

Our First-Ever Full-Color, All-Digital Edition



It's a digital world, but here at the *Channel*, we still love ink and paper. It's why we send our students to the library. However, keeping you up-to-date has its costs. And in these lean times, the printing and mailing costs of *The English Channel* are simply beyond our humble means at present. Therefore, as a (hopefully temporary) cost saving measure, we have decided to distribute the department newsletter electronically.

The good news is that the electronic edition comes with lots of bells and whistles: you can see Sally Schuler-Tardella's painting (p. 7) not to mention Kevin Grimm's mug (pp. 3-4) in full-color. Also, since we no longer have to worry about the number of pages we print, we're able to include Brian Connery's Special Super-sized version of "Author's Explained" (pp. 8-9) Also hyperlinks are active. So if you'd like to read a story, send an email, or contribute to our Gift or Scholarship funds (p. 16), you can now do so with added convenience: just click on the appropriate link.

As always, our job is still to keep you informed of all the happenings on the 5th floor of Wilson-soon-to-be-O'Dowd Hall (see story p. 11). We ask once again that you please keep us equally informed of your doings!

Also in this issue

Teaching Excellence

The latest English prof to win!

Drama is back!

Meet L. Bailey McDaniel

Hat Wearer

Grimm gets his props

American Idol

Yes, *that* American Idol...seriously!

Emblem Dreams

A collaboration in words and paint

And... The Dean

The most comprehensive "Authors Explained" ever!

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The English Channel

The Alumni Newsletter of the Department of English

Hawkins Wins 2008 Teaching Excellence Award

Brian Connery Recognized for Outstanding Service



President Russi presents Susan Hawkins with the 2008 Teaching Excellence Award

At the annual Faculty Recognition Luncheon in April, English department chair Susan Hawkins received the 2008 Teaching Excellence Award—the university's highest honor for teaching. Professor Hawkins earned recognition for her dedication, in her words, to turning “students into better readers, which means better thinkers, which means better analysts, which means better citizens and human beings who care about their world.”

In 23 years of teaching at Oakland, Prof. Hawkins has designed an

astounding variety of innovative courses in twentieth-century literature, all of them taught, as one student notes, “with such a special blend of enthusiasm, depth, engagement and intensity.”

Instituted in 1982, the Teaching Excellence Award recognizes superior teaching, innovative instructional practice, high educational standards, the creation of productive learning environments, and the ability to inspire and motivate students. As the 2008 winner, Hawkins joins seven other English department faculty who have won the prestigious Award (see sidebar). Please join us in celebrating Professor Hawkins' well-deserved honor as well as the continuation of a long tradition of outstanding, innovative teaching in the English department.

Professor Brian Connery was also recognized for outstanding service at this year's luncheon. Among his many achievements cited at the ceremony were his directorship of the Oxford Studies Program, course development, and service in the University Senate and College of Arts and Sciences Assembly.

Departmentally, Prof. Connery currently chairs the Publications Committee, which oversees production of the student handbook, the department website, and, of course, *The English Channel*, which owes its very existence to Prof. Connery, who initiated it a decade ago during his first term as chair of the department.

English Department Teaching Excellence Award Recipients

1984	Nigel Hampton
1987	Bob Eberwein
1991	Bruce Mann
1993	Brian Connery
1995	Brian Murphy
1998	Natalie Cole
2002	Jude Nixon
2008	Susan Hawkins

L. Bailey McDaniel Joins English Faculty

The English department is delighted to welcome its newest faculty member, L. Bailey McDaniel. Prof. McDaniel joins the department as an Assistant Professor of English with a specialty in dramatic literature and performance, gender and race.

Professor McDaniel comes to us as a dynamic and accomplished teacher. She has worked, most recently, in the English departments of Indiana University and the University of Houston Downtown. Her undergraduate work at the University of Michigan was in economics and her graduate studies at Indiana University incorporated Marxist and post-



Bailey McDaniel

colonial criticism, so her research is also informed strongly by theories of capital, nation, and cultural studies. Her most recent publication appears in the journal *Literature/Film Quarterly*, and she is currently finalizing her manuscript, *Nurturing Fallacies: Constructing the Counter-Maternal in Twentieth-Century American Drama*. Among her favorite classes to teach is her 400-level English/Gender Studies course, “It Rhymes with Witch: Exploring the ‘B’ Word in World Drama,” which she will teach at OU during the winter 2009 semester.

Prof. McDaniel adds that, as a native of southeast Michigan, she is extremely happy to be back in the area.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR by Susan E. Hawkins



This fall we welcome a new member to our department, L. Bailey McDaniel, a specialist in American Drama (see p. 1). Once again we are able to offer English 306: Drama and 307: Modern Drama plus additional dramatic delights in winter. It's great to have the excitement of contemporary drama back in the curriculum.

And speaking of excitement, mark your calendars for October 22 and this year's Maurice Brown Memorial Poetry Reading with nationally known poet Albert Goldbarth (see below). Author of numerous poetry collections, Mr. Goldbarth not only writes beautifully crafted poems but, by all accounts, delivers a witty performance as well.

In winter S.J. Rozan, a New York-based detective fiction writer, will be giving a reading.

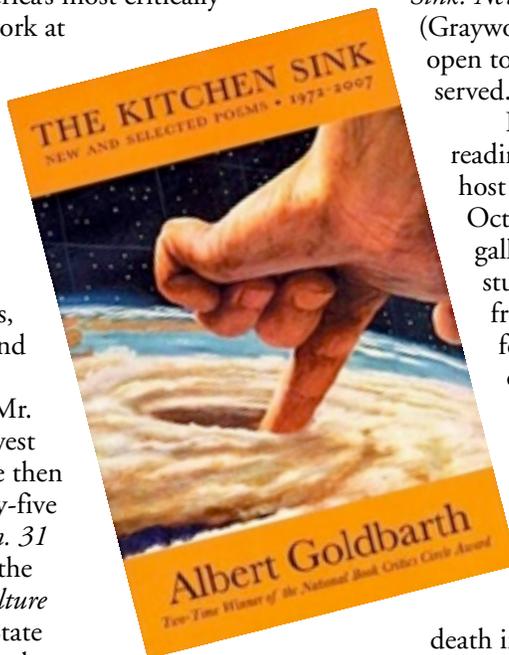
We are especially excited as her appearance at OU will be the kick-off event on her national book tour for her newest novel, *The Shanghai Moon*, due out in February, 2009. Stay tuned for details about the exact date and time by visiting our website: www2.oakland.edu/english/.

This issue of *The English Channel* comes to you courtesy of the web. Printing and mailing costs have forced us to move to an online format. Please let me know what you think of this development (hawkins@oakland.edu). And speaking of costs, I want to thank those of you who have given to the department gift fund in the past and to ask those of you who haven't, please think about doing so. Our gift account supports student travel and Sigma Tau Delta's activities. It also makes possible our events, not only the big ones such as the Goldbarth and Rozan readings, but the smaller ones as well: our Annual Read-In (this year: Milton's *Paradise Lost!*), the Poetry Bash, the Flash Fiction and Ekphrasis Poetry Contests, and so on. To make the process as easy as possible, we have enclosed a form for that purpose.

Brown Poetry Reading to Feature Goldbarth

Albert Goldbarth, one of America's most critically acclaimed poets, will present his work at the 21st annual Maurice Brown Poetry Reading, at the Oakland Center, in the Gold Rooms, on October 22nd at 4:00. We invite you to join us for the reading, the English department's premiere annual public event.

