

BYWORDS

Department of English Newsletter

“ We build statues
out of snow,
and weep
to see them
melt.
-Walter Scott ”



www.english.umd.edu/bywords

“First Annual Alumni Luncheon”

On Saturday, December 4, 2010, the English Department hosted its first annual Alumni Luncheon. Fifty alumni (roughly half of whom were undergraduate English majors and half of whom were enrolled in graduate programs), ten faculty and staff members, and one graduate student gathered. While the event was officially scheduled to run from noon to 2:00 pm, some participants arrived early to tour the department’s new home in Tawes, and many lingered well into the afternoon.

After the tours, time spent connecting with old friends and making new connections, and a delicious lunch, Kent Cartwright welcomed the group to this academic homecoming. Robert Levine, Director of the department’s Center for Literary and Comparative Studies, articulated opportunities for collaboration between alumni, students, and faculty.

As part of the formal program, Howard Norman acknowledged the pleasures and perils of a life spent writing, briefly narrated a portion of his current project, and read from his recently released novel, *What is Left the Daughter*. Martha Nell Smith offered details from a career dedicated to the study of Emily Dickinson.

The department organized the event with two main goals in mind: to foster a sense of community between alumni and members of the department; and to gather information about the sorts of future programs both the department and alumni would find beneficial. The day was convivial and productive. Participants planned to return, and members of the department not in attendance remarked that they were looking forward to next year’s event.
-Karen Nelson

“Bloodwork” Conference Coming Up This Spring

This conference explores how conceptions of the blood—one of the four bodily fluids known as humors in the early modern period—permeate discourses of human difference from 1500 to 1900. “Bloodwork” begins with the assumption that the metaphorical equation of blood with “race” as we understand it today is a distinctly modern, always shifting, and geo-culturally contingent formation. Hence, we believe a conversation among scholars from various periods and fields of inquiry will enhance our understanding of the cultural history of blood. Specifically, we ask how fluid transactions of the body have been used in different eras and different cultures to justify existing social arrangements.

The conference is made possible by Office of the Vice President of Research, the Office of the Dean of Arts & Humanities, and the Center for Literary and Comparative Studies in the Department of English. And the organizers are our department’s own Ralph Bauer, Kimberly Coles, Zita Nunes, and Carla L. Peterson.

For contact and registration information, please visit:
<http://www.terpconnect.umd.edu/~rwakeman/index.html>

Order Your Winter and Spring Semester Books!

It’s time to order your Spring 2011 textbooks. Deadlines for The University Book Center and Maryland Book Exchange have passed, so please do this as soon as possible to ensure availability!

We strongly recommend ordering your textbooks electronically, this will allow UBC to post them on Testudo as soon as the order is received and verified. Please note that each bookstore requires separate electronic forms. If a course does not require textbooks, both stores and the department need to know. If you’re placing orders “exclusively” with UBC, please note this, in their new form “comment screen,” and if MBE becomes your “exclusive” bookstore, e-mail Marge Robling at mrobling@md.bookex.com to let her know.

When ordering books electronically from University Book Center, please forward to Isabella’s attention, a copy of your confirmation, for the Main English Office file, either by hard copy or by e-mail attachment. We don’t need a copy from MBE, unless they’re exclusive.

When you’ve ordered books, please be in contact with Isabella Mouton in 2119 TWS or at imoulton@umd.edu.

The University Book Center:

<http://www.umcp.bkstore.com>
click on “Faculty,” than on “Register”
(if it’s your first time)

Maryland Book Exchange:

<http://www.marylandbook.com>
click on “Faculty Information,” then on
“Faculty Adoptions Form”

FYI, Faculty **must** submit acknowledgement with the state’s Textbook Affordability Law.

WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

The Paper Shell Review, the University's only undergraduate journal of essays on literary topics and book reviews is now accepting submissions. If you've written essays you're particularly proud of, consider sending them to the journal. Having published work can put you above the competition when applying to grad schools and jobs. The submission guidelines are below.

Paper Shell Review Submission Guidelines:

We accept essays of no more than twenty pages. Essays must be double-spaced, in Times New Roman font, numbered, and formatted with one inch margins. Use MLA style to cite sources.

We accept book reviews of no more than two pages. Book reviews must be double-spaced, in Times New Roman font, numbered, and formatted with one inch margins.

Submissions are accepted from August 30th to January 31st. The journal is published in print on April 18th and on-line May 20th. Send submissions to papershellreview@gmail.com.

Accepted authors must sign a contract confirming the work they submitted is original and their own.

Zahara Heckscher is facilitating a Writing Staycation over Winter Break at the Writer's Center in Bethesda.

Do you dream of participating in a writing retreat, but can't get out of town? This workshop, a non-residential week-long retreat at The Writer's Center, is for you. Join us for an intensive, supportive, exhilarating, focused week of writing. Each day begins with a short reading and brief discussion. Then tons of time for working on your own writing—whether it is poetry, a novel, or nonfiction work in your brain, or a manuscript that needs some final polish. Optional lunch speakers, afternoon walks, and group shares.

Cost: \$360.00 (contact Zahara zaharah@umd.edu for information about a discount)

Date: January 10-January 14

Time: 10:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.

