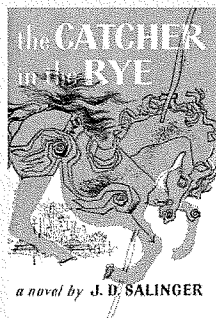


During the school year I tend to not read books outside of class due to the number of literature classes I take every semester.

I do most of my "fun" reading during the summer when I have more time to focus on doing such activities. I really enjoyed reading *Beautiful Creatures*, this is a series of novels that made for a great 6 week reading.

I really like the idea of a love story and how modern the authors can make them. Others should read it because it has an awesome story line and involves the modern ideas of fairy tale for teenage readers.

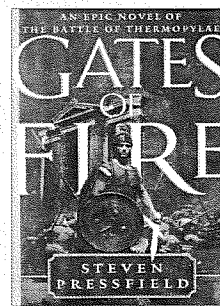
—Emily Vaughn



Catcher in the Rye by JD Salinger, I read it in high school and really liked it. I decided I would buy all the great American classics to reread again and this was the first one on my list.

I'm a big Salinger fan, I enjoy all of his works.

Others should read it because like I said, it's a classic. We are thrown into a different time period with that story and Salinger writes so differently than so many writers that everyone should experience his work. —Amy Fogarty



I am currently reading *Gates of Fire* by Steven Pressfield.

A friend of mine recommended it to me and since he has consistently recommended excellent books to me, I decided to read it.

I'm only a few chapters into the novel, but so far, it is an interesting book.

If you've seen the movie *300* you have a general idea about what this novel is about.

It deals with the Battle of Thermopylae, from the point of view of a single surviving spartan warrior.

Since I've only read a few chapters I would be hesitant to advise others to read it, but if the rest of the novel is as interesting as these chapters, and if the reader likes historical fiction novels, I would recommend it.

—Joseph Leganski



I am currently reading *Night* by Elie Wiesel because it is a classic that I have not yet read. Although the theme of the book is dark, I like the insight that it offers. Others should read it because it gives more than just Anne Frank's side of the Holocaust.

—Emma McCreary

WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO WITH THAT?

When I tell my friends and family that I am in graduate school attempting to get my master's degree in English, without fail, they always ask, "What're you gonna do with that?" After getting asked this question nearly once a week since I've started the program, I have concocted myself a little script: "I plan on going into the publishing and editing world, and I hope to work with books, magazines, and newspapers. But I know these jobs are few and far between so we will just see where life takes me."

I realize that I am not the only English grad student getting bombarded by this same question. Out of curiosity, I asked some of my classmates what their scripted responses were, and this is how they responded:

"I am looking to begin my own magazine as well as become a prolific author. I'd like to start a magazine for African American males that will be progressive in nature and a resource for them to establish and reach their goals whether they are academic or professional. Moreover, I am looking to become an author who will write stories of mystery and other genre fiction."
— Rayvon Shelton

"Well, either I keep going to school for another decade and finally become a college professor or I become the most over-qualified barista you've ever met. 'Do you want whip on your Frappuccino?'"
— Julianne Kaiser

"When I graduate with my MA in English, I plan to apply to colleges and universities in order to teach English composition courses.

If this does not go well, I will use my undergraduate degree in Secondary English Education in order to apply to high schools to teach English. So essentially I plan on teaching at some level, secondary or higher, with my master's degree."
— Elena Moran-Cortez

FALL 2013 WRITING FESTIVAL

On Friday November 8, Western Illinois hosted the 2013 Writing Festival at the WIU Multicultural Center.

Around sixty students from four area high schools came and were given lessons from professors in the WIU English department.

Nine different areas of writing were covered in 50-minute classes.

With three classes happening simultaneously, the students were able to choose what topic appealed to them most.

I was able to observe three of these seminars, and not only learned about some forms of writing, but I also had a fun time.

Dr. Morrow led the day with a lesson on Shakespeare.

He presented two sonnets and worked through their meaning before tasking the students to try to come up with their own version.

Most students worked in groups and wrote a rebuttal sonnet to one that was presented, Sonnet 130.

In it, Shakespeare says some unflattering things about the woman he loves.

Most of the groups came up with humorous ways of telling old Will that he was full of it.

There was a lot of laughter to be had from these rebuttals.

