

English Department Newsletter

28 August 2013

Vol. 8, No. 1



The newsletter is published biweekly. The next issue will appear on 11 September 2013.
Current and past newsletters are also available on the [English Department website](#).

MEETINGS and EVENTS

The **English Department Advisory Council** will meet tomorrow, Thursday, 29 August, at 12:15 pm in KH 318. Chairs of all English Department committees should attend. The **Department Meeting has been postponed** to Tuesday, 10 September at 12:15 pm, so that department members may attend Interim President Howard Cohen's address to the College. That will take place on Tuesday, 3 September at 12:15 pm in Rockwell Hall.

Ed Taylor will be reading at the **Book Corner in Niagara Falls on September 28** and will be a featured reader in the **Gray Hair Reading series at Hallwalls on October 9**, wishing that series had a different name. But of course having nothing against gray hair.

Immanuel Lutheran Church, 107 Scott Street, Tonawanda, presents **Cameo Productions of WNY's staged reading of George Bernard Shaw's "Don Juan in Hell"** from *Man and Superman* on Friday, September 20 and Friday, September 27 at 6:30 p.m. "Don Juan in Hell" is presented as an inaugural Dessert Theatre production; dessert will be served before the live performance. Tickets are only \$5. For reservations, call Immanuel Lutheran Church at 692-6200.

REMINDERS and USEFUL INFORMATION

Syllabi and office-hours cards are due to Maureen this week. Remember to include Student Learning Outcomes (for the course and, if relevant, for Intellectual Foundations) on your syllabus. SLOs are available on the course proposals posted to the sharedrive and at the [IE webpage](#).

Faculty: please pay your **annual dues** by October 1. The rate is unchanged: \$50/\$45 for full time faculty (if one's salary is \geq \$60,000/ \leq \$60,000) and \$5 for adjunct faculty. Dues should be paid to Maureen: cash (preferred) or a check made out to Lisa Berglund. We use faculty dues for such expenses as flowers (congratulations, condolence) and department events. If you would like to see how your dues were spent last year, the Faculty Dues Fund report for 2012-2013 is available on the department sharedrive.

To assist in our **annual attempt to reduce our spending on copier paper**, remember that you can scan documents on our copier, and save them to the sharedrive in pdf format. Ask Maureen for more information.

If you apply for **travel funding**, visit the [Travel Services website](#) before you start filling out forms.

Students may look up the names of their advisers in Banner, and faculty may also find lists of their advisees there. Give students what help you can before directing them to the office. Please note that many readmitted students do not have advisers; if you are assisting students who do not have advisers, send them to Marcia.

DEPARTMENT NEWS



Maureen) and faculty may use the space for makeup exams or student consultations. The **Faculty Lounge has also undergone some reorganization**--Barish Ali, Maureen Lougen, Lorna Perez and Lisa Berglund spent a humid morning relocating chairs, tables, file cabinets, and Bobby Burns. (Painting and re-carpeting of the faculty lounge and main office is scheduled for January.)

A **new English Major lounge** has been established in Ketchum Hall 322. This lounge will be open Mondays-Thursday, 8 am – 7 pm, and Fridays, 8 am – 3 pm. A **Student Organization Meeting Room and Quiet Study Space** has been created inside the Writing Center, KH 323. It will be open whenever the Writing Center is open. Student groups may reserve the space for meetings (consult



Two student employees have joined the department: **Margaret Weiser** will be working in the main office, and **Chelsea Nabozny** will be the English Education Graduate Assistant.



In July, **Barish Ali and Heidi Wallace** directed a month-long study abroad program in Istanbul, Turkey. Ten Buffalo State students, including seven English majors, combined a rigorous academic study of the region's literature and history with a culturally immersive experience of Turkish culture. Classroom instruction, which was held at the historic [Boğaziçi University](#), was followed by visits to mosques, churches, museums, ancient Greek ruins, and other great monuments of the Classical Greek, Byzantine, and Ottoman eras; students attended Ramadan festivities, a soccer game, a whirling dervish ceremony, and a Turkish jazz concert; they learned how to order food and drinks in Turkish and how to haggle with aggressive shopkeepers in the Grand Bazaar; they were invited to the home of a Turkish family for lunch and attended guest lectures by *Boğaziçi* University scholars who were closely involved with Occupy Gezi Park movement; they swam in the Aegean sea, ate Turkish Delight, and drank so much tea that they stayed up some nights to watch the sunrise over the Bosphorus; and, of course, they read books by Orhan Pamuk, Elif Shafak, Nazim Hikmet, and also visited Pamuk's [Museum of Innocence](#) – an actual museum that he conceived together with the novel. In addition to their formal assignments, students were required to record their experiences in private diaries and at this blog: <http://istanbulblog.tumblr.com/>.



