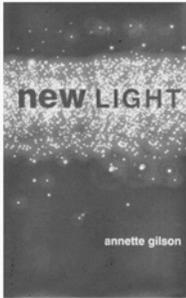


# The English Channel

The Alumni Newsletter of the Department of English

## Professor Gilson Publishes Debut Novel



Beth Martin wakes up one day feeling that she has wasted her life. She goes to Saint Louis to visit her college roommate and take some time to get her bearings.

But at a party she experiences what she can only call a vision. When she meets a neuroscientist who is researching vision phenomena, Beth accompanies him to New Light, a visionary commune in the Missouri Mountains where she meets its charismatic leader and is befriended by some of its members.

So begins Professor Annie Gilson's powerful debut novel *New Light*, published this spring by Black

Heron Press. Praising the novel for its "high standards of craft and art," National Public Radio's Alan Cheuse calls the novel "a lively and intelligent piece of fiction... that stands in the American line of fiction about utopian experiments which extends from Hawthorne's *Blithedale Romance* to the present."

The novel's publication and enthusiastic critical reception have kept Prof. Gilson busy, with public readings in Oakland County and in St. Louis as well as numerous interviews on radio and in print.

*New Light* is available locally at Barnes & Noble and Border's bookstores in Rochester Hills. Or for more information, please visit [www.annettegilson.com](http://www.annettegilson.com).

Success hasn't slowed Prof. Gilson down: she is now reviewing

books for *Publisher's Weekly* and has nearly completed her follow-up novel, called *A Book of Mirrors*.

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### LETTER FROM THE CHAIR by Kevin Grimm



Another summer has flown by and here on the fifth floor of Wilson Hall we are well advanced in our Fall semester. (Indeed, midterms are fast approaching!). We've had a busy start to the semester. First, I want to thank all of you who have e-mailed in news of yourselves. We have been delighted to hear from you and we hope to continue to get updates from those of you who have written already, as well as receiving new messages. On October 5th, we held the 19th annual Maurice Brown Memorial Poetry Reading, featuring Vijay Seshadri. The next day, we gathered to honor Professor Rob Anderson with the 11th annual Judd Family Faculty Achievement Award. Remember to check our website for other news and upcoming special events <http://www2.oakland.edu/english/>. Soon you will also be hearing about Oakland University's 50th anniversary in 2007. The University has begun planning a variety of events

to celebrate this significant milestone and will be launching an official 50th Anniversary Website in January. Keep tuned in as events are announced.

OU's first half-century will happen to coincide with a major transition for the Department of English, as well. At the end of this academic year, Distinguished Professors Jane Donahue Eberwein and Robert Eberwein will be retiring after over 30 years at Oakland University. All of you who have studied with either Professor Eberwein know just how much their devotion to their students and their profession has enriched the OU community and the Department of English.

As always, I encourage you to contact me with your news, questions, comments, whatever, at [grimm@oakland.edu](mailto:grimm@oakland.edu). Have a good autumn.

# “The cistern contains, the fountain overflows”

## Rob Anderson Receives Judd Family Faculty Achievement Award

On October 6th, English department faculty, students, alumni, and family gathered to honor Rob Anderson with the 11th 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, the Judd Award annually recognizes a faculty member for outstanding achievement in the areas that broadly define our professional mission: teaching, scholarship/ creative work, and service.