Next, Dr. Banash

taught students a lesson on colorful writing utilizing Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons*.

Dr. Banash placed a coffee cup on the table, and asked the students to describe it.

He then gave everyone a copy of Stein's writing to show how when used creatively, even the simplest words become powerful tools in a writer's repertoire. The students then redrafted their works using these techniques.

It is hard to believe that the writing they produced came from high schoolers. Banash explained, "There is such power in Gertrude Stein's writing. Instead of writing that there is just a cup

of coffee on the table, suddenly students are using words to name sensations. There is a vibrating, black hole, or a cracked white universe in front of them. They realize that they can find a power in language by giving themselves a constraint. When they realize this, it is is deeply exciting!"

When I talked with some of the students, many of them said that this was their favorite of the day. They did not know that they could use words in that way.

Before the lunch break, an awards ceremony was held.

In the weeks before the writing festival, students were given

the opportunity to submit works in four different categories.

Dr. Shazia Rahman's led a writer-activism seminar.

One of the students wrote a small play about bullying, and her teacher came up with a plan to perform it as a flash play in the hall of their school in between classes.

Overall, the Writing Festival was a success.

Many of the students who attended said that they hoped that Western would do this again next year so they could come back.

Many thanks go out to all the WIU faculty, and event organizer Dr. Rebekah Buchanan.

— Daniel Kopping

2013-2014 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Alumni

Jenny Maddox Abbott (B.A. 2004) Technical Services Project Coordinator, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Chelsea McDougall (B. A. 2006) Reporter at the *Northwest Herald*, Crystal Lake, IL.

Ayana Contreras (B. A. 2006) works at Chicago Public Media. She is the host and producer of *Reclaimed Soul* and Executive Producer of *Barbershop Shop Show* and *Practically Speaking* on Chicago's 90.7 FM.

Ryan Budds (B.A. 2007): Associate Producer, *Ridiculousness*, MTV, Los Angeles.

Flannery Scott (M. A. 2008) is an acquisitions editor for Taylor Trade Publishing, Denver.

Annette Glotfelty (B. A. 2008) is a Digital Media Manager, STARZ, a cable network, New York City

Jacob Davis (B. A. 2008) Social Media Manager, Southport Grocery & Cafe, Chicago.

Bridgette Walker (M. A. 2008) Production Scheduler, Kraft Foods Group, Quad Cities.

Kristen Aguirre (B. A. 2009) KHQA *This Morning* Co-Anchor

Leonard Vance (B. A. 2009) Content Producer at Noggin Labs & Associate Editor at Curbside Splendor publishing, Chicago.

Adam Sacasa (B. A. 2009) Reporter, *Fort Lauderdale Sun Sentinel*.

Jamie Mitchell (B. A. 2009) graduated from Southern Methodist Law School and is now Junior Development Partner

at United Commercial Development in Houston Texas.

Christina Holt (B. A. 2010) is the managing editor of the medical journal *Pulmonary Circulation* in Chicago.

Lauren Finkler (B. A. 2010) Editor at *The Homer Horizon* at 22nd Century Media LLC, Chicago.

Ed Komenda (July 2011) Reporter, *Las Vegas Sun*.

Francie North (BA 2011): MWR Library Manager, U.S. Naval Base, Guam.

Travis Moran (M. A. 2011) is currently an English as a Second Language Instructor in Beijing, China.

Lacey Skorpea (B. A. 2011) graduated with an M. A. in folklore from Louisiana State University and is now in the Cultural Studies Ph.D. Program at Wayne State University.

Kelsey (Wolfe) Head (B. A. 2012) works in public relations at Yetter Manufacturing

Kasey Gallagher (2012). Reading Teaching Assistant at William Fremd High School in Palatine, IL.

Johnathan Pontarelli (B. A. 2012) returned to campus to speak with English Education Students. He is currently teaching at Neuqua Valley High School in Naperville, IL.

Ashley Hurley (December 2012). English Teacher at Warsaw High School in Warsaw, IL.

Aaron Graf (B. A. 2012) Dealer Systems Analyst for John Deere Information Systems.

John DeGregorio (M.A. 2013) was accepted to the Ph.D. in English at The University of Iowa.

Thomas Boyd (B. A. 2013) Circulation Clerk, Bloomington Public Library.

