

BYWORDS

Department of English Newsletter

“ Summer afternoon -- Summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language -- Henry James ”

IN MEMORIAM

The Department mourns the loss of **Ed Berlinski**, Lecturer in Professional Writing, who passed away suddenly and unexpectedly on May 6, 2009. Ed, a lecturer in the Professional Writing Program, suffered a seizure and passed away at his home on the morning of May 6. He was 48. A much beloved colleague, teacher and scholar, he will be dearly missed by all who knew him. Anecdotes about Ed are being collected for a memorial book. Please contact Helen McClung (hmmclung@umd.edu) if you are interested in contributing. The *Diamondback* had a touching article on Ed's passing. You can access that [here](#).

HIGHLIGHTS

Congratulations are in order for **Adele Berlin** on the occasion of her retirement. The Department holds a great debt of gratitude for Dr. Berlin's history of service and leadership at the University, including terms as Director of the Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Studies, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, Chair of the University Senate, and of Robert H. Smith Professor of Hebrew Bible. More on Berlin's retirement can be found [here](#).



UPCOMING DEADLINES and DEPARTMENT MEETINGS

Reminder: Graduating students will receive their degrees at Spring Commencement at Reckord Armory at 5:00PM on Friday, May 22. Doors will open at 4:30PM; the event is expected to run until 6:30PM. More info is available [here](#).

English major Dwayne Betts named Student Speaker for Commencement

Of all the terrific students graduating this week, it's difficult to single out one to highlight. Fortunately, the Commencement Committee has done that for us! Graduating English major **Reginald "Dwayne" Betts** was named student speaker for Thursday's commencement ceremony.

The selection process for commencement's student speaker is rigorous -- it requires exemplary academic achievement, top recommendations, and several rounds of interviews. Dwayne says that his speech will focus on the importance of education. "A college education is a rare gift and one that we should cherish," says Dwayne.



Dwayne will be speaking from experience. When he was sixteen, Dwayne and a friend were convicted of carjacking and sentenced to nine years in a state penitentiary. After his release, Dwayne enrolled at Prince George's Community College, earning academic distinction and organizing poetry workshops at a Washington, D.C. middle school. Dwayne's success at PGCC was rewarded with admission to the University of Maryland.

While at Maryland, Dwayne quickly amassed an impressive resumé: a work-study scholarship to the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, a Pushcart Prize nomination, winning the Beatrice Hawley Prize from Alice James Books. Betts was awarded a Holden Fellowship to Warren Wilson College in his junior year -- meaning he has been dually enrolled at Maryland for his senior year while simultaneously pursuing his MFA at Warren Wilson!

Dwayne knows that it is a serious honor to be representing his class. "I figure you can't get through the strenuous [selection] process, you can't get through the speech writing if you haven't found a way to connect with the people of the University."

Joshua Weiner is one of the many faculty members that Betts has connected with at Maryland. Weiner calls Dwayne one of the best students he has worked with at Maryland. "[Betts is] a young poet of serious ambition and dedication, impressive talent and unyielding drive. Dwayne also has a caring and warm disposition: humorous, self-deprecating, and quietly confident," says Weiner.

Dwayne's memoir, *A Question of Freedom*, will be published by Penguin this August. He also has a book of poetry under contract with Alice James Books. You can read Dwayne's biography on the commencement website [here](#). And you can read more about *A Question of Freedom* [here](#).

www.english.umd.edu/bywords

Smith Honored By Alma Mater

Martha Nell Smith received a Distinguished Alumni Award from Rutgers's Livingston College this past weekend. The Livingston College Alumni Association cited Smith's accomplishments as an Emily Dickinson scholar, her award-winning books, her work on the Dickinson Electronic Archives, and her role as Founding Director of the Maryland Institute for



Technology in the Humanities.

Smith joined fellow honorees women's rights activist Françoise Jacobsohn and broadcast journalist

Marla Diamond at a formal dinner reception on May 16. More information on Smith's award can be found [here](#).

Center for Literary and Comparative Studies Sets Agenda for 2009-2010

"Reading: Histories, Practices, Futures" will be the inaugural theme for the Department's new center, which will officially "open" on July 1st. The Center's Director, **Bob Levine**, on behalf of the Center's Steering Committee, recently announced some of what we can expect:

- A 2-day conference, "A Celebration of Stanley Plumly and Poetry at the University of Maryland," October 29-30
- A spring conference on "Reading Comparatively" or "Reading on Location"
- A Work in Progress series
- Book launch celebrations for members of the Department
- Community readings

Stay tuned to the [Department Website](#) this summer for more information.

PhD Graduates Embark on New Careers

Eight PhD students have landed tenure-track positions for this fall! "I'm very proud of our job seekers, particularly given the unusual uncertainties that they faced this year, and know they will be vital faculty members at their new institutions," says Associate Director of Graduate Studies and Placement Director **Tita Chico**. "It's been a pleasure to work with such smart and well-trained graduate students at such a pivotal moment in their careers." Four newly minted Doctors of Philosophy share their thoughts on post-Maryland careers:



Keiko Arai has already begun her life as Assistant Professor at Tokyo's Musashi University. Since April, she has deeply enjoyed discussing literary texts with her students in three courses on American literature. Keiko is completing her dissertation, "American Girls: Nation and Gender in James, Wharton, and Cather," under the direction of Marilee Lindemann.