A specialist in the English Romantics, Prof. Anderson has published articles on the work of William Godwin; on Godwin and John Keats; on William Wordsworth; on labour and leisure in romantic literature; and on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and the writings of Robert Owen. Rob has also made numerous public presentations of his work. In addition to his stellar teaching and these traditional professional activities, Rob has been energetic in interacting with the students of OU as well as the larger community: organizing events like the annual Tax Day Poetry Bash, and speaking to high-school classrooms in Rochester, and to numerous community book-clubs and reading groups off-campus. Last year alone, he served as a facilitator for three community book groups

In presenting Rob with this year's award, Department Chair Kevin Grimm remarked, “the list of Rob's accomplishments gives concrete evidence of his

**“Rob has a rare capacity for a particular kind of sharing.”**

generosity and energy. But the resulting whole, the Robness that is Rob, far transcends the sum of those individual achievements. I think this is because Rob has a rare capacity for a particular kind of sharing. He recognizes the enthusiasms of others, and is able to express his own enthusiasms in ways that allow us to experience them as our own. Rob's devotion to literature, though thoroughly Romantic, finds expression in events and activities that not only allow, but encourage and even require, engaging the intensely personal and profoundly public qualities of literature.”

The plaque presented to the Judd Award recipient each year is inscribed with a quotation. For this year's award, Prof. Grimm turned to Rob's favorite poet, William Blake, who writes in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, “The cistern contains; the fountain overflows”-- a line which, as Prof. Grimm remarked, “captures some sense of the deep resources of love and knowledge which Rob shares with us every day



*Kevin Grimm presents Rob Anderson with the 11th Annual Judd Family Faculty Achievement Award*

### **What follows are Professor Anderson's heartfelt remarks upon accepting the award:**

On November 28, the 248th birthday of the British poet and printer William Blake, the English department sponsored its first annual “read-in.” Held at the Fireside Lounge of the Oakland Center, the event featured a continuous reading of Blake's epic poem *Jerusalem*. The reading lasted nearly seven full hours, attracting students, faculty, and curious on-lookers. Participants took turns reading ten minute blocks of the poem, while images from Blake's “illuminated manuscripts” were projected onto a screen for those watching and listening in the audience.

By the first years of the 19th century, William Godwin lived in a very strange family. There were 5 children in the household, no two of whom had the same parents. Godwin married Mary Jane Claremont, who brought with her two children from two separate fathers. Godwin brought with him two children, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, and Fanny Imlay, who was the child of Mary Wollstonecraft and Gilbert Imlay. Godwin and Mrs. Godwin, as his second wife was called, added to this another child, William Jr. By most accounts, Godwin was particularly devoted to Fanny Imlay, the child Mary Wollstonecraft brought to their marriage.

It is tempting to say that this unusual domestic arrangement worked its way into Godwin's writing. In his 1806 novel *Fleetwood* there is a story of a young Swiss boy who is sent to live with his uncle when his parents die. The selfish uncle sends him to work at a silk manufactory in Lyons. He finally escapes and flees to Paris where he hopes to find help from the king of France. Fortunately for him, a successful British merchant, the grandfather of the novel's protagonist, finds him, takes him in, and, establishes him comfortably in life. The British merchant explicitly says that

he feels for this child the same affection as he does for his biological offspring.

As a novel, Fleetwood is also deeply interested in the possibilities and limitations of friendship. Indeed, I would argue that the idea—and practice—of friendship as a way of imagining human relationships outside of the narrowing limits of the biological family is central to Romanticism in Britain and America. Mary Wollstonecraft calls friendship “the most holy band of society” and argues that friendship, not passionate love, should be the basis of the spousal relationship. It is hard to imagine that either Wordsworth or Coleridge could have produced their great works without their friendship. Keats and Percy Shelley, Shelley and Byron, Melville and Hawthorne, Thoreau and Emerson, all forged friendships which were crucial to their poetic careers. Indeed, friendships were vital to the lives as well as the poetry of all these writers we think of as individualists. The principle of friendship is equally important to Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and *The Last Man*. For these writers, friendship was not just a matter of mutual affection, but a way of imagining subjectivity. It also provided a means of imagining an egalitarian social network which fosters individual development and social support.