Brandon L. Scates (B. A. 2013) is the Student Engagement Coordinator at Kelly Miller Middle School in Washington D. C.

Allison Janacek (B.A. 2013) Instructional Assistant at Jewel Middle School in North Aurora, IL.

Michael Davenport (B.A. 2013) English Teacher at El Capitan High School in Merced, CA.

James Black (B.A. 2013). 8th Grade English Language Arts Teacher at Cary Junior High in Cary, IL.

Caitlin Christmas (B.A. 2013) Computer Concepts teacher at Illini West High School and West Prairie High School in Carthage and West Prairie, IL.

Teli Fedeli (B.A. 2013) Substitute teaching in Monmouth-Roseville and Quad Cities area schools.

Neil Friberg (B.A. 2014). Substitute teaching in Quad Cities area schools.

Jennifer Mitchell (B.A. 2014) 6th and 8th Grade English Language Arts Teacher at Abingdon-Avon Middle School in Abingdon, IL.

Annie Supalla 6th Grade English Language Arts Teacher at Percy Julian Middle School in Oak Park, IL.

Undergraduate Students

Xitong Chong, certificated Chinese teacher by IMCPI, became a member of National Society of Collegiate Scholars this semester and traveled to Juarez, Mexico as a volunteer to help construct housing for the homeless. Chong is also the presi-

dent of Chinese Students Association.

Victoria Drews was accepted to the Masters of Library Science programs (M. L. S.) at the University of Illinois, Washington University, and Drexel University. She will begin at one of them in the Fall of 2014.

Elizabeth Gieb presented her paper "What Happens to Student's Knowledge When the Session Ends? on the panel "Talk about Transfer in the Center: Negotiating the Complexities of Writing Transfer" at the Midwest Writing Center Association Conference. The presentation for MWCA was done under the direction of Dr. Neil Baird. She also presented "Wait you're Not a Grad Student?" Age and Gender in Writing center Consulting" at the Conference on College Composition and Communication as part of the panel "Broadening Access: Reviewer Response, Gender Revision, and Drop-In Writing Centers."

Julianna Goodman has been accepted to the M.F.A. program in Creative Writing at Purdue University.

Kylee Palmer will start teaching English at VIT High School in Table Grove, IL in the fall of 2014.

Di Ann Duffey Vulich took 2nd place for the Lois C Bruner Creative Nonfiction Award and she has been accepted to The Graduate Program in English at Western.

Graduate Students

Jessica Masson McFadden presented "Woolf's Alternative Medicine: Queer Cognition, Narrative Defiance, and the Undoing of Diagnosis" at the 24th Annual

International Conference on Virginia Woolf; "Open Access to Desire: Queering Classrooms to Build Connections" at Open Source(s), Access, Futures: 2014 Conference on College Composition and Communication Annual Convention; "Open Access to Desire: Queering Classrooms to Build Connections" at Western Illinois University First Annual Graduate Research Conference; "Gender Incarnations and Incantations: Rhetorical Reinventions of the Canon and Collective Acts of Identity-Villainy in Macbeth" at Courtliness and Convention: The 37th Annual Ohio Valley Shakespeare Conference; and "Diagnosing The Hours: An Ambivalent and Disjointed Fictional Anti-Clinical Case Study and Feminist Analysis of Fictional Woolf and her Struggle within the Fragmenting Machine of Heteronormativity" at Being Undisciplined: An Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference.

She won the Gloria Anzaldúa Rhetorician Award at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, the Graduate Student Research and Professional Development Award from the School of Graduate Studies, Western Illinois University, October, and the Graduate Student Research and Professional Development Award from the School of Graduate Studies, Western Illinois University. Her article "Open Access to Desire: Queering Classrooms to Build Connections" is forthcoming in *Palaver*, 2014. She also has creative work appearing in *The Feminist Wire*, *Sinister Wisdom*, *Wilde Magazine*, *A Queer Jar of Feelings*, *Gender Focus*, *Lambda Literary*, and *Gender Focus*.

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Graduate Students cont.

Ruby Nancy did a graduate internship as Coordinator of Supplemental Instruction in the Student Success Center at Black Hawk College this spring. She was also a panelist on "Barriers to Writing Transfer at the '2+2' University: Preliminary Findings from CWPA-Supported Research," with faculty members Dr. Neil Baird and Dr. Bradley Dilger at the Conference of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) in Savannah, Georgia. She also won travel grants from the Research and Professional Development Fund, The School of Graduate Studies, and the College of Arts and Sciences to attend "Theoretically Prepared: Boot Camp for Graduate Students" at CWPA in Savannah, Georgia.