Nancy Comorau is thrilled to be going to Ohio Wesleyan to work closely with students in small seminar-style classes. In the fall, she'll be teaching OWU's Freshman writing seminar and Readings in Postcolonial Literature. As the department's first specialist in Postcolonial Lit, Nancy looks forward to developing new courses. Nancy is completing her dissertation, "Postcolonial Refashionings: Reading Forms, Reading Novels," under the direction of Sangeeta Ray.



Kate Singer says she's sad to be leaving the Washington, D.C. area, but is looking forward to "roaming the rural retreats of Western Massachusetts" surrounding her new home at Mount Holyoke College. "I'm excited to teach young women new ways to think about the promises and failures in Romantic poetry," she says. Kate is completing her dissertation, "Romantic Vacancy and British Women's Poetry," under the direction of Neil Fraistat and Orrin Wang.



Kelly Wisecup has accepted a position in early American literature at the University of North Texas. This fall, she'll be teaching a survey of early American literature and an upper-division class, "Religion, Race, and Science in Early American Literatures." Kelly is completing her dissertation, "Communicating Disease: Medical Knowledge and Literary Form in Colonial British America," under the direction of Ralph Bauer.

Four other PhD graduates have landed tenure-track positions, but were unable to send in a picture ahead of the Bywords deadline. **Misun Dokko** has accepted a position as Assistant Professor of English at Shippensburg University (her dissertation is "Dirty Bodies: Filth and Marginal Characters in Asian American Literature," directed by Kandice Chuh); **Simone Drake** has accepted a position as Assistant Professor of English at Ohio State University (her dissertation is "'Sometimes folk need more': Black Women Writers Dwelling in the Beyond," directed by David Wyatt); **Delores Phillips** has accepted a position as Assistant Professor of English at Old Dominion University (her dissertation is "Bittersweet Tastes of Home: Diasporic Longing and the Postcolonial Cookbook," directed by Sangeeta Ray); and **Nazera Wright** has accepted a position as Assistant Professor of English at University of Kentucky (her dissertation is "Girlhood in African American Literature, 1827-1949," directed by Carla Peterson and Mary Helen Washington).

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

FACULTY NEWS

Maud Casey has an essay forthcoming in the next issue of *The Oxford American* due out in August.

Monica Jacobs has been selected to take part in CTE's Summer Institute, "Teaching with New(er) Technologies," and will be redesigning Eng1391H to become a technology-rich course in which students create an online course guide to rhetorical and professional writing that can be used by students in various Eng1391 classes.

The Works of Francis William Newman on Religion and the Letters of FWN, Chiefly on Religion, edited by **Tod Jones**, have been published digitally. Brief descriptions of both collections are on the website of the [Philosophy Documentation Center](#). The Francis William Newman Society has gathered many of its sources into a searchable [Research Library](#) with over 400 catalogued entries. "We are limited in our expansion until we can add advanced search capabilities, and we would gratefully welcome any help from someone with knowledge of php scripting," writes Tod.

Sandy Mack will be Resident Scholar at the National Institute on Teaching Shakespeare run by Shakespeare & Co. in Massachusetts this summer. The teachers think they want to work on *Romeo and Juliet* and *Julius Caesar*; Sandy will try to teach them otherwise. After years of these institutes in the Berkshires, for some reason they have moved to Northampton this July.

Liora Moriel was accepted to the CTE Summer Mobile Technology Institute, where she will learn how to use specific technologies for the world literature classroom to keep students connected with each other as well as with outside guests. Liora will also be working informally with the Chesapeake Sustainability Project to add that component to her classes, since eco-feminism and sustainability are vital issues for the world, and, thus, world literature.

Mike Scalise, adjunct lecturer for PWP, is moving to Bucknell University this fall to take the Philip Roth Residence in Creative Writing. The residence runs from late August to December, and, according to the [Bucknell website](#), "offers an emerging writer four months of unfettered writing time during Bucknell's fall semester, without formal academic obligations."

Marybeth Shea will participate in the Sustainability Office/CTE two-day workshop on introducing environmental themes across the disciplines. Marybeth will develop teaching materials

for Eng1398V and hopes to share some materials with non-technical/non-science PWP courses. Marybeth has also received a 2009-2010 CTE grant to develop wiki-platforms for PWP best practices -- assignments, class materials, rubrics, etc. This space will be a private resource for faculty training and professional development. Also under development is a public wiki-space of stable course content for use by students and instructors.

