

# BYWORDS

Department of English Newsletter

Let us love winter, for it is the  
spring of genius.

-- Pietro Aretino

## HIGHLIGHTS

The committee for the Department of English's second annual GEO Conference invites faculty, students, and friends to attend on Friday and Saturday, February 27th and 28th in Susquehanna Hall. **"(Media)tions: Translating the Body Politic"** will be theme for this year's conference. Included on the program are keynote lectures from **Jonathan Gil Harris** (George Washington) and **Zita Nunes** (Maryland).

For more information, please see the [conference website](#).

## FOR YOUR CALENDAR

**Writers Here and Now** opens its spring semester series with poet Arthur Sze and fiction writer Joan Silber. They will read from their work on Wednesday, 2/18/09 at 7:00PM in the McKeldin Library Special Events Room. Join us for a reception before the reading at 6:15PM, Dorchester Hall, Jiménez-Porter Writers House.

The **Translation Theory Colloquium** continues on Friday, 2/20/09 from 3:00-5:00PM in the Dean's Conference Room (1102 Key Hall). Professor Sangeeta Ray will lead a discussion of ethics and translation. Please contact Professor Zita Nunes to request the readings.

The **Local Americanists Lecture Series** welcomes Dr. Leonard Cassuto (Fordham University) for a lecture on 20th century crime fiction titled "Sentimentality and Serial Murder." Join us on Friday, 2/20/09 at 3:30PM in Susquehanna 1101.

**Digital Dialogues** continues on Tuesday, 2/24/09 at 12:30PM with William Noel (Walters Art Museum), speaking about his ongoing work with the Archimedes Palimpsest project. Digital Dialogues occurs every Tuesday at 12:30 in the MITH Conference Room, McKeldin B0135.

Maryland MFA students read from their recent work for the **Mock Turtle Reading Series** at Wonderland Ballroom, Columbia Heights, Washington, DC on Friday, 2/27/09 at 7:00PM.

The **Perspectives on Rhetoric and Writing** series welcomes Janet Atwill (University of Tennessee) on 3/2/09 at 3:30PM. Location TBA.

Princeton's Jill Dolan will speak on "From Flannel to Fleece: Women's Music, Lesbian Feminism and 'Me'" on 3/4/09 at 4:00PM in CSPAC's Gildenhorn Recital Hall for the LGBT Studies lecture series **69/09: The Queer Afterlives of Stonewall**.

The **Early American Reading Group** joins forces with the **Medieval & Renaissance Discussion Group** to bring you a lively discussion of Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* on Thursday, 3/5/09 at 1:30PM in Susquehanna 3109.

[www.english.umd.edu/bywords](http://www.english.umd.edu/bywords)

## UPCOMING DEADLINES and DEPARTMENT MEETINGS

**Reminder:** All Faculty, Lecturers, and TAs teaching 200 level courses must submit a copy of your **Spring 2009 syllabi**.

We use these copies to answer inquiries from current students who need to finalize their class schedules, and former students needing transfer credits. Your syllabi on file has been a big help to new TAs when they're in the process of developing their own syllabi. Please help us by submitting your syllabus to Isabella Moulton at [imoulton@umd.edu](mailto:imoulton@umd.edu), and to [english@umd.edu](mailto:english@umd.edu) for our computer database.

### Save the date!

APT meeting, Full Professors Only:  
April 6, 2009, 10:00-11:00AM

APT meeting, All Tenure-track Faculty:  
April 22, 2009, 9:30-11:00AM

## DEPARTMENT EVENTS

The **2009 Petrou Lecture and Colloquium** will take place on 3/5-6/09. Professor Kenneth Gross (University of Rochester) will speak on **"The Madness of Puppets,"** at 3:30PM, 3/5/09 in Susquehanna 1120 and conduct a **colloquium on Shakespeare's Shylock** on Friday, 3/6/09 at 10:00AM in Susquehanna 3105. All are welcome. To obtain advanced readings and to register for the Friday Colloquium, contact Abby Mulhollen.



Gross is the author of four highly influential books, most recently *Shylock Is Shakespeare* (University of Chicago Press, 2006).

Professor Gross has recently returned from a year as the Ellen Maria Gorrissen Fellow at the American Academy in Berlin, where he has been studying puppet theaters. In addition to his scholarly work, he is active in theatrical production, having served as Dramaturge for the Holderness Theatre in NYC from 1996-2003.