FACULTY NEWS and ACTIVITIES

Congratulations to **David Ben-Merre** who has been granted tenure and promoted to Associate Professor!

Ed Taylor saw the world's greatest Rolling Stones cover band, the Rolling Stones, in Boston this June and otherwise had a pleasant summer, including teaching three courses--two of which were online for the first time. His novel *Theo* will be published in May 2014 (Old Street Books) and he has poetry and short fiction forthcoming this fall in *Louisville Review*, *Vestal Review*, and *Gargoyle*.

Ann C. Colley has just been appointed to the SUNY Distinguished Professor Advisory Council. The Council is a SUNY-wide tenure and promotion committee that evaluates nominations for Distinguished Professorships.

Two articles by **Peter Ramos** appeared this summer: "Cultural Identity, Translation, and William Carlos Williams," in *MELUS (Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States)*, 38.2 (2013): 89 – 110 and "Nature's 'harshest but truest colors': Romantic and Un-Romantic Nature in *The*

Deerslayer, The Last of the Mohicans, and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,” in *James Fenimore Cooper—His Country and his Art: Papers from the 2011 Cooper Seminar*. Eds Hugh McDougal and Steven Harthorn. (Oneonta, NY: SUNY Oneonta, 2013): 84-88. Peter was also in residence as a poetry fellow at the Virginia Center for Creative Arts (VCCA) in July for two weeks.

On July 1, **Theresa Harris-Tigg** was sworn in as the East District Board of Education member for the Buffalo Public Schools. Theresa writes: “I was elected Vice President of Student Achievement and Liaison for district EPO's (Education Partnership Organizations). In addition, with the support of Deans Ben Christy and Wendy Patterson (SOE), I obtained a signed agreement between myself, as liaison, and Naomi Cerre, principal of Lafayette High School, to facilitate the development of a PDS (Professional Development School). It was a very busy summer as the Board of Education had an unprecedented number of summer ‘special meetings’ and my #2 grandson graduated from high school in Georgia and began his post-secondary education at Tennessee Temple University on a sports scholarship. Lastly, I will be traveling to Washington, DC for the 50th anniversary and continuation of the March on Washington.”



Good news for fans of young adult fantasy--*Kesh*, a novel by **Ralph L. Wahlstrom**, was published this summer. From the press release: “Kesh was a scrawny kid, but he was smart...he saw and heard things others couldn't, and he was about to be thrust into a world of myth and danger. To save his city and the world, Kesh must discover the coyote spirit inside, and find the courage to lead a strange army into battle against the power of evil.” The book is available at [Amazon](#), [Barnes and Noble](#), or [Wild Child Publishing](#).

Back in May, **Barish Ali** was elected to represent the Arts and Humanities on the Graduate Advisory Council, and **David Ben-Merre** was elected to the Senate, joining **Karen Sands-O'Connor** who is chair of the Senate Curriculum Committee.

Maureen Lougen's short story “Dead Spot” has been published by the online journal *RedFez*. (www.redfez.net/fiction/533/0). Maureen adds, “The journal ranks stories according to how many times they’ve been read. I’m the #1 read story for my issue (over 300 times, which is 3 times more than my closest competition.) Of all the stories *RedFez* has ever published, I’ve been either #1 or 2 for the day since I was published, #2 for the week, and #3 for the month. (I want to be #1!)”

The Western New York Network of English Teachers (WNYNET), organized by English Education’s **Jim Cercone**, held its second annual Summer Conversation on 15 August. Geoff Schutte (a classroom teacher at Tapestry Charter School and co-founder of [Educators for a Better Buffalo](#)) spoke on “Teachers Being Agents of Change,” a topic that will also serve as WNYNET’s theme for 2013-2014.