Days: Monday-Friday

Genre(s): Mixed Genre

Level: All Levels Location: Bethesda

Workshop Leader: Zahara Heckscher

(NEWS)

FACULTY NEWS

Matthew Kirschenbaum has co-authored a report on Digital Forensics and Born-Digital Content in Cultural Heritage Collections, just published by the Council on Library and Information Resources. The report is the first study to examine the impact of digital forensics (a field originating in computer security and law enforcement) on the collection, authentication, and analysis of digital content in manuscript archives, including the born-digital “papers” of major contemporary authors. It is online at <http://www.clir.org/pubs/abstract/pub149abstract.html> and also available in hard copy. The research and writing, as well as an invitational symposium on the subject at Maryland this past May, were funded by a grant to Kirschenbaum from the Andrew W. Mellon foundation.



Robin Earnest, J.D., LL.M., presented at a recent meeting on future trends in legal writing instruction sponsored by the Legal Writing Institute, and held at the Washington College of Law (American University). Earnest, formerly an Assistant U.S. Attorney, discussed the mutual benefits of having a close association with area law schools. UMCP is one of the few universities, another being UNC-CH, that offers a legal writing course to undergraduates so as to better prepare them for the rigors of law school. In furtherance of that goal, in the spring semester her students will be allowed to take Dr. Linda Coleman's grammar course (JOUR 181).

Merrill Feitell has been granted a residency fellowship at The Dorland Mountain Arts Colony beginning in January 2011 as well as a residency fellowship at Virginia Center for the Creative Arts beginning in May. She also has new fiction forthcoming in the journal, Copper Nickel, which should be published in time for the upcoming AWP.

Connie Inukai attended a usability workshop sponsored by the Center for Plain Language at the National Press Club on Nov. 10. The workshop was led by Ginny Reddish, Kate Walser, and Whitney Quesenbery, who presented tips on how to make sure that the people who read your documents, letters, announcements, and web pages can understand and use them. Topics included:

- Reviewing a document from the perspective of different readers (persona-based review)
- Conducting “hallway evaluations”
- Running informal usability tests with members of your audience

The highly interactive workshop focused on ways to determine whether documents (primarily government documents) were understandable for intended readers. Participants also celebrated World Usability Day (Nov. 11 this year) and the passing of the Plain Writing Act in September.

(NEWS cont.)

FACULTY NEWS cont.



As a guest of the Provincia di Firenze and several Italian universities, **Martha Nell Smith** delivered an invited lecture to celebrate the 80th Birthday of Emily Dickinson. On Friday afternoon, December 10th, Smith gave “‘Rereading Me’—Emily Dickinson, ICON, in the Drawing Room and in the Palazzo” in the Sala Luca Giordano, Palazzo Medici Riccardi, to a standing room only crowd and is happy to report that the Italians LOVE Emily Dickinson.

In mid-November **Orrin Wang** was an invited speaker at the Brown University Cogut Center for the Humanities Colloquium, “Romanticism and the Question of Community.” The title of his talk was “The New in Romantic Common Life.”

STUDENT NEWS

Porter Olsen presented the paper “Reading Technologies: The Aesthetics of the Digital in Zadie Smith’s *On Beauty*” at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association (SAMLA) conference in November.

Carolyn Ureña presented “Yes Means Yes: Female Sexual Choice as Source of Anxiety in Vampire Films” at the 2010 Film & History Conference: “Representations of Love in Film and Television”, Milwaukee, Wisconsin November 11-14, 2010, as part of a panel on “Vampire Love.” The keynote speaker was Laura Mulvey.

Sohayl Vafai would like to share that The English Undergraduate Association book drive was a huge success. They collected over 300 books for Robert Frost Elementary School in New Carrollton, MD. The EUA’s goal was to collect 200 books, although they didn’t expect to meet it. Not only did they meet it, however, they surpassed it! The drive was held from Nov 29-Dec 3 and had donation boxes in Tawes, STAMP, Benjamin, and Key. Every night, a team of EUA members picked up books from the boxes and they stored them in the English Undergraduate Lounge. The EUA counted the books Monday night and delivered them to the elementary school this week on Wednesday.

The “**Borderlines**” conference submissions deadline has been extended to January 15th. The Graduate English Organization of the University of Maryland’s Department of English invites graduate students to submit abstracts for our fourth annual interdisciplinary graduate conference “Borderlines” on March 11 and 12, 2011.

The conference committee invites proposals for fifteen-minute papers from a broad range of disciplines and theoretical backgrounds. Presentations of creative work are also welcome. *Panel submissions (3-4 participants) are highly encouraged.* Please limit individual abstracts to 300 words for individual abstracts and panel abstracts to 500 words. Full papers may accompany abstracts. Please include three keywords at the end of the abstract to assist panel formation.

For more information, please visit their webpage: <http://geoconference.blogspot.com/>

ALUMNI NEWS

Kelly Wisecup, assistant professor of English at the University of North Texas, won the 2009-2010 Society of Early Americanists Best Essay Contest. Her essay is titled “Invisible Bullets and the Literary Forms of Colonial Promotion.”

Erin Sadlack just published her first book, *The French Queen’s Letters*, which is available on the publisher’s website, <http://www.palgrave.com/products/title.aspx?pid=377162>.

Clutches of real terps are a little like our department. There is the occasional hard shell and the constant search for leaves to devour.

I recommend emulating them in their winter ways as well. We ought to dig in deep under warm layers, and sleep away until the sun comes up warm again. Happy Holidays, and congratulations on another completed semester!

Wishing you warmth and replenishment.
Thanks for reading, and for your contributions.

Catherine

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

*The next edition of **Bywords** will be released in January 18. Please send us any and all updates on new publications and accomplishments by January 13.*

*Please include dates, locations, and titles of papers/lectures/etc. in your news submissions.
Bywords e-mail: englweb@umd.edu*