This may sound like an odd way of responding to this touching and generous offer of collegial recognition and affection but it speaks profoundly to my own sense of my belonging here. It gives me a way of articulating my embeddedness in the department. I think of this group as

**“I love the rituals of this most holy band.”**

“the most holy band.” I don’t know if we have available a word in English to describe the mixture of familial and friendship ties which band us together. The egalitarian

and affective nature of our relationship fosters individual development while instilling the reciprocal investment of each of us in the well being of the whole. No small portion of the pleasure I get from scholarship comes from imagining sharing the results with my colleagues. Part of that imaginary pleasure is the prospect of securing your approval, but even more significant, I think, is the pleasure of returning energy to one of the sources from which it flowed. The quality of that pleasure is not much different from learning about Carl Van Vechten and Waldo Frank, Jonathan Swift, Kathy Acker, James Fennimore Cooper, the war film, Charles Dickens, Emily Dickinson, Cormac McCarthy, the creative output of Ed, and Gladys, and Annie. We are a most holy band.

Even more, I love the rituals of this most holy band, symbolized in the lunch room. I love to hear Rosemary walk down the hall saying “It’s crunch and munch time” not because I get so much pleasure out of eating pretzels and yogurt, but because I get to enjoy the wit of my delightful colleagues. I used to joke that there was an almost oppressive pressure to join in the communal lunch. Now I spend my weekends storing up things to share at lunch and in the halls.

When, as an undergraduate, I dreamed of becoming an English professor, it was a dream of creating relationships with students like the ones I had with my own professors. I wanted to inspire and energize students the way I was inspired and energized. In my mind, becoming a professor

was a calling, not a job. I have no way of knowing whether I have had the kind of influence on students that I fantasized I would. I love teaching. I look forward to talking with students about poetry. It brings me joy and energy, and, as William Blake declared, “Energy is eternal delight.” However, I dreamed the wrong dream. The thing that I value most about my job is its jobness. I love coming to the office. I love talking with my colleagues. I love weekends as a break from the work week, but I love coming back to work. I love going down to the office in the morning to greet the bosses, Rosemary and Dana. I love the committee work. I love hiring new colleagues. I love my job.

**“Talking with students about poetry brings me joy and energy.”**

So I am extremely grateful for the recognition and approval embodied in this Judd Family Award.. It is at once humbling and a source of great pride for me. I appreciate the kindness of the Judd family, whose generosity extends well beyond the narrow limits of biology and touches the lives of people they haven’t met. Thank you.

Finally, my praise for the connections beyond biology doesn’t mean that I do not value my own little holy band. I appreciate their support and patience with my enthusiasm for my job. Not that this is any consolation, but I want them to know that I talk about them to my classes with as much enthusiasm as I talk about my classes and colleagues with them.



*Rob Anderson, with his family: his wife Betsy, sons Sam (right) and Jacob, and daughter Kate.*

**Past Judd Award Winners**

2006	Rob Anderson	2000	David Mascitelli
2005	Maureen Dunphy	1999	Bruce Mann
2004	Brian Connery	1998	Nigel Hampton
2003	Susan Hawkins	1997	Jane Eberwein
2002	Linda McCloskey	1995	Martha Hammel
2001	Bob Eberwein		

## TRAVEL NARRATIVE

# OU English Majors Go Transatlantic *by Brian Conmery*

On Saturday evening, February 24, 2006, 13 students, one game spouse, and I gathered in the Aer Lingus departure lounge at O'Hare airport. Twelve hours and 4,430 miles later, somewhat "gob-smacked" as the Irish say, we stumbled through Irish customs at the Dublin airport and onto the bus to our hostel.

It's said that the Irish attempt on Everest was valiant but that they ran out of scaffolding, and sure enough, as we drove into Dublin, cranes towered overhead and building after building was encased in scaffolding for construction of new wings or sandblasting and renovation of its grand 18th-century buildings. The historic General Post Office was covered with sheets of plastic, just as it had been when I last visited two years before. Driving down O'Connell St., students mistook this seeming state of disrepair for the consequence of a minor riot the night before at a public commemoration of the 90th anniversary of the Easter rebellion, of which we had received fragmentary accounts via cell phone calls from anxious parents just before our departure. Indeed, throughout the next week, one of the most enlightening educational experiences would be our reading newspapers and talking with Dubliners about the causes of the riots (which did, in fact, involve construction materials) and the continuing attempts to reconcile and honor both Unionists and Republicans who, in spite of contradictory political views and multiple casualties and deaths on both sides at the hands of the other, share a common history and a common land.