Gina Wilkerson presented a paper entitled "Returning Adult Learners in the Writing Center: It's Not Just for Kids Anymore" at the Midwest Writing Center Association conference.

This spring, she interned with Professor Galen Leonhardy at Black Hawk College in his English 101 (and 102) courses and was asked to join Phi Kappa Phi honors society.

Faculty

Barbara Ashwood published "Rural Residents For Responsible Agriculture: Hog CAFOs and Democratic Action in Illinois" in *The Journal of Rural Social Sciences* 28.3 (2013): 76-88.

She presented with Magdelyn Helwig, Nicole Hagstrom-Schmidt, Bill Knox, and Bill Thompson at the Conference on College Composition and Communication and read creative nonfiction work at the Boiler Room series, presented at the English Graduate Organization,

and wrote a narrative that was featured in the University Art Gallery's exhibit "Perceptions: Exploring Sense of Self and Place through Art."

Neil Baird published "NextGen Students and Undergraduate Ethnography: The Challenges of Studying Communities Born Digital" in *The New Digital Scholar: Exploring and Enriching the Research and Writing Practices of NextGen Students*, eds. Randall McClure and James Purdy. 2013. 273-292. He presented "Barriers to Writing Transfer at the '2+2' University: Preliminary Findings from CWPA-Supported Research." Council of Writing Program Administrators in Savannah, Georgia.

David Banash published his monograph *Collage Culture: Readymades, Meaning, and the Age of Consumption* (Rodopi) and the edited collection *Collecting and Collections: Objects, Practices, and the Fate of Things* (Scarecrow). His essay "In the Cut: The Art of Linder Sterling" appeared in *The Los Angeles Review of Books*.

Dan Barclay presented "Christmas Trees in the Capitol: Turning Nature into a Rhetoric of Power" at the Association for the Study of Literature & Environment (ASLE).

Rebekah Buchanan published "Rhetoric of Riot: Creating Alternative Feminist Sites of Resistance" in *Feminist Challenges, Feminist Rhetorics: Locations, Scholarship, and Discourse*.

She also presented "Punk and Zines" and "So and In Flight" at the Popular Culture Association-American Culture Association Annual Conference.

She also presented "Telling Digital Stories in the Preservice Classroom" at the Conference on

English Education (CEE) and was a participant in the NEH Summer Institute, "Finding Mississippi in the National Civil Rights Narrative: Struggle, Institution Building, and Power at the Local Level."

Merrill Cole was the featured poet in *Poetic Diversity* with his poems "The Mystery of Statistics" and "Pirate." He presented "The Dada App" and "No Ditto in Dada" at The Modernist Studies Association Conference. In the past academic year, Merrill Cole published poems in *Belleuve Literary Review, Poetic Diversity: A Litzine of Los Angeles, and Creative Resistance*.

Bradley C. Dilger published "West Palm" in the edited collection, *Florida* and "Feeling the Unseen Weight of Class" in *College Composition and Communication* 65.3 (Feb 2014). He was a co-presenter (with Neil Baird) for "Writing Transfer and First-Generation College Students" at the Council of Writing Program Administrators Conference.

Jose Fernandez presented "The Budding of Modernism in Richard Wright's *Black Boy* and 12 Million Black Voices" at the 55th Annual Convention of the Midwest Modern Language Association and "The Legacy of Radical Social Protest in Amiri Baraka's 'The Slave' and Luis Valdez's *Bandido!*" at the American Literature Association Symposium on "War and American Literature."

Everett Hamner presented "Climate Change Fiction, Technology, and the Sacred" at the Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Jerry Hansen was inducted into the Mendel Catholic High School Hall of Fame in Chicago and wrote and registered a screenplay with

the Screenwriters Guild of America.

Barb Harroun published "Reading and Writing My Way" in *Friends Journal* November 2013:6-9.

Her flash fiction, "Trapeze," appears in *Prairie Gold: An Anthology of the American Heartland*. Iowa, Ice Cube Press, 2014. Forthcoming.