Tom Reigstad presented his paper “John Harrison Mills: Twain’s Illustrator at the *Buffalo Express*” at the Seventh International Conference on the State of Mark Twain Studies, held at Elmira College August 1–3. His presentation described the personal and professional relationship between Twain and Mills, the staff illustrator at the *Buffalo Express* who provided six wood-cut engraved drawings to accompany four of Twain’s Saturday feature stories in August and September of 1869.

On May 22-25, **Lisa Berglund** attended the biennial meeting of the Dictionary Society of North America at the University of Georgia, a meeting that marked the end of her second term as executive secretary. She was honored for her six years of service at the conference banquet, where she also performed with the DSNA’s vocal group The Catchwords. In June, she attended the MLA’s Association of Departments of English meeting in Pittsburgh, and in July drove a van full of two dogs, one suitcase, and 38 boxes (all carefully packed, with DSNA painted clearly on each) to Jersey City, the DSNA’s new home. The highlight of the summer was a week at Cape Cod, which yielded this photograph, taken at Duck Harbor in Wellfleet.



Craig Werner led a book club discussion of Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* at the Main Street Talking Leaves on August 14. Tan's book will be the subject of her November 22 Babel presentation.

STUDENT and ALUMNI NEWS

Jenelle Orosz (class of 2008) was inducted into the Buffalo State Athletic Hall of Fame. Jenelle was the first female All-American track and field athlete in the history of Buffalo State.

In May 2013 English major **Jasmine Milton** was recognized with the Americorps Peer Leader Award. The Volunteer and Service Learning Center’s [Spring 2013 newsletter](#) has a photo and more information. The VSLC newsletter also features students in classes taught by **Theresa Harris-Tigg and Jim Cercone**, and an article on digital storytelling by student **Alyssa Moretti**.

Here’s an update from **Jason A. Wright** (who graduated May 2012 with a BS in English Education and a minor in writing: “This summer, I spent a week in Thailand, acting as a guest teacher at the Hatyaiwittayalai School, a public school in Hat Yai, in SW Thailand, ranked in the top ten public schools in the country. I then applied for a position within the English Program at this school, and will start teaching multiple grade levels of English on July 22nd, on a one-year renewable contract. The classrooms used for the English Program are purpose built, including an interactive board, fully integrated sound, wireless internet, and a plethora

of learning software. I was highly impressed at how strongly integrated the technology is at this school. The English Program / Foreign Language departments include teachers from the US, UK, The Philippines, South Korea, South Africa, Japan, France, and India.”

Thomas Poehnelt (class of 2009) is starting his second year as a doctoral student at UMass Amherst, with a focus on Asian American graphic novels, literature and culture. His overall thesis is Fanonian, in that Asian American cultural practices are weaponized, subverting or inverting orientalist tropes to push back on the western, culturally "white" hegemonies that institute the racist ideals of yellow peril and model minoritism, which are two sides of the same coin. His wife Mary was featured on the last season of *Hell's Kitchen* and came in second place in the overall contest. Mary, after her *HK* experience, is now starting a job at Ming Tsai's flagship restaurant, Blue Ginger. She also maintains a blog www.bulgogiandbutter.com, and will have online videos up soon on allfood.com.

Congratulations to our students who graduated in May! Majors in English Education: **Ashley Wittlief, Philip Peluso, Erin Tessmer, Stephanie Babcock, and Slaudeh Morrison;** Majors in English: **Nicole Domescek, Mary Mark, Victoria Mowrer, Lisa Pratt, Bryan Haley, Darcy Kennedy, Jonathan Orlow, Brent Petri, Eric Bucklaew, Claire Giovino, Shawn Misechok, Bradley Connors, Jonathan Cummings, Katherine Szatkowski, Kaleigh Gifford, Joshua Kuberka, Sarah Orrico, Kelly Steen, Tess Leonard, and Jessica Majewski;** Majors in Writing: **Cynthia Delaney, Leah Butzek, Julia Figliotti, Philicia Montgomery, Lindsay Shelton, and Cornelius Newman.**

And Finally...

The future of the English Major is a Hot Topic right now. Here are articles from either side of the lectern: University of Virginia Professor Mark Edmundsen's article on "[The Ideal English Major](#)" from the 16 August 2013 number of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and Adam Gopnik's "[Why Teach English?](#)" in yesterday *New Yorker* magazine. Read and discuss.

English Department Newsletter, Buffalo State College
Compiled by Lisa Berglund, berglul@buffalostate.edu