Accommodations had been somewhat tricky to come by because we were arriving on the weekend of the Six Nations Football Cup match (think Super Bowl) between Wales and Ireland, but we were happy with the Four Courts Hostel on Merchant's Quay, right on the Liffey in central Dublin, and it was a kick (pun intended) to share the hostel with enthusiastic sports fans from Wales and Scotland who broke into their team songs at the mere mention of a football or a pint.

No time was wasted for the next week; immediately upon arrival, we walked the streets of Dublin and toured Dublin Castle; on our first full day, we traveled to Newgrange (the site of a megalithic passage tomb), the ruins of Mellifont Abbey, and the Monasterboycce cemetery, getting a quick glimpse of the history of the country from the stone age pagans to the medieval monks who, according to Thomas Cahill, saved western civilization. A subsequent day in the city allowed us time to tour the National Library (with a very fine exhibit celebrating the publication of Joyce's *Ulysses*), the National Museum of History, and the Dublin Writer's Museum; we also had a personal tour of the Bank of Ireland (originally the first

Irish House of Parliament) and were thoroughly instructed by our historian guide about the ways in which the original Irish Parliament was subverted by the English. The evening was devoted to seeing *The Grown Ups* by Nicholas Kelly, a play satirizing the Americanization of Dublin, at the Peacock (the studio theatre in the basement of the Abbey).

The following morning we visited Christ Church Cathedral and St. Patrick's Cathedral (where Jonathan Swift served as the Dean for more than twenty years). The surprise hit of the morning, however, was a visit to Marsh's Library, adjacent to St. Patrick's; founded by Narcissus Marsh in the late 17th-century as one of the very first public libraries on the planet, Marsh's was initially stocked with what were then the great books of the western world, especially in science and religion; thus, when we visited, their exhibit on astronomy included first editions of Copernicus's and Galileo's published work. Acquisitions to the library stopped

in the mid-18th century; so in many ways, the library is a perfectly preserved early 18th-century center of learning. Students were charmed by Dr. Muriel McCarthy, the Keeper of the Library, who guided us around and charmed us with her unique combination of librarianly fussiness, Irish scholasticism, and Dublin bluntness. When she paused for a moment to show us a book borrowed by James Joyce while he was a student, including his signature on the sign-out card, there was an audible and universal intake of breath.

We traveled that afternoon to Sligo on the west coast, where we spent the following day touring Yeats country, including Drumcliffe cemetery, Glencar, and the Lake Isle of Innisfree, along with the surfing village of Strandhill. While I had warned students to bring rain gear, we were largely unprepared for snow— as were the locals. Schools were canceled, and the roads

we traveled were lined with delighted Irish children building

***"We possess rare photographs of a snow-covered Ben Bulben."***

snowmen, who gleefully pelted our little blue bus with snowballs. Our visits to the famous landscapes of Yeats' poems were consequently unique: we are in possession of most of the very few extant photographs of a snow-covered Ben Bulben. That evening we dined in the home of a local restaurateur and Yeats aficionado, whose dining room overlooks Lough Gill. Many of us repaired subsequently to a local pub (Fury's, owned by the traditional Irish band, Dervish) to hear renderings in the Sean-Nos style (i.e., Irish acapella) of traditional songs by locals who seemed ancient enough to have been around when the songs were initially composed.