STUDENT NEWS

Deborah Bailin, who is writing her dissertation, "From the Perihelion to the Post-human: Animality, Inheritance, and Identity in American Literary Naturalism," under David Wyatt's direction, and **Margaret Rice**, whose dissertation, "The Ethics of Allegory in *Paradise Lost*," is being directed by Marshall Grossman, have been awarded Ann G. Wylie Dissertation Fellowships for 2009-2010.

Ishai Barnoy's (MFA, 2008) poem "Twelve Movies" is featured on [Poetry Daily](#).

Michelle Boswell's "Choosing Comedy and Philosophy: Constance Naden's Hylo-Idealist Poetics" has been selected as the winner of the Kinnaird Essay Prize for the best essay by an MA student. **R. Lindsay Dunne's** "Public Cure/Counterpublic Cause: Rhetorics of the Breast Cancer Movement," has been selected as the winner of the Kinnaird Essay Prize for the best essay by a PhD student.

Heather Brown, Sarah Fang, and Jasmine Lellock won grants from the Center for Teaching Excellence to attend the Lilly-East Conference at the University of Delaware held April 16-17.

Dan Collinge presented a paper at the Worldwise Seminar on Energy earlier this semester. The paper was titled "Global Stalling: Environmental Roadblocks and Repairs in the Climate Change Conversation."

Maura Elford will be presenting a paper in a panel at the April 2010 Renaissance Society of America conference in Venice. The paper is titled "Print, Performance, and Publicity: the Creation of a Raleigh Legacy." The panel will be chaired by Prof. Christopher Martin of Boston University. The respondent will be Arthur F. Kinney of UMass-Amherst.

Jody Lawton has been awarded the Mary Savage Snouffer Dissertation Fellowship for 2009-2010. The title of Jody's dissertation is "Rhetoric, Sophistry, and Humanism in the Northern Renaissance."

(NEWS cont.)

The James A. Robinson Prizes for 2009 will be awarded to **Jasmine Lellock** (for teaching writing) and to **Laura Heninger Hill** (for teaching literature). The Robinson Prizes were established by former English Department faculty member Jamie Robinson before his death 1998 and recognize excellent teaching by graduate students.

A poem from **Kim O'Connor**, "Three Months," has been accepted for publication in the journal *Cloudbank*.

Joanne Roby, whose dissertation, "Private Scandal in the Public Sphere: The Polemical Mode of the Early Eighteenth Century?" is being directed by Laura Rosenthal, has been selected as the English Department's Harman-Ward Fellow for 2009-2010.

Eight graduate teaching assistants have been named Distinguished Teaching Assistants by the University's Center for Teaching Excellence: **Agnes Bannigan, Eric Curry, Christy DeSanctis, Schuyler Esprit, Kara Fontenot, Brent McCafferty, Kimberly O'Connor, and Natalie Phillips**. More information is available [here](#).

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The next edition of Bywords will be released in September. Please send us any and all updates on new publications and accomplished accomplishments by Monday, September 7th.

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

Stay tuned to www.english.umd.edu for more news all summer long!

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.

Astute members of the Department will recognize the name **Susan Emolyn Harman** as one-half of the Harman-Ward Fellowship. At the age of 23, Harman was hired as an instructor in 1920, becoming the first woman to teach in the Department of English. (Maryland State College first admitted women in 1916). In 1923, Harman earned her Ph.D. and was promoted to Assistant Professor. Other women had already achieved distinction serving as professors in the Colleges of Education and Home Economics, but Harman was, as far as I can tell, the first woman to hold the title "professor" in the College of Arts and Sciences. Harman accomplished a great deal before retiring as a full professor in 1961: she was co-founder of the English Club of Prince George's and Montgomery Counties, was president of the University of Maryland chapter of the American Association of University Professors, and she helped secure Social Security benefits for all university faculty.

While a professor, Harman developed classes on Middle English and Anglo-Saxon, Major Poets of the Fourteenth Century, and a seminar on *Beowulf*. Her publications include *College Rhetoric, Handbook of Correct English*, and she served as co-editor of the *Middle English Dictionary*. Harman is best known, with her colleague and longtime Department Chair **Homer C. House**, for *Descriptive English Grammar*, first published in 1931. Harman revised *Descriptive English Grammar* in 1950, and it remained widely influential and is still frequently cited. Prentice Hall released a new edition in 1998.

During the 1920s, the College was growing rapidly, and by the '30s the Department had four full-time professors and six lecturers. This allowed for greater specialization and the development of new series of courses. Homer House's favorite course to teach was a seminar on the Brownings. A very young **Robert Tyson Fitzhugh**, who would later earn acclaim as a Robert Burns scholar, began his academic career teaching seminars on Romantic poetry. Following the creation of the Graduate School in 1918, the Department also began offering fellowships to select graduate students.

Two fellowships went to graduate students in English each year. The English Department's first woman to be listed as a fellow in the University catalogs was **Mary Evelyn Kuhnle** in 1931. In exchange for teaching five credit hours each semester, Kuhnle was paid a handsome annual stipend of \$500.00 (\$6,528.00 in today's money). Then, as now, graduate students were forced to ride out economic downturns on a healthy diet of ramen noodles.