Mr. Goldbarth received his B.A. from the University of Illinois, Chicago Circle campus, in 1969 and his M.F.A. from the University of Iowa in 1971. Early in his career, Mr. Goldbarth won the Poetry Northwest Theodore Roethke Prize, and since then he has published more than twenty-five collections of poetry, including *Jan. 31* (1974), which was nominated for the National Book Award; *Popular Culture* (1990), which received the Ohio State University Press / The Journal Award; *Saving Lives* (2001) and *Heaven and Earth: A Cosmology* (1991), both of which won the National Book Critics Circle award for poetry (Goldbarth is the only poet to have received this award twice). Last year saw the publication of a large collection: *The Kitchen*



Sink: New and Selected Poems 1972-2007 (Graywolf Press). As always, the reading is open to the public. Refreshments will be served.

In anticipation of Mr. Goldbarth's reading, the English department will also host "Reading Albert Goldbarth" on October 9th, from 4-5 pm in the OU art gallery. This annual event features students, faculty, and others reading from the works of the Maurice Brown featured poet. All friends and members of OU and the English department are invited to attend.

The annual Maurice Brown Poetry reading was begun in 1988 (and featured OU Alum Tom Lynch) to honor the memory of Maurice Brown, who taught in the English department from 1961 until his

death in 1985. Prof. Brown was a great fan of contemporary poetry and the special collection of contemporary poetry in Kresge Library also bears his name. The event in his honor was in large part initiated by his wife, Judy Brown, who still teaches anthropology at OU; her contributions help underwrite the annual event.

Hat Wearer: “I have done thee worthy service”

Kevin Grimm Honored with Judd Family Faculty Achievement Award



Susan Hawkins presents Kevin Grimm with the 2008 Judd Family Achievement Award

On April 18th, English department faculty, students, alumni, and family gathered to honor Kevin Grimm with the 12th annual Judd Family Award, established through the generosity of OU alumni Pat and Randy Judd, with the counsel of their former teacher, Professor Joan Rosen.

Department chair Susan Hawkins was kind enough to allow the *Channel* to print in full her eloquent tribute to Professor Grimm, delivered at the ceremony:

The Judd Family Faculty Achievement Award was created to recognize outstanding achievement in the areas that broadly define our professional mission: teaching, scholarship/ creative work, and service. We are honoring Kevin today because his contributions to the department, the University, and the community epitomize the goals of that mission. Or, to describe his achievements more felicitously, I'll borrow a sentence from Kathy Pfeiffer and Kevin Laam's nominating letter: "As we all know, the duties of the Department Chair increase dramatically every year, and every year of Kevin's Chairmanship, he has met these demands with good humor, a clear vision, and a strong commitment to the department's well being." Kevin's "motif," for his tenure as chair was this: the man who wears three hats: department chair, AAUP president, and teacher/scholar. With a little help from Brian Connery, the keen-brained, we have a suitable kenning, all apologies to the Anglo-Saxon brotherhood, for Kevin: Hat-wearer!

Thus the first hat: Teacher/Scholar:

I apologize to all the young-un's here for my indulgence in rank nostalgia—you will forgive me, I know, as I am the oldest fart in the department now, in terms of age and in years of service. But as I perused Kevin's personnel file I was

just seized with the past—finding Kevin's application for the position, his original CV from the University of Virginia, oh and the comment sheet from the personnel committee-- Everyone ranked him as "high."--made up at that time of Bob Eberwein, Nigel Hampton, Bruce Mann, David Mascitelli, Joan Rosen, and Mark Workman (which must have been the entire advisory committee at that time). And I found his original interview schedule—January 22nd and 23rd, 1987—. The only faculty member on that sheet who is still full time in the department is me—an unsettling reminder about time and about my previously mentioned old fart status. But also a reminder of how we continue to function as a group, how we maintain a uniquely warm collegiality, and how we continue to maintain traditions.

As a teacher scholar (twice nominated for the OU Teaching Excellence Award) Kevin has taught all of us about Arthurian Romance, about Beowulf, about Malory, about Dante. Over the year's he's done a number of presentations to the department: "The Failure of The Knight's Tale [Chaucer]; "Sir Thomas Malory: The Knight and the Book"; "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight's Gift of Grace." He has continued to publish and to present at conferences—no mean feat as Chair--and his sabbatical in fall will be devoted to work on Malory and the new area in Bible studies that he's developed in the last few years.

As a teacher--and I know about his success having served as advisor—he's had a tremendous influence on our students—for example, he mentored one of our brightest undergrads, Kathleen Bethell, and saw her through the process of presenting a paper at the Michigan Academy. Most recently Kathy Pfeiffer has heard from former grad Jerry Jones who, in the acknowledgements to his about to be published novel, says this about Kevin: "My appreciation for his erudition, although perhaps unknowingly, goes to Dr. Kevin Grimm. My apologies for all of the things I portrayed inaccurately. Without your knowledge, I could not have managed even that much. And in many ways, Boethius dwells in these pages."

"Professor Grimm has had a tremendous influence on our students"

Hat Number Two: AAUP President—and his many years, still continuing, of service to the union:

From 2003—2005 Kevin served as AAUP President and according to Scott Barns—and as we well remember—those were difficult times for the union: we faced some of our "worst economic times." The administration was keen to cut positions and benefits. Scott doesn't have any "funny stories" about that period, but despite the stresses of negotiating and dealing with an often intransigent administration, Kevin has always been willing to explain to us the issues—what they are, what's at stake, and how best to proceed. His work with the union has been constant since Spring of 1994 when he served as Secretary to the Faculty Bargaining Forum; in 1997 and 1999 he served as Chair of the Nominating Committee; from

1995-2003 he functioned as an At large Member of the Executive Committee. Since 2006 he has been the union's Contract Office and again, as we all know, any time a question comes up that might entail some obscure matter in that bloody, long, incredibly complicated document about what the protocol might be, Kevin will say, "I think it's in paragraph 122, subsection 14, pointetcetera." He's the man! And as Jim Ciplewski, the new President of the AAUP, testifies, "As I began as president of the OU AAUP chapter, there was no one that I wanted more to emulate. . . . I am truly appreciative that you were there when I needed your insight."

Hat Number Three: Chair and Colleague:

During Kevin's time as Chair, we hired six sterling colleagues: Kyle Edwards, Kevin Laam, Andrea Knutson, Joshua Yumibe, and our excellent Visitors, Doris Runey and Susan Beckwith. And most important: he guided us through the process of hiring Cyndie Ferrera, our department miracle worker. For this accomplishment, we are forever in his debt.

While we're all aware of his service to the union coincident to his being chair, we may forget that he was also a member of CAP from 2001-2004, and during his last two years on CAP, he was Chair of that significant and heavy work-load committee. Since 2006 he has served on the CAS Assembly, and since 2007 has been a member of that body's Executive Committee. He now serves the department as Chair of the Graduate Committee and serves me as informal

"Kevin has been a steadying force that has leveled some rocky fields."

advisor all the time! I relied on him last summer to see me through the first phase of the transition, but I beat a path to his door all the

time. And he is ever gracious and patient.

For me what has characterized his time as chair is what characterizes him as a person and this is his consummate sense of discretion, his ability to be even handed and calm in the face of actual or potential chaos. As Laurie Evans says so beautifully about his fourth hat—that of father and husband: "He has maintained a remarkable balance, which has had a remarkable impact on his kids and for which I am remarkably grateful. Really from the day they were each born and all through the phases of parenting and marriage tending, he has been a steadying force that has leveled some rocky fields."

And that seems as good a place as any for me to say, for all of these reasons, the department is honored to present to Kevin Grimm this plaque commemorating his achievement as the Judd Family English Department Award Winner this year. The quotation is from *The Tempest*, an early speech from Ariel, who is recalling Prospero to his promise of freedom. Ariel says, "I have done thee worthy service."

Professor Grimm is currently enjoying a much-deserved sabbatical during the fall 2008 semester, which he is devoting to scholarly research. But he'll put his hats back on this winter semester.