She presented "Geode" at the PCA/ACA National Conference.

Magdelyn Helwig published "'Uttering Tongues': Verbal-Visual Collaboration as Memory- and Meaning-Making" in *War Memoranda: The Civil War, Walt Whitman, and Renewal* (forthcoming 2015) from the Library of Congress.

She presented "Acknowledging (and Harnessing) the Differing Learning Dispositions of New TAs" at the Council of Writing Program Administrators Conference and "Opening Curriculum, Creating Openings: Transforming a Writing Program after a CWPA Program Evaluation" at the Conference on College Composition and Communication.

Timothy Helwig published "Melville's Liminal Bachelor and the Making of Middle-Class Manhood in Harper's New Monthly Magazine" in *American Periodicals: A Journal of History, Criticism, and Bibliography* 24:1 (Spring 2014): 1-20.

He was elected to serve a four-year term as the Midwestern Regent of Sigma Tau Delta English Honor Society.

Bill Knox published "Sustainable Local Food: Turning the Soil, Turning the Tide" in *Local Food Networks and Activism in the Heartland*, for which he was also a co-editor, (Common Ground Press). He also published *Writing Fast/Writing Well* (Kendall Hunt).

He was a co-presenter

on "Opening Curriculum, Creating Openings: Transforming a Writing Program after a CWPA Program Evaluation" at the Conference on College Composition and Communication and presented "After Honors: Staying in the Game" Upper Midwest Regional Honors Council Conference.

Daniel Malachuk published "Democracy" in *Emerson in Context* (Cambridge University Press) and "Green Exaltadas: Fuller, Transcendentalism, and Antebellum Women's Nature Writing" in *Toward a Female Genealogy of Transcendentalism* (University of Georgia Press).

He has many forthcoming essays, including: "Disinterestedness and the Liberal Subject" in *Victorian Debates* (Routledge); "Liberalism" in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Victorian Literature* (Blackwell Publishing); "Repair to the Lamps and Rake the Language" in *Democracy and Education*, 21.1 (2013).

He presented "Farming with the Transcendentalists: A 'Higher Use' Alternative to Becoming Postnatural" at Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts and "James Baldwin's Privacy" at James Baldwin: Transatlantic Commuter. He was invited to speak at the Université Bordeaux Montaigne, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Université Paris Diderot, and University of Münster, Germany.

During the 2013-14 academic year he was Fulbright Senior Lecturer in American Literature, Ruprecht Karls Universität and Residential Fellow, Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Study.

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Faculty cont.

Chris Morrow published "Acknowledgment, Adaptation and Shakespeare in Ron Rash's *Serena*," in *South Central Review*, 30.2 (2013): 136-161. He presented "Kill Shakespeare: Teaching and Researching Comic Book Adaptations" as a roundtable participant at 41st annual meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America. He was also Senior Instructor of Book History, Book History Workshop, Cushing Memorial Library & Archives, Texas A&M University.

Shazia Rahman published "Cosmopolitanism, Internationalization and Orientalism: Bharati Mukherjee's *Speritexts*" in *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 49.4 (September 2013): 405-418. In the spring of 2014, she presented "Atonement and Reparations: Pakistan's 1971 War in Sorayya Khan's *Noor*." Debt and Indebtedness. 2014 MLA Convention.

John Schulze published

"Saudade" *Two Hawks Quarterly* [fiction]; "Fifteen Miles From Early" *A River and Sound Review* [fiction]; "Blitzkrieg" *Rolling Thunder Press*, 2013 [fiction]; "Finale" *Union Station Magazine* [fiction]; "Rendezvous" *Front Porch Review* [fiction]; "Good Intentions" *Hippocampus Magazine* [non-fiction]; "Neighborly" *Comnotation Press: An Online Artifact*, [non-fiction]; Review of Jose Saramago's *The Lives of Things*, *Prairie Schooner*; "Lawn Care" *Poetry Quarterly* [poem]. He presented "A Sense of Place: A Sense of Self: The Value of Place Consciousness in the Composition Classroom" at the 21st Annual Gulf Coast Association of Creative Writing Teachers Conference.