**Interpolations Launches on February 27**

After reviewing almost 100 submissions -- discussing, debating, and re-reading them -- the editorial board of **Interpolations: A Journal of First Year Writing** has finally selected, what we consider to be, the finest essays produced by English 101 students this fall semester. We proudly announce that the journal's inaugural edition will debut on the English Department's website ([www.english.umd.edu/interpolations](http://www.english.umd.edu/interpolations)) on February 27!

We encourage everyone to read and publicize the journal. Additionally, we invite you to use the journal as a teaching tool to model essays, spark discussion, assign responses or refutations -- any way you see fit. We also welcome feedback and suggestions for improving the journal for our second issue and beyond. Please contact **Adam Lloyd** ([lloyd@umd.edu](mailto:lloyd@umd.edu)) with any comments or questions

*More articles on recent department activities are available on our [web site!](#) If you have an idea for an article, please e-mail [englweb@umd.edu](mailto:englweb@umd.edu)*

**Alexandra DeArmon '09 Travels to Chile on Allocca Memorial Award**

DeArmon, a senior involved in the Jiménez-Porter Writer's House, won the \$200 award established in remembrance of Nicholas Allocca, who taught in the Professional Writing Program for many years before passing away unexpectedly in 2007. She was kind enough to send this recap of her experience.

It was through the Writer's House that I first heard about the "Chilean Literature, Democracy, and Social Change" study abroad and also about the Allocca Award.



I was fortunate enough to already have a personal relationship with the two faculty directors of the Chile trip: **Johnna Schmidt** (head of the JPWH) and **Vivianne Salgado** (whom I've had as a workshop instructor for two semesters). The trip was, for me, an incredible immersion into a country and a culture that I knew nothing about.

I like to believe that all experiences further me as a writer, especially trips such as this one. I was fortunate to be able to travel to Chile and learn a lot, experience new and beautiful places, and connect with many warm and welcoming people--both the others in the course and the multitudes that we met along the way. In addition to the Chilean people, we interacted with travelers from around the world in the two hostels we stayed in. In Valparaiso we spent a week running a summer school program for a group of school children who were incredibly gracious and sweet, despite the fact we could only say a few words to our new 'amigos.' Each day provided a new once-in-a-lifetime experience. I kept an extensive journal of my time there and hope that I can work it into some more polished pieces of prose. If nothing else I view this trip as a springboard to a life of extensive travel once I graduate this May.

**Graduate Studies Collects Donations for Capital Area Food Bank**

On Thursday, 29 January 2009, English Graduate Studies hosted a Give-a-Little, Get-A-Little Lunch — a food and funding drive to benefit the Capital Area Food Bank.

Faculty, staff, and students were invited to come and share in this opportunity to welcome the new year and semester, which is also an opportunity for us to contribute to the broader community around us by supporting the Capital Area Food Bank. The CAFB serves the needs of the DC metropolitan area, and is, not surprisingly, particularly stressed these days. The English Department (in the person of Chair **Kent Cartwright**) graciously underwrote this event, which featured lunch catered by Woodlands Indian Restaurant in Takoma Park.



"We've received a lot of positive responses to this event, which is clearly demonstrative of a collective sense of responsibility to the communities and publics beyond Susquehanna Hall," said Director of Graduate Studies **Kandice Chuh**.

See <http://umdenglishgrad.wordpress.com/> for a full account and pictures.

## FACULTY NEWS

**Jonathan Auerbach** was interviewed on WTTG Fox 5 News for a Valentine's Day segment on the first kiss in the history of cinema. The interview is available [here](#).

**Hannah Baker** has her second poem in *TLS* in as many years. It's called "A Management Shoot" and appears in the January 23 issue (p.13).

At the annual conference of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, held this year in Richmond, VA, **Vin Carretta** will give a talk on Philip Quaque, an eighteenth-century African missionary. Vin has just co-edited Quaque's writing with a historian. The history department at Brandeis University has invited Vin to speak about Phillis Wheatley, whose biography Vin is writing. And in June, Vin will again speak about Quaque, in Salt Lake City, at the annual conference of the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture.

**Joanna Findlay** recently started her own non-profit corporation, Perfect Paws Animal Rescue, Inc. She plans to begin fundraising activities this spring and would appreciate colleagues sharing their knowledge of non-profit work and fund-raising ideas to help her along. One of her first projects is a silent auction. Anyone willing to donate items of interest should contact her directly. All donations will be catalogued, and she will send receipts so donations can be claimed as tax deductions. One hundred percent of proceeds will be used to benefit furry friends in need.