From left: Randy Judd, Kevin Grimm, Pat Judd



Kevin Grimm with his wife Laurie Evans



Kevin Grimm delivers remarks upon acceptance of the Judd Award

TELEVISION REVIEW

Unjaded Reflections on *American Idol*, Season 7 by Kevin Laam.

When *American Idol* premiered on U.S. television in 2002, I predicted it would be cancelled within weeks. Not because I found it anything less than fabulously entertaining, but because it seemed hopelessly out of step with American popular culture. With its busy, synth-laden theme song, clunky animatronic visuals, and metrosexual hosts Ryan Seacrest and Brian Dunkleman, the show seemed frankly too fabricated, too European for American tastes. *Idol* was desperate to please in a pop-culture landscape where studied nonchalance (or even active contempt) for the audience was the rule.

Seven seasons later, Dunkleman is gone - but everything else remains. The show is a juggernaut, and there appears no end in sight. This is a good thing. TV critics tell us that *Idol* is evil, that it feeds our worst impulses by inviting us to laugh at the unsuspecting throngs whose desire for stardom overreaches their actual talent (see: William Hung, Sanjaya Malakar, etc.). Music critics bemoan the program's near pathological condescension to middlebrow tastes—as song choices go, it's not the Beatles and the Stones but Whitney and Celine who are enshrined in the *Idol* pantheon. (Indeed, only in the universe of *Idol* can Blake Lewis's beatboxed rendition of Bon Jovi's "You Give Love a Bad Name" be described as "edgy.")

These criticisms are not without merit. But they tend to miss the larger point: *Idol* is first and foremost a celebration of performance, in all its glory and in all its shame. *Idol* makes idols of all who dare to make stars or fools of themselves, and there are precious few among us who are willing to take that risk. There's something unsettling about the fact that the show turns some 25 million viewers a week into critics while the number of performers dwindles to one. And that wild disproportion explains why we watch: partly because we want to weigh in on our favorites, but mainly because they're doing what most of us can't: baring their souls, daring to dream.

Case in point: this season's Brooke White. Brooke distinguished herself early on as an engaging acoustic-folk singer in the vein of Carole King and Joni Mitchell, but incurred the scorn of pundits, bloggers, and assorted cynics by being, of all things, prone to weeping. Brooke wept when she performed well and when she didn't. After flubbing the first lines of "You Must Love Me" during Andrew Lloyd Webber week, Brooke could

barely maintain her composure throughout the remainder of her performance. When she was finally voted off during Neil Diamond week, her farewell performance of "I Am...I Said" was punctuated, again, by forgotten words and heaving sobs.

Whether Brooke deserved to be voted off for her performance is not the point (although, of course, she didn't: the week's main offender was David Archuleta, who gracelessly rasped his way through "America" and "Sweet Caroline"). The point is that she was raked over the coals for her emotional transparency. Evidently it would have taken too giant a leap of faith for Brooke's critics to believe that her tears were genuine, that such a lachrymose display could emerge organically from the relentlessly inorganic universe of *Idol*.

As far as I can tell, such criticism is no more than glorified cynicism—and good critics should never be cynics. I'm reminded of the scene in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* where Duke Theseus is cautioned to avoid the Athenian craftsmen's laugh-out-loud awful staging of *Pyramus and Thisbe*. Against all good advice, Theseus insists:

I will hear that play;
For never anything can be amiss,
When simpleness and duty tender it.

The craftsmen's performance is met with incessant heckling—but they power through it, oblivious to their own ineptitude and all the better for it. It is the unadulterated joy of performance that carries the day for Bottom, Quince, and their fellow "rude mechanicals," and I suspect it is no accident that they, not the jaded spectators of the Athenian court, are the characters who earn our rooting interest.

I confess: I'm usually a spectator, seldom a performer. It is for that reason, perhaps, that the modest charms of a televised karaoke competition afford me such keen, vicarious pleasure. There's boundless delight to be found in the spectacle of Brooke White singing "Here Comes the Sun" in a matching yellow dress – or of a dreadlocked Jason Castro gleefully channeling his inner Bob Marley on "I Shot the Sheriff" – or of any contestant singing "All By Myself" as if her life depended on it. If *Idol* proves one thing, it's that simpleness and duty always trump irony.

Awaiting season 8, Prof. Laam currently spends his free time teaching a seminar on the poetry of John Donne.

MOVIE REVIEW

Beowulf: Bad, but Not Truly Awful *by Kevin and Geoff Grimm*

I gave the movie *Beowulf* the full benefit of all possible viewing advantages, watching at an I-Max theater in 3-D. And, in order to protect *English Channel* readers from having to listen to the rant of a professional medievalist nit-picking about arcane details ("nobody in the poem ever fights naked, I mean, really, how stupid is that . . ., 'unarmed' doesn't mean . . ."), I viewed and discussed the movie with my 19-year old son, Geoff, who has so far avoided reading the poem *Beowulf* and who agreed to contribute some of his own comments. (This truly is a joint enterprise: even in my comments I have not included any aesthetic or critical judgments that Geoff did not agree with, and many of my own points were formulated only through his observations during our post-viewing conversation.)

Kevin: My bottom line response is that *Beowulf* the movie is not a truly awful movie, (it's not nearly as bad as it might have been—hey, I paid \$7.50, in 1973 dollars, to see Andy Warhol's *Frankenstein*, so don't talk to me about *bad* movies). The I-Max 3-D experience was occasionally cool (flying through the night from the perspective of Grendel's mother was a literally dizzying experience), though father and son agreed the best part of the 3-D experience was the previews for the *Creatures of the Deep* underwater documentary which was shot entirely in and for 3-D I-max viewing: a whole school of fish actually swam right between us—freaky. The computer image-capture production technique produced some impressive special effects, as expected, but was also kind of distracting. Major characters, especially Ray Winstone as Beowulf and Anthony Hopkins as Hrothgar, were graced with remarkable detail. However, the various extras in the hall scenes looked exactly as if they had wandered in from *Shrek*. Their movements were fluid, but not quite human.

Most interesting to me, ultimately, were the changes in the story, both plot and theme. (Here comes the professional medievalist.) Director Robert Zemeckis creates a more narratively unified, but more thematically depressing *Beowulf*. In the poem, the early fight against Grendel and the later fight against the Dragon have no causal connection. They are unified primarily by being focussed on Beowulf, who is presented first as a Young Hero seeking fame and later as an Old King seeking fame. The poem is thus structured like an Old English kenning, one of those compound nouns that is used as a metaphor (such as "battle-sweat" to mean "blood"), which presents the idea of the complete hero, a man "most eager for fame" ("lofgeornost," the final word of the poem). Fame, the reward for heroism, is essentially a positive value in the poem, or at worst, an ambivalent one, as the pursuit of fame necessarily involves many positive qualities (bravery, loyalty, and generosity being the most obvious).

In contrast, Zemeckis creates a narrative organized by the idea that heroism itself is a myth. In Zemeckis's telling, men are shallow creatures who only desire fame for its own sake,

especially when it is literally embodied as Angelie Jolie wearing only a micro-thin layer of gold lamé and sporting built-in 4-inch stilleto heels. The narrative action thus becomes unified around male sexual desire, the one human impulse which is totally absent from the poem. Zemeckis strips Beowulf of his nobility and makes him into the one thing that the poem's Beowulf definitely is not: a liar. Particularly odd is the fact that the two primary women in the movie are actually the most positive and interesting characters. They are, however, given little to do and have no impact on the outcome.

The poem is famous for Beowulf's battles with monsters (Grendel, Grendel's mother, the dragon); but as those of you who have actually read the poem know, those battles are metaphors for the forces of feuding and violence that threaten human society from within. Much of the poem is actually occupied with talk and story telling that builds thematic bridges between the heroism of the monster battles and the values of the world Beowulf defends. Zemeckis has preserved the amount of talk, but having devalued heroism, he doesn't really have much for his characters to say. And that observation leads directly to Geoff's comments.