Mohammad Siddiqi presented "Media Code of Ethics: A Comparative Analysis and an Islamic Perspective" and "Muslim Media in the United States and Their Role in Helping Muslims Become Part of the American Public Square" at the Third International Conference of Islamic Media. He was interviewed on KHQA Television, Quincy, IL on

the "A for Arab" exhibit and by WIUM FM 91.3 for the "A for Arab" Exhibits. He was inducted into the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Collegium of Scholars, Morehouse College and elected, for a two year term to the Executive Board of the International Islamic Organization of Media.

Bonnie Sonnek presented with Western English Department Alum Kristin Dragos, "Redesigning Teacher Education Courses: What Graduates Contribute" at the 103rd National Council of Teachers of English Convention.

Yong Tang published "Journalistic Right in the 'First Rough Draft of History': A Comparative Study of News Copyright in the United States and the People's Republic of China in the *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 6 (1), 24-44. He presented "Journalistic Role in Chinese Freedom of Information" at the Communication Law and Policy Division of the 2013 International Communication Association (ICA) Annual Conference and "Journalistic Internal

Reference: Exemption from China's Freedom of Information Law" and "'Feeling for Rocks while crossing the river': Analysis of statutory language of China's first freedom of information law" at the Law and Policy Division of the 2013 Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC).

Alicia White presented "Artistic Frames: Using Arts Based Research Methods to Explore Teachers' Experiences" at the Tenth International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry (ICQI).

Jacque Wilson-Jordan published "Losing June" in *Gravel Literary Journal* [fiction] and "Verne and Nellie's Table" in *The Blue Bear Review*.

She presented "Verne and Nellie's Table" at the English Graduate Conference and participated in the "NIU Ph.D. Graduates Panel Discussion" at the Northern Illinois University Conference on Language, Literature and Media.

Erika Wurth published her first novel, *Crazyhorse's Girlfriend* (Curbside Splendor). She also published "Beautiful, Terrible Thing" *Sententia*, [fiction]; "Kes Woodi," *Contrary*, [fiction]; "Candy Francois" *Split Lip Magazine* [fiction]; "Freighttrain" *Southern California Review* [fiction]; "On North Beach" *Toe Good Poetry* [poem]; "Faces Toward the light" and "Change Form Behind Me" *Mas Tequila Review* [poems]; "He Brought Me Down" and "Fists Clenched, Holding" *As, Us* [poem]; "Dusty Redemption" *Yellow Medicine Review*, [poem]; "Receding Like the Wilderness in the Night" and "Smoke Billowing," *Cimmaron Review*, [poems];

Pat Young presented "Miss Ida B. Wells: Kicking Ass Badly" at the National Council on Black Studies Conference, 4 March 2014, Miami, and she also chaired the panel "Performance in the African Diaspora" at The College Language Association Conference in New Orleans, LA. She is currently at work on a new book manuscript.

REMEMBERING DR. ROBERT JACOBS

Dr. Robert Jacobs, 86, former chair of the department, died March 31, 2014, at Heartland Healthcare Center in Macomb.

He received his B.A. from Grinnell College, his B.D. from University of Chicago, and his M.F.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Iowa.

He taught at UCLA and Iowa Wesleyan before arriving in Macomb in 1969. He served as chair of the department from 1972 to 1978, and retired in 1994.

During his career at WIU, he taught a variety of classes, including Myths, Legends,

and Literature; Modern British Literature; Great Books; Short Story; 20th Century British Literature; Literature of the Bible; and Introduction to Fiction.

His dissertation was entitled "Psychology, Setting, and Impressionism in the Major Novels of Joseph Conrad," and he went on to publish on a number of articles on Conrad, mythology, and modernism.

Former student Randy Hardin (BA 1992, MA 1995) recalls: "Yes, I took a mythology class from Jake. I was initially disappointed that

we weren't studying mythology, but mythology as applied to modern literature.

However, the class introduced me to a number of great books I wouldn't have touched otherwise (I am one of the few, the proud, the soldiers who have actually read *Ulysses* cover to cover).

I loved the class – to this day I have a sharpened sense of how mythology is used in contemporary literature."

His colleagues remember him for his warmth, energy, and playful sense of humor.

—Judi Hardin



CREATIVE WRITERS FIRE UP THE BOILER ROOM



2013-2014 was an extremely productive academic year for the creative writing minor. The Boiler Room Reading Series kicked off, featuring faculty and student readers sharing original poetry, fiction and nonfiction at the University Art Gallery.