**Liz Fixsen** had a unique inaugural experience. She plays keyboard in a jazz band called the Bob Schwartz Quartet and had a gig on Inauguration Day for a private party for the Computer and Communications Industry Association. "It was exciting to be there in the middle of the action, and to experience the palpable emotions of excitement and joy shared by all present," says Liz.

**Matthew Kirschenbaum** was interviewed about his recent book *Mechanisms: New Media and the Forensic Imagination* (MIT 2008) in the Winter 2009 issue of *Neural*, an international magazine devoted to media art and "hacktivism" publishing since 1993. His essay "Hello Worlds: Why Humanities Students Should Learn to Program" appeared in the January 23 issue of the [Chronicle of Higher Education](#). In February he will present results from an NEH-funded project at the O'Reilly Tools of Change publisher's conference in New York City -- the premier industry venue for electronic books and online publishing.

Collaborating with **James Ocita** (MFA '08), and two stellar undergraduates, **Lauren Bush** and **Temi Fakinlede**, **Hank Lewis** will be presenting a modern-day, speculative folktale that was selected along with five other proposals for "Energy: A 2009 Worldwide Event." **Mary Helen Washington** and **Sandy Mack** are on the planning committee for the event, to be held Tuesday, 2/24/09 at 4:30PM at Gildenhorn Recital Hall, Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center.

**Reiner Prochaska** this winter faced the challenge of adapting Hans Christian Anderson's *The Snow Queen* for the Maryland Ensemble Theatre's (MET) family-friendly stage. The play ran Dec. 13 - Jan 24. "I didn't see the Snow Queen as wicked and evil," Reiner told *The Frederick Herald-Mail*. "I saw her as force of nature." Reiner has been with the MET for four years and was most recently cast in the MET's production of *A Doll's House*.

**Sangeeta Ray's** essay titled "the Politics and Aesthetics of Language in Anita Desai's *In Custody*," was just published for the *Agrégation*. Sangeeta gave a talk titled "The Virtues of Realism?: Gender in/and the Postcolonial Novel" and conducted a colloquium at The Humanities Center at Carnegie Mellon University on February 10th and 11th. She was the second speaker in the Spring Lectures event of the year long lecture series which included folks such as Colin McCabe, Frederic Jameson, Michael Fried, Toril Moi, and Wai Chee Dimock.

**Brian Richardson** has been elected second Vice President of the International Society for the Study of Narrative. He will assume the position of First Vice President in 2010, and President in 2011.

## STUDENT NEWS

**Damion Clark** was awarded a QCB Research and Travel Grant to do research at the Hall-Carpenter Archives, housed at the London School of Economics and Political Science, for his dissertation "Queer Renegotiations with History in Post-World War II British Fiction."

**Katherine Young's** poems "The Chameleon's Tale," "The Bear," and "African Violets" appear in the Spring 2009 edition of *Prairie Schooner*, scheduled to arrive in March 2009.

## HISTORY of the ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

This year will mark the 150th anniversary of the Maryland English Department. *Bywords* will be celebrating our long legacy and the important role of the department in the university.

Did you know that a Maryland English major had a hand in the founding of Shenandoah National Park? Lemuel Ferdinand Zerkel graduated with honors from Maryland in 1906. He was salutatorian of his class and delivered the student address at commencement before going on to a successful career in Virginia real estate.



Zerkel was descended from pioneers who first settled the Shenandoah Valley in the 1750s. His family had important ties to Shenandoah tourism (his father was the first superintendent of the famed Luray Caverns). In 1926, Zerkel was

appointed to the Committee on Conservation and Development charged with the establishment of a “national park near the nation’s capital” ([vahistory.org](http://vahistory.org)). Under Roosevelt’s New Deal, Zerkel became a key staffer to Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes and the Federal Homestead Corporation. As the Works Progress Administration worked to build the park’s infrastructure and its majestic Skyline Drive, hundreds of farmers living in the valley were forced to relocate by the Federal Homestead Corporation. The resettlement was directed by Zerkel.

It was strangely appropriate work for Zerkel, since he had written his honors thesis on the early development of the English language. A 1935 pamphlet promoting the park reads, “Nothing is more fascinating or more interesting in the area of the Blue Ridge Mountains than the native people who live there. Their manner of living and customs of speech are more nearly like the Eighteenth century than any other age to which it might be compared. Many of their phrases of speech are of the manner and wording of Chaucer’s time” ([vahistory.org](http://vahistory.org)).

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The next edition of *Bywords* will be released on Monday, March 16th. Please send us any and all updates on new publications and accomplished accomplishments by **Friday, March 13th.**

Please include dates, locations, and titles of papers/lectures/etc. in your news submissions.  
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