Geoff: The marketing of the movie *Beowulf* seemed to be targeting a 300 audience. All the previews were battle scenes and inspirational speeches. When I actually saw the film, it seemed that the previews were the extent of the action in this movie. Not that this is a problem if I were expecting a movie that was more Beowulf and less fight. However, a very weak script limited the characters, and the amount of time spent delivering the bland script detracted from the action. The only male character that was honest and likable throughout the movie, Wiglaf, is destroyed at the end when he falls to the temptation of Grendel's mother. So it doesn't matter if you live your life honestly and loyally, in the end you will fall to the temptation of evil. This ending in particular seemed disjunctive with the rest of the movie and was a big component in the failure of the film. I do, however, agree with my father and highly recommend seeing the "Creatures of the Deep" in 3D, which had a spectacular preview.

Kevin: So there you have it. As a recreation of the poem, *Beowulf* the movie fails. As an action/fantasy film, it similarly fails (though perhaps not quite as spectacularly). As a reminder that technology can not substitute for well-told story, however, and as a commentary on the moral and imaginative bankruptcy of contemporary narrative in comparison with the rich splendor of medieval poetry, it is a resounding success.

Prof. Grimm is currently on sabbatical, presumably enjoying some extra time—and more film viewings—with his son Geoff.

COLLABORATION

“Emblem Dreams” *by Sally Schluter Tardella and Gladys Cardiff*

This fall, Adjunct Professor of Art and Art History Sally Schluter Tardella and our own Gladys Cardiff entered a collaborative work in the 2008 PAN Poetry/Art Exhibition competition. Their entry was accepted for the exhibit and was on display in the Milford Public Library from Monday, April 21st - 28th.



by Sally Schluter Tardella, oil on canvas, 24" x 36"

Staying ahead of you
is what they do. They know you'll survive them
and their low sense of humor.

They keep the reading structures simple.
Visual puns, as in Hogarth's ornaments
– pointing skeletons, a fleeing rat, blowzy justice –
not much complicated vibrato between the image
and the message.

If only we could remember this when we are in them!

It was like my heart was being torn from my body.
And the weeping. I'm pouring milk but the milk won't wait
for the glass I'm lifting in my other hand.

Spilt milk.

A pool of it that for the longest time was just a
sickening feeling I woke to.

What more?
Dreams are always a sign of something unfinished,
something more I had to give up.

by Gladys Cardiff

*Professors Cardiff and Tardella are continuing their collaboration
in the classroom, preparing a course that brings together student poets and artists.*

AUTHORS EXPLAINED...JONATHAN SWIFT *by Brian Connery*

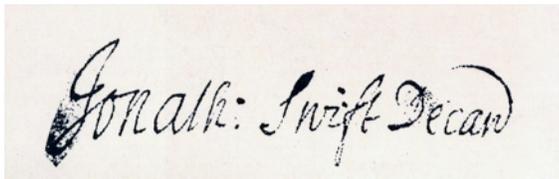


Fig. 1

While we have literally hundreds of samples of Jonathan Swift's signature (Fig. 1), from his correspondence and from documents in his service as a Church of Ireland prelate and subsequently as Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Swift set his name to only two of his publications, a very early "Ode to the Athenian Society" (1692) and "A Project for the Advancement of Religion and the Reformation of Manners" (1709). The "Ode" was written to what Swift believed was an anonymous society of learned men who published a magazine responding to philosophical and scientific queries from gentlemen throughout England. In

reality, it was a publication produced solely by the prolific hack writer John Dunton. The ode reflects upon the mysterious nature of anonymity and concludes by declaring "that men, who lived and died without a name, / Are the chief heroes in the sacred list of fame," an intriguing paradox, registering simultaneously, perhaps, Swift's own desire to be both unknown and recognized.

All of Swift's hundreds of poems were published anonymously. His prose works variously identified the author descriptively ("a Church of England Man," "a Person of Quality"), functionally ("the Examiner," "the Drapier"), pseudonymously ("Isaac Bickerstaff," "Lemuel Gulliver"), or not at all (the Tale-teller in *Tale of a Tub* or the Modest Proposer).

In his letters to Esther Johnson in Dublin, while Swift was in London during the reign of Queen Anne, Swift frequently describes, with some pleasure, conversations among his friends as they attempted to assign authorship to works he had written. On other occasions, he expresses dismay over misattributions.

Swift seems simultaneously to have wanted to be and not to be found out. In the case of *A Tale of a Tub*, even in private correspondence Swift referred to the book only as the "you-know-what." In the case of *The Drapier Letters*, however, often credited with unifying the people of Ireland with a sense of national interest for the first time in the island's history, the fifth letter offers a brief biography of "the Drapier" which parallels Swift's own. Swift's identity as the Drapier was an open secret; even his friend, the Duke of Ormonde, who was forced by political contingencies to offer a reward for information leading to the identification of the Drapier, knew very well who the author was. Indeed, the people of Dublin seemed more united in their resistance to giving Swift up to the authorities than they did in resisting the influx of the halfpence against which the Drapier had written.

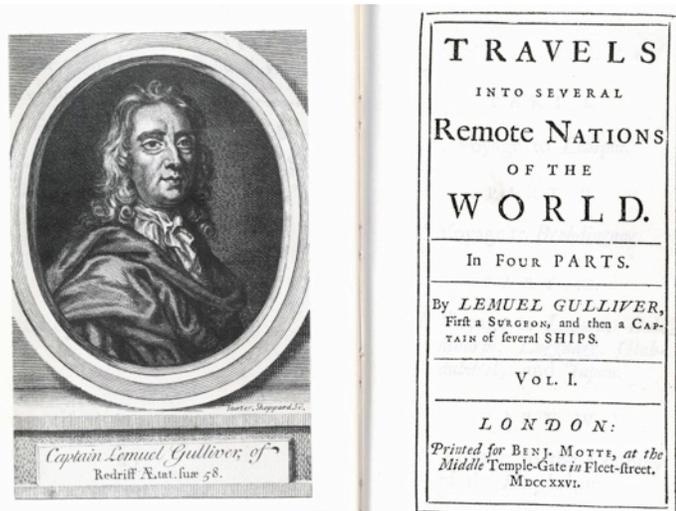


Fig. 2

By the time he'd completed *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World* "by Lemuel Gulliver; first a SURGEON then a CAPTAIN of several SHIPS" (Fig. 2), Swift had perfected his routine for putting distance between himself and his publication. He passed his own manuscript on to a friend to copy "in a fair hand"; the manuscript in his friend's handwriting was then shipped from Ireland to London to another friend who passed it to an acquaintance who took it to a bookseller for publication. It's possible that neither the bookseller nor the person who delivered the manuscript to him knew the identity of the author.

Swift knew that the *Travels* was likely to be his last bid for literary fame. Still, the success of the *Travels*, depended upon creating an impression of authenticity in order to hoax the public much as Swift had been hoaxed by Dunton. Much of the prefatory matter for the first edition of the *Travels*

attests not only to Gulliver's existence but to his veracity as well, and the letter "from the Bookseller" to the reader attests that among Gulliver's neighbors in Redriff, "it became a Sort of Proverb . . . when any one affirmed a Thing, to say, it was as true as if Mr. Gulliver had spoke it."

Pictorial testimony to the reality of Gulliver is provided in the frontispiece (Fig. 2).

While it was fundamental to the very nature of the *Travels* that Gulliver not be identified with/as Swift so that Gulliver can act as Swift's ironic mouthpiece, making statements throughout the book at variance with Swift's own views, Swift seems nevertheless to wish to be identified as the author. The portrait of Gulliver in the first edition, published by Benjamin Motte in 1726, bears some resemblance to Swift, as seen in this portrait by Charles Jervas (Fig. 3).