For a full list of readers and photographs of the six events, please visit us on Facebook, courtesy of John Schulze, at <https://www.facebook.com/#!/boiler-roomreadingseries?fref=photo>.

In conjunction with the University Art Gallery exhibition, "Perceptions: Exploring Sense of Self and Place Through Art," and with the generous support of the Visiting Lecture Committee, award winning fiction writer Chad Simpson contributed fiction, gave an author's talk, and

read from his 2013 collection, *Tell Everyone I Said Hi*.

Barbara Ashwood, John Schulze, Magdelyn Helwig, Barbara Harroun, and Amy Patrick-Mossman also contributed original work.

Merrill Cole coordinated the Fred Case & Lola Austin Case Writer-in-Residences.

In Fall and Spring respectively, fiction writer Susan Steinberg and poet Christopher Hennessy conferenced individually with students, attended classes, participated in a Q & A, and each gave a reading.

The 2014 Creative Writing Awards winners were: Sarah Lambach (1st Place Nonfiction), DiAnn Vulich (2nd Place Nonfiction), Juliana Goodman (3rd Place Nonfiction, 1st and 2nd Place Poetry),

Corin Bodenhamer (2nd Place Fiction), Zach McGowan (3rd Place Fiction), and Victoria Drews (3rd Place Poetry). Congratulations to all!

Faculty Advisor, John Schulze, and Editors Corin Bodenhamer, Dana Breen, Juliana Goodman and Sarah Lombach have compiled the stunning 2014 edition of *Elements*, our very own literary magazine with a rich 50 year history. A release reception/reading is scheduled for Wednesday, May 7th at 7:00 p.m. in the University Art Gallery. Please join us!

In celebration of National Poetry Month, the creative writing minor organized a reading at the WCI Arts Center on Friday, April 25th at noon. Creative writing also partnered with English Education for a "Black Out Poetry" event

led by undergraduate Kimberly Ackers on April 17th.

In student news, Juliana Goodman has been accepted to Purdue University's M.F.A. program and is a candidate for the prestigious John Kent Cooke Scholarship.

Graduate Kathryn Brostowitz has been accepted in to Roosevelt University's M.F.A. program. Congratulations and best wishes to both.

In faculty news, Erika Wurth is on sabbatical.

Her novel, *Crazy Horse's Girlfriend*, will be released in 2014 by Curbside Splendor Press. John Schulze's (Penn Stewart) novel *Fertile Ground* will be released October 7th 2014 by Knox Robinson Publishing.

Merrill Cole's recent publications include: "Objective Correlative" in Creative

Resistance; "The Mystery of Statistics" and "Pirate" as the featured poet in *poeticdiversity*; "Edema" in *Bellevue Literary Review*. Barbara Ashwood's "Rural Residents for Responsible Agriculture: Hog CAFOs and Democratic Action in Illinois" was published in the *Journal of Rural Social Sciences*, and she presented with Magdelyn Helwig, Nicole Hagstrom-Schmidt, Bill Knox, and Bill Thompson at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in March.

Barbara Harroun's work can be found this year in *Friend's Journal*, *Bird's Thumb*, and is forthcoming in *Sugared Water*, *i70 Review*, and *Prairie Gold: An Anthology of the American Heartland*.

— Barb Harroun



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The Mirror & The Lamp
Department of English and Journalism
1 University Circle
Macomb, IL 61455-1390

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We hope you enjoy the first edition of *The Mirror & The Lamp*. We trust that this newsletter will bring together students, faculty, and alumni of the Western Illinois University English and Journalism Department for years to come. You can help by keeping us informed of your recent activities and achievements.

Please email David Banash, Faculty Advisor, with any updates or announcements that you would like to share at D-Banash@wiu.edu. You may also send us a letter at:

The Mirror & The Lamp
c/o David Banash
1 University Circle Simpkins Hall
Macomb, IL 61455

With your assistance, *The Mirror & The Lamp* will be a valuable and long-standing English and Journalism Department publication. Thank you!

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**Assistant Design
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David Banash

**Sigma Tau Delta
Faculty Advisor:**
Timothy Helwig

Contributors:

Mark Mossman

Caitlen O'Day

Di Ann Vulich

Clair Larson

Barb Harroun

Andrew Gerske

Daniel Kopping