Moreover, as Janine Barchas has pointed out, the frontispiece gives Gulliver's age as 58, but based on the details in the text, Gulliver would be 65 at the time of publication. It was Swift who was 58.

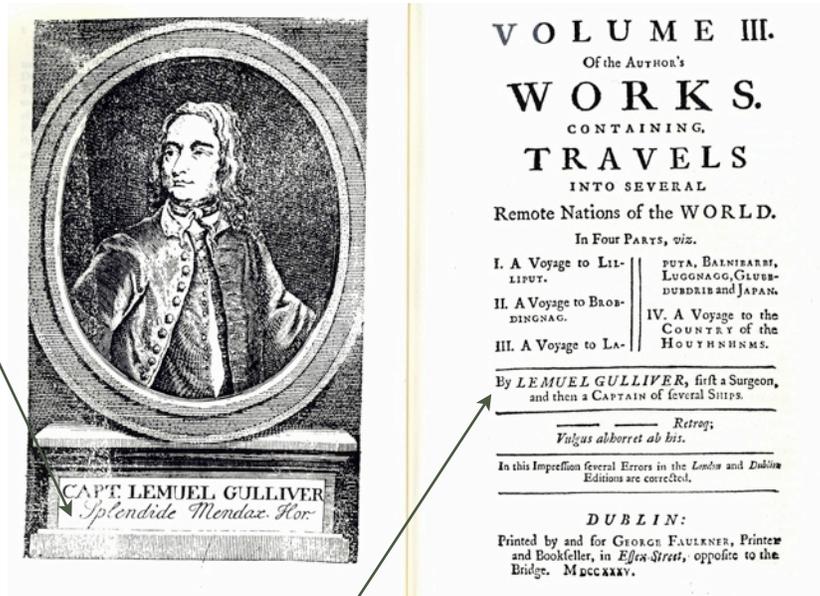


Fig. 3

AUTHORS EXPLAINED... (continued)

In 1735, Swift's Dublin publisher, George Faulkner (whose bookshop displayed a bust of Swift under the sign of the Drapier in the front window) began publication of Swift's collected works. Swift was still not fully identified: the volumes bear the title *Collected Works of J.S., DSP* (Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's).

This portrait, alluding to Horace, adds the epithet "Splendide Mendax," variously translated as "teller of great tales," "magnificently false," "lying splendidly," or "big liar," and since the mid-1980s, a number of critics have taken this epithet to be a key as to how to read the *Travels*, i.e., as totally bogus, the portrait and the epithet being a sign from the very beginning of the fictional mendacity of the project. These critics, in your author's humble opinion, forget that Swift wrote for specific occasions and that the status of the *Travels* had changed considerably since 1726, the author now being widely known and recognized. Swift knew that the work would be read differently in the *Collected Works* than it was in the first edition. This revision was not, in my opinion, supposed to be an improvement, but rather an adaptation to a different occasion.



Volume 3 of the *Collected Works* includes, somewhat paradoxically, "the author's *Travels* [...] by Lemuel Gulliver," whose new portrait appears on the facing frontispiece.

Indeed, both this portrait of Gulliver and the one that appeared in the cheaper duodecimo edition of the *Collected Works*, showing a somewhat more haggard Gulliver, bear considerable resemblance, this time, to another portrait of Swift which appears in the first volume of the *Collected Works*.

The title page – referring to both Gulliver and the author – and the portraits produce a complicated set of contradictory truths: Gulliver is and isn't the author; and Swift's presence is becoming more visible. This is complemented by the double voices in the "Letter from Capt. Gulliver to his Cousin Sympson," a piece of prefatory apparatus that appeared first in the Faulkner 1735 *Collected Works* edition, and which begins with Gulliver's/Swift's dismay that "Writers . . . will not allow me to be Author of mine own *Travels*" and a disclaimer of attributions of other works: "others make me Author of Books to which I am wholly a Stranger."



Swift's voice is apparent in a section testifying to the authority of the emendations made in the text: "I have sent you some Corrections which you may insert." Gulliver's voice is more apparent in testifying to the factuality of the book: "I must confess that as to the People of Lilliput, Brobdingnag, and Laputa; I have never yet heard of any Yahoo so presumptuous as to dispute their Being, or the facts I have related concerning them." Gulliver is "magnificently false," while Swift is "lying splendidly" as they speak in unison.

BOOK REVIEW

Man Gone Down by Robert Anderson.

At first glance, the premise of Michael Thomas's *Man Gone Down* is straightforward enough. A young aspiring black writer is married to the white daughter of a disapproving Boston Brahmin family. The mother-in-law not only disapproves of his profession as a writer, but clearly does not believe that he has what it takes to make it. The novel takes place over four days while his wife and three children are away at her mother's summer home in the Hamptons. During those four days, his challenge is clear: find a job, collect debts, and find a way to pay tuition for his young children at a private school, or lose his family.

This scenario, however, is only straightforward if your first glance is at the blurb on the back. Much of the novel's action takes place inside the unnamed narrator's consciousness; this action moves so freely back and forth in time that it can be difficult to determine just where (or when) we are at any given moment. Fortunately, the novel's power does not rely on the ease of identifying all the details. In fact, no small share of the novel's considerable pleasure comes from the work of putting the pieces together.

As I see it, the novel's signal achievement is its success in portraying the narrator's racial anger as legitimate and compelling while stressing the flaws in the narrator's perception of the world around him. In recalling a fight that got him kicked out of middle school, the narrator offers a poetic description of his anger:

"You let it run. And for an instant it feels so good—the smack-thunk of skinbone on skinbone, feeling yourself strike something and having it give. And what it looks like—brown fist on white face. It makes sense—to me at least."

As an adult, his reasons for racial rage are credible. Observing the way "strangers, friends and family" respond differently to his two sons according to the darkness of their complexions—one is light enough to pass as white. "They are my boys," he insists.

The novel tracks the gathering momentum of the narrator's racially inflected anger with deftness. At the same time, it tracks the burden of being the chosen one, selected to carry the banner of his race into the world. This election, first announced by his mother, and sanctioned by graduate school professors he encounters while working on his Ph.D. studying T.S. Eliot (quotations from "The Four Quartets" pepper the novel). At the same time, however, it suggests how the events that have bruised him—bruised him even when he thought he came away unscathed—have distorted his vision, rendered him incapable of seeing even his wife's love. Blinded by this anger, for much of the novel he plots his exit from his marriage, repeatedly wondering if this is what it feels like to fall out of love. This delicate balance of presenting a rage that is both legitimate and blinding, both earned and disqualifying, makes the novel more than worth the labor required to read it.

Prof. Anderson somehow continues to find time to read contemporary fiction while teaching courses in British literature.

News Shorts

Cole Promoted to Full Professor

Upon recommendation of the provost and approval by the Board of Trustees, Natalie Cole was recently promoted. Prof. Cole's impressive record of scholarship, service, and teaching—including her important work as director of the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program and her long dedication to mentoring students—have earned her the rank of Full Professor. Please join us in congratulating Professor Cole on this important career milestone!



Professor of English Natalie Cole

Oakland to Host Scholars from Around the World

On October 17-20, over 150 scholars will travel to OU for the [International Conference on Romanticism](#). A gathering of academics from the U.S., Canada, China, England, Nairobi, Finland, and elsewhere around the world, the conference will feature panels and sessions on the conference theme, "The Work of Romanticism."

Thursday and Friday sessions will be held at the Royal Park Hotel in Rochester. Saturday and Sunday, the conference will move to the Oakland Center on the OU campus and feature a dinner at Meadowbrook Hall.

Hosting the ICR will contribute significantly to raising OU's profile both nationally and internationally. Special thanks for spearheading ICR at Oakland are due to Rob Anderson and Chris Clason, chair of Modern Languages. Jeff Insko of the English dept. and Jennifer Law-Sullivan and Ingrid Rieger of Modern Languages are also members of the conference organizing committee. Support and funding for the conference is also being provided by the Dean of CAS, the Provost's office, and the Judd Family Endowment.

John Milton Selected for Fourth Annual Read-In

The Fourth Annual English Department Read-In is set for November 24 in the Fireside Lounge of the OC. This year's featured work is John Milton's remarkable epic poem *Paradise Lost*. All are welcome to attend (and read!) the event. More information is forthcoming on the department [website](#).

News Shorts

(continued from page 10)



Becky Fernandez

Department Welcomes New Secretary

The English Department welcomed Becky Fernandez as our secretary in November 2007. Since then she has become indispensable to faculty and students. Hers is the cheerful voice you hear on the phone and the welcoming person you first meet upon entering the office. She joined OU in 2004 as a secretary in Rhetoric, Communication and Journalism, after her family relocated here from Delaware. We are delighted and grateful for her presence.

We're Moving!

This December, the English department will bid farewell to Wilson Hall and take up residence on the fifth floor of O'Dowd Hall. Although we'll miss our current home, faculty and staff alike have embraced the move and look forward to new furniture—and new views of campus—in their new confines.

Laam, Yumibe Receive Research Fellowships

For Summer '08, Assistant Professors Kevin Laam and Joshua Yumibe received prestigious University Research Fellowships. Prof. Laam's research is part of a long-term project exploring the classical *consolatio* tradition on the literary and political discourses of Elizabethan England. His research included two weeks at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C.

Prof. Yumibe used his fellowship for research in the Parisian film archives during June and July. The

research is part of his manuscript project on silent film coloring practices. While in Europe, Yumibe presented his work at the Women and the Silent Screen Conference in Stockholm, Sweden and attended the Cinema Ritrovato Conference in Bologna, Italy.

Yumibe to Teach at U of M

In other Joshua Yumibe-related news, Prof. Yumibe will be on leave in the winter semester in order to teach silent film history in the Department of Screen Arts and Cultures at the University of Michigan as a visiting Assistant Professor. While there, he will also be conducting research at the U of M libraries in their extensive collection of early film journals. The one semester, visiting appointment will also prove useful for developing the English Department's relations to other local cinema studies programs as we implement a new film major within the department.

Writer Stirs Imaginations



Fiction writer Kellie Wells with Prof. Gladys Cardiff

On March 31st, a plague of giant jack rabbits, a gigantic girl named Willow, and a Midwestern version of the Pied Piper of Hamelin came to OU via a short story written and read by acclaimed fiction writer Kellie Wells. Wells read her story "Rabbit Catcher of Kingdom Come" to an attentive and occasionally startled audience of students and faculty. Known for fiction that is "outside the box" the fairy tale fits Wells's imaginative sensibility perfectly. "There is freedom in unimaginable fairy-tale peril" she said in an interview as she cautioned her readers that there would be "a lot of rabbit screaming."

The story was commissioned by the editors of *The Fairy Tale Review*

and is forthcoming in this year's annual edition. Wells has also authored the short story collection, *Compression Scars*, and *Skin*, a novel. She teaches fiction at Washington University in St. Louis. The reading was fully sponsored by the Department of English.

Poetry Bash a Hit



Brian Connery at the Poetry Bash

On Tuesday, April 15, the English Department hosted the 10th Annual Poetry Bash. The 40 or 50 in attendance heard readings of about 25 poems, including the winning poems for the Ekphrasis poetry contest (written and read by students Carla Butwin, Shayla Hawkins, Marshall Stephens, and David Bowman). Other highlights included Brian Connery's reading of Robin Robertson's "Answers," one of the meanest poems you will hear and Susan Hawkins's reading of Kenneth Koch's "One Train May Hide Another." Mark your calendars for next year: the Poetry Bash always takes place on tax day at 5:30 pm in the Oakland Center.

Crime Novelist to Read at OU

On Wednesday, February 11, S.J. Rozan will visit Oakland to lecture and read from her work as part of the University's "Celebrating the Liberal Arts" series. The theme for this year's series is "Cities."

The author of ten crime novels, Rozan's work is a creative expression of the theme of cities, of which the crime novel genre is a unique cultural form. She has received critical acclaim for her explorations of the multi-faceted, complex life of cities and the characters whose lives are intertwined with them.

Rozan's visit to OU will coincide with the publication of her eleventh novel, *The Shanghai Moon*. The event will be open to the public.

Faculty Notes

IN PRINT

Natalie Cole's monumental review essay, "Dickens and Gender: 1992-2007," was published in the Summer 2008 *Dickens Studies Annual*. She has also received a contract from AMS Press for *Dickens and Gender*, which will be published in late fall. Prof. Cole also published a book chapter, "'Private Snuggeries': the Spaces of Masculine Identity in *Armdale*," in *Armdale: Wilkie Collins and the Dark Threads of Life*, ed. Mariacconcetta Costantini. Rome: Arachne Press, 2008.

Nancy Joseph published "Preparing Secondary Students for Twenty-First Century Literacy Through Content-Area Reading Instruction" in the summer issue of the *Language Arts Journal of Michigan*.

Kathy Pfeiffer's essay "Teaching Waldo Frank's *Holiday*" comprises chapter 11 of the newly published book, *Teaching the Harlem Renaissance: Course Design and Classroom Strategies* (Peter Lang Publishers) edited by Michael Soto. Prof. Pfeiffer's book review of *The Letters of Jean Toomer 1919-1924* edited by Mark Whalan will appear in the forthcoming (summer) issue of *African American Review*.

Susan Beckwith's essay "Vor[te]xual Time: The Agency of Being-in-Time and Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*" has been accepted for publication as a book chapter in *Literature of Exile of East and Central Europe. Exile and Narrative/Poetic Imagination*.

Doris Runey published a short story, "Lucky Fish," in the online journal, *Cezanne's Carrot's*, Summer Solstice 2008.

Kitty Dubin was a winner in the International Jewish Short Play Competition in Boca Raton, Florida for her play *Mimi and Me* (2008). In addition, her play, *Tough as Nails*, is being produced by the Gateway Theatre Guild's One Act Play Festival in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. Another play, *Blockbuster*, was being included in 8 by 8, an evening of short plays at the Ringwald Theatre in Ferndale, Michigan.

Jude Nixon's 2002 essay in *Victorian Poetry*, "'Death Blots Black Out': Thermodynamics and the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins," has been republished in *Nineteenth-Century Literary Criticism* (February 2008).

Jeffrey Insko's essay "The Logic of Left Alone: *The Pioneers* and the Conditions of American Privacy" has been accepted for publication in the journal *American Literature*.

Retirement has done nothing to slow down **Distinguished Professor Jane Eberwein**. Her essay, "'Earth's Confiding Time': Childhood Trust and Christian Nurture" was published in the *Emily Dickinson Journal* (2008). She also published "Oakland's History for Beginners: One Professor's Perspective" *Oakland Journal* (Fall 2007). In addition, she also published "'Told in Story or Sung in Rhyme': Narrative Pairings in Prose and Verse" in *Teaching Nineteenth-Century American Poetry*, edited by Paula Bernat Bennett, Karen Kilcup, and Philipp Schweighauser (2007) and "Emily Dickinson and 'the weight of glory,'" in *Walking on a Trail of Words: Essays in Honor of Professor Agnieszka Salska*, edited by Jadwiga Maszewska and Zbigniew Maszewski (2007).

And there's more: Prof. Eberwein's latest project is a collection of critical essays, *Reading Emily Dickinson's Correspondence*, which she is co-editing with Professor Cynthia MacKenzie of the University of Regina. It will be published by the University of Massachusetts Press -- but not for another year or two.

AT THE PODIUM

Distinguished Professor Bob Eberwein was invited to do a couple of gigs in California 2007-2008. In November he made a presentation and participated in a panel on the contributions of the First Motion Picture Unit. This was a photographic unit formed within the Air Force to make training films, some with Ronald Reagan. That was at the Pacific Film Archives in Berkeley. In April, he was at the University of Southern California to talk about aspects of the history of the use of film in sex education.

Rob Anderson presented "The Hour-Glass Contemned': Time and Labour in Blake and Whitman" at the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism, University of Bologna Italy in March. The paper is part of a collaboration with **Jeff Insko**. The two presented their work together at a conference on "Finding Time: Romantic Temporalities" at the University of Western Ontario, April 12-13.

Jeff Insko also delivered his paper "Frederick Douglass's Historical Turn" at the American Literature Association Conference in San Francisco in May and at the annual Michigan Early Americanists gathering the following week in East Lansing.

Kevin Laam presented a paper entitled "The Jesuit Politics of Richard Crashaw's *Sospetto d'Herode*" at the Renaissance Conference of Southern California at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California.

Andrea Knutson attended this year's conference for the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy and the American Literature Association Conference in San Francisco in May.

On May 22 **Niels Herold** took students from his winter semester graduate class and from his Honors College class down to Luther Luckett Correctional Complex for a Big-House Shakespeare production of *Julius Caesar* (you know, the play about republican values and political assassination!). This will be the final performance by the acclaimed prison theater company, *Shakespeare Behind Bars*, under the artistic directorship of Curt Tofteland, who has devoted the past thirteen years of his professional life to founding and single-handedly running this award-winning prison program (Tofteland is moving to Holland, Michigan, his new base of operations for the campaign for human dignity and social justice.) As one of the great if perverse Jacobean put it: "When the bad bleeds, then is the tragedy good...." Herold and his students are looking forward to some good blood.

Pamela Mitzefeld attended the 8th Annual Lilly Conference on College and University Teaching in Traverse City in September. She presented on "The Blogosphere: Using the Medium to Assist Students in Finding the Value of Voice." *(continued on p. 14)*

Student News

STEP Students Land Jobs

Graduates from the department's Secondary Teacher Education Program once again had tremendous success on the job market, a tribute both to the department and to Prof. Nancy Joseph's able stewardship. The department would like to congratulate the following students and wish them great success as they begin their teaching careers:

Jean Wood (Rochester High School); **Kelly Beck** (Jewish Academy in West Bloomfield); **Lauren Schley** (Madison Heights Lamphere); **Jianna Hair** (West Bloomfield); **Cynthia LaDuke** (Redford Academy); **Bridget Yaldou** (St Pius Southgate); **Ashley Hart** (Detroit Edison Academy); **Christina Palmeri** (Anchor Bay Schools); and **Suzanne Demey** (Lake Orion Schools). In addition, two students have been hired out of state: **Keith Crisp** (Florida) and **Ralph Hickmott** (South Carolina).

Student Plays Hit the Stage

We are also pleased to report a number of student successes in playwriting over the past year. The plays listed below were originally written in OU's Playwriting courses:

Franco Vitella was accepted into the Kennedy Center American College Theater Summer Intensive. His play, *Come Beauty*, won the Ann Arbor Civic Theatre's Playwriting Competition and received a staged reading as well as a full production in the Studio Theatre at Varner Hall.

Jackie Sue Salter's play *The Luck of the Irish* was performed in the Stagecrafter's Short Play Festival.

Matt Bell's play, *Everyone I Love You*, received a full production at the Lab. Theatre at Oakland University. The Lab. also hosted an evening of student written one acts, *An Error of Comedies*. Among the playwrights were English majors **Erin Downes** and **Linda Curatolo**.

For All the Tea in Boston, by current MA student **Jay Founé**, was produced at the Lab. Theatre.

Students Present Work at Meeting of Minds

The OU English department was once again well represented at the annual Meeting of Minds Undergraduate Conference, held this year on the OU campus. This year's group of English major presenters were:

Melissa Kasey, "Christine De Pizan: Battling Medieval Misogyny Through Language Manipulation"; **Erin Kott**, "Behind Every Great Man...Female Control in the Male First-Person Narration of 'The Big Sleep' and 'The Sound and the Fury'"; and **Chris Thomas**, "Narrative Desire and Futility in *Great Expectations*: Dickens' Narrative of Narrative." Susan Beckwith served as faculty advisor for Melissa, Erin, and Chris.

In addition, **Elizabeth Milam**, "The Lay of the Land: Nineteenth Century Racial Science and *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*," and **Paul Zink** spoke on "The Mysterious 'Ism'." Their faculty advisor was Jeffrey Insko.

Prof. Andrea Knutson also advised a student for MoM: **Kimberly-Joi Williams** for her paper, "A New Definition of Faith: Jonathan Edwards' Response to Thomas Shepard"; and Kyle Edwards served as faculty advisor for **Jen Whalen**, who spoke on "Darren Aronofsky: A Formalist Approach to Tracing Theme Through Cinematography."

MA Students Present Work at Conferences

MA students **Kellie Riddell** and **Kelly Mandeville** presented their work at conferences this year. At the Michigan Academy of Sciences and Arts, Kellie R. presented her paper, "Building Castles in the Air: Discipline and Punishment in *Little Dorrit*." At the same conference, Kelly Mandeville presented "Fashionable and Fatal Feasting: Big Dining in *Little Dorrit*." Kelly M. presented another paper, "Betraying Dinner: Improper Dining in *Little Dorrit*," at the 2008 Dickens Symposium at Kingston University in London in July. These papers were developed under the mentorship of Natalie Cole.

Department Welcomes New Teaching Assistant



New TA Andrew Reimann.

This fall, we welcomed a new Graduate Assistant, **Andrew Reimann**. Andrew comes to the MA program from California, where he taught high school English at Pittsburg High School in the San Francisco Bay area.

Before moving to California, Andrew attended high school at Rochester Adams and earned his undergraduate degree from Michigan State. Andrew says that he is "thrilled to join the dynamic staff at Oakland University and am equally excited to work with college students." Andrew is currently working with Rob Anderson in his British Literature course.

The English dept. is pleased to announce this year's outstanding group of scholarship recipients:

Werner Holzbock Humanities Scholarship

Audrey Burck

Mr. and Mrs. Roger Kyes Scholarship

**Dana McGee
Erin Downes**

Doris J. Dressler Scholarship

**Adrean Smith
Angie Walentovic**

Mary L. Otto Scholarship

**Ronda Pellerito
Carolyn Williams**

Cole Pope Scholarship

Elizabeth Milam

We once again thank the Kyes, Dressler, and Otto families, as well as Prof. Natalie Cole, for their generous support of our students.

At the Podium

(cont'd from page 12)

Nancy Joseph attended the International Reading Association annual convention in Atlanta and participated in a session titled "Adolescent Literacy: Policy into Practices and Practices into Policy."

Kyle Edwards presented a paper at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference in Philadelphia this March. It was entitled "A Sector of Service: B-Film Marketing and Series Filmmaking at Monogram Pictures Corporation."

Josh Yumibe presented "The Gendering of Color and the Coloring of Films: Female Film Colorists of the Silent Era" at Women and the Silent Screen V conference in Stockholm, Sweden this summer. He also gave a talk on "The Color Aesthetics of Progressive Art Education, from the 'Democratic Art' of Chromolithography to Early Cinema," and participated in panels on "Aesthetic Education and American Silent Film" at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies Annual Conference in Philadelphia. In addition, he presented "National Styles and

Circulations of Film Coloring during the Single-Reel Era" at the Border Crossings: Rethinking Silent Cinema Conference in Berkeley, California.

Jude Nixon presented "'[I]f all had bread': Hopkins, Nazareth House, and the Poor Law" as the The Feeney Lecture at the Hopkins International Conference in Dublin in October. At the same conference, he was also a panelist for The Oxford Editors. In July, he presented "Myth and the Organic: Carlyle's *Igdrasil* and Western Consciousness" at Reappraising Carlyle for Our Times at Villanova University.

Alumni Corner

Share your news! Send contributions to Susan E. Hawkins at hawkins@oakland.edu

Continuing an impressive recent run of acceptances, several English alumni have entered graduate school this fall:

Former OU Graduate Assistant **Lisa Czapski** is now in the doctoral program in English at Boston University.

Chinmayi Kattamalavadi has entered the doctoral program at Wayne State, where she will join fellow English alums **Justin Prystash**, **Rianna Amolsch**, and **Jane Asher**. Chinmayi also presented a paper on shame in *David Copperfield* at the Dickens Symposium in London in July 2008.

Jeff Klein has received a 5 year ride, with a TA to pursue his PhD at Michigan State University. He entered the program this fall.

Josh Corbin reports he had planned to attend the M.F.A. program at Columbia College in Chicago but changed his plans upon acceptance to the American Film Institute in Los Angeles. He entered AFI this fall.

Heather McMacken is now at the University of Cincinnati, where she was awarded a full tuition fellowship and a teaching assistantship beginning this fall.

Matt Bell entered the MFA program at Bowling Green this fall. For more on Matt's recent publications, see below.

Andrea Gilroy (Margetic) has begun the doctoral program in Comparative Literature at the University of Oregon with a full teaching assistantship.

Now in her second year at Wayne State, **Jane Asher** has received a teaching assistantship. Also, Jane's paper on shame in *David Copperfield* was delivered at the 2008 Dickens Symposium at Kingston University in London, Ontario in July.

In other alumni news:

Recent graduate assistant **Danny Runey** has been hired by Rochester College. He is currently teaching an online section of American Literature.

Joseph Bastian, BA '90, MA '97 announces his latest book *Big Boss Man: My Adventures in Mismanagement*, which he notes is "doing quite well. Please check it out at www.bigbossmanbook.com."

Patrick Bates (85) and **Tony Lucchi** (84) recently optioned a horror screenplay that they co-wrote to Triboro Pictures in New York.

Sarah Malczynski has been hired in the Communications and Marketing Department as a part-time employee. Sarah writes, "I'm so excited!" She will join fellow MA alum and Assistant Director of Media Relations **Michelle Moser** in the OU Marketing department.

Matt Bell's short story "Alex Trebek Never Eats Fried Chicken," originally published in *Storyglossia's* Fiction Prize Issue, has been selected as one of the Top Ten Stories of 2007 by StorySouth's Million Writers Award. Matt also has a story, "Mario's Three Lives," that will be reprinted in this year's Best American Fantasy anthology. Matt reports several other publications as well: "Creating a Radio" (published in *elima*, June 2008); "The Folk Singer Dreams of Time Machines" (published in *Smokelong Quarterly* #21, June 2008); "Like a Giant Beacon" (published in *Juked*, March 2008)..

Joy Gaines-Fiedler writes to say that her first book of poetry, *Like Vapor*, has been published by Mayapple Press in Bay City, Michigan. Joy reports that the book is available on amazon.com and from the [Mayapple Press website](http://www.mayapplepress.com). Joy writes, "I would like to publicly thank Springfed Arts, the Detroit area community organization whose mission is 'to educate and inspire...the craft of writing, be it prose or song, the performance of works, spoken or sung.'" Springfed Arts offers workshops and retreats that offer writers the opportunity to work with wonderful teachers, and involvement in a writing community.

Andrew Engwall published two poems in the Michigan-based online journal, *The Driftwood Review*.

Finally, **Mary Ann Samyn** writes to announce that her newest book of poems, *Beauty Breaks In*, will be published by New Issues in 2009

REPORT

Student Views of the MCTE Conference *by Kerri Cosgro and Adrean Smith***Kerri:**

On Saturday, April 12, 2008, I attended the Michigan Council of Teachers of English (MCTE) “Bright Ideas” conference at Michigan State University with Dr. Nancy Joseph (my ENG 398 professor) and a group of my peers. In addition to in-service teachers and college professors, there were many pre-service English teachers like myself in attendance. I felt like a real professional...on my way to becoming a teacher!

The keynote speaker for the conference was Chris Crutcher, the author of numerous novels for middle school and high school students. His comments on how to engage students in reading and help them develop their literacy skills were well presented and insightful.

After the keynote address, I attended three informational sessions along with my peers. The first session we attended was called “Hearing Voices: Engaging Students in Conversations about Their Lives Using Multi-Voiced Literature.” The second was “Best Practices Party for New and Pre-service Teachers,” thrown [presented] by OU’s own Professor Joseph. The third and final session of the day was “Integrating the English Language Arts through Dramatic Literature.”

It is difficult for me to pick a favorite session from the conference. All of the sessions were *very* interesting and informative. During the session about multi-voiced literature, we read excerpts from a young adult novel, *The Brimstone Journals*. The large group broke into smaller groups, and each group read from the perspective of one character. When we reconvened as a large group, we used context clues to attempt to figure out how all of characters’ lives/stories were interconnected. Young adult literature is so insightful. It is almost like delving into the lives and minds of potential students.

At the best practices party we learned some new instructional strategies that inspired us as pre-service teachers to be the best teachers that we could be. It was a lot of fun! We even jammed out to Charles Barkley’s “Crazy” and counted nouns and verbs – now how’s that for good, clean, educational fun!

Finally, the dramatic literature session showed us that ‘cold readings’ of plays can be brutal for students and teachers alike. There were two brave volunteers who got up and read a scene from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. They were instructed to read with a purpose and were given a secret motive to direct their interpretation of the story. Based on their individual motives, they read with passion and purpose, creating a sense of being at the theater. It was much better than a boring ‘cold’ reading of the play. Students could really breathe life into/better comprehend dramatic literature with the right instructional strategies.

Adrean:

The MCTE conference was a great experience for me as a future English teacher. I had the opportunity to be a student host, and I introduced Cathleen Clara, a teacher who discussed multiple voice books to expose students to different perspectives on life. Her seminar opened my eyes to different levels of books to use with middle school and high school students.

The main speaker at the conference, Chris Crutcher, talked about the censorship issues he faces with his books because he writes about the realities of teens’ lives. The most important statement that he made during his two presentations was that he would be available to defend his books when a teacher was fighting to use them, explaining that he recognized the important work teachers do in classrooms. Crutcher’s speech motivated me to buy many of his books and to look beyond the classics when selecting literature for adolescent readers.

As a future teacher, I learned that the sessions offered by the MCTE Conference can open possibilities for teaching ideas that could be used in my classroom. In addition, the conference allowed me to meet other English teachers. Each session brought a different perspective, demonstrating a variety of ways to teach and to engage students in learning. Acting, multiple voice books, games, music, and reading are a few examples of the activities that the sessions offered to teachers.

English Channel Archives available!

Missed an issue of the *Channel*? No problem. Just visit the English department [website](#), where you can download and read recent issues of the department newsletter. And while you’re there, you can also get information about upcoming events, contests and awards, view our photo gallery, send an email to a favorite former prof, and more.

APPEAL

The Department of English depends on the continuing contributions and support of our alumni and friends to fund community events like lectures and readings, to support student research and travel and to purchase special video and book materials for classroom use. We ask you to please consider making a contribution (which is tax deductible and doubly deductible for Michigan residents).

Thank you for your generosity!

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Professor Susan E. Hawkins, Chair
 Department of English
 Oakland University
 Rochester, MI 48309-4401

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