*Professor Conmery's travel companions.*

*(Ireland, con'td)*

Upon our return to Dublin, everyone had the final day to do as they pleased, and, unconstrained by the imposition of my cultural and educational agenda, most headed immediately for the tour of the Guinness



*Brazen Head, our pub of choice.*

brewery; we met again in the evening for a farewell musical pub crawl. All agreed that the trip was fabulous, and we are all

grateful to the English Department (and its benefactors), the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Office of Academic Affairs for their support.

*Professor Connery's Irish literature course will be offered again in Winter 2007 and plans for another trip, Feb. 24 – March 4, are underway; some improvements are being negotiated, including a night in Galway and, possibly, a bicycle tour of the Aran Islands. Students and alums with time on their hands are welcome. The current anticipated overall cost is about \$1150 (plus airfare, currently about \$560), but depends on the number of participants. If you're interested, contact Prof. Connery at [connery@oakland.edu](mailto:connery@oakland.edu), or 248.370.2254; the website at <http://www2.oakland.edu/english/connery/lireland2007.html> will be updated regularly beginning in mid-October. An informational meeting will be held on Monday, Nov. 20, 4:30-6:00, in 126-127 of the Oakland Center; the deadline for placing a non-refundable deposit of \$250 is Jan. 15, 2007.*

## ESSAY

## The Academic Conference: Just Do It *by Natalie Cole*

My parents drove down to New Orleans from Baton Rouge to hear me give one of my first conference papers, at the Popular Culture Association Conference way back when right after I began my career at Oakland. Embarrassingly, my paper was on the relationship between primal scene fantasies (a child witnessing sex between its parents, as described by LaPlanche and Pontalis in *The Language of Psychoanalysis*) and the crime scene in detective novels by Dorothy L. Sayers, and there were my mother and father, sitting in the back row, watching as I faced the performance anxiety of all academics—delivering a conference paper to a new audience while testing new research waters. This was a definite do-over moment in my life. Now all my conference jitters are small potatoes compared to the ravaged land and lives of South Louisianians. Although I stumbled through parts of that paper and fumbled one of the questions afterwards, the experience leads me to these reflections about the importance of the conference experience for students thinking about entering the profession.

I have taught many students who were unsure about standing up in front of others to talk about their ideas in a classroom, and yet who emerged from the other side of a conference presentation with a wholly different feeling about this experience. This happens, I think, because conference presentations are not born overnight. Only in nightmares about performance anxiety, in which we dream we walk into an auditorium or a stadium, with no talk prepared, and start ad-libbing, do we face the horror of the entire absence of words to speak. Conferences, on the other hand, issue "Calls for Papers" six or twelve months ahead of time, and a student may write a particularly strong research paper in a winter semester class and revise it for presentation the following March; that leaves an additional 9 months time to fine-tune and follow-up on research leads that may have been overlooked during the semester. So, with adequate time to prepare, the anxiety of giving presentations in class and at a conference diminishes considerably. The more preparation, the better the performance. Students willing to put in the time, find that revising and digging further into a topic brings

a unique satisfaction all its own, as well as a taste of what graduate work will be like. Conferences also prepare students who want to be academics for the professional responsibilities of pursuing research, publishing that research, and presenting material in the classroom to students. For others, the experience is also intellectually enriching, builds confidence in presentation and public speaking skills, and gives practical experience in developing critical thinking and research skills.

Professors can help identify student work that seems particularly promising for development as a conference paper. Two regional conferences are easy to get to: The Meeting of the Minds (for undergraduates), and the Michigan Academy of Arts & Sciences (for undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty). Oakland is usually well-represented at both, especially by English Department students.

Conferences give students the opportunity to travel, to engage in the give-and-take of intellectual discussion in the Q&A period that comes after the presentation of a paper, and to hear the work of other scholars in the larger academic community beyond their own university. They also offer the possibility to form friendships and professional relationships that can last a lifetime.

A veteran of many conferences now, I've come a long way since those days in New Orleans when my parents were part of my audience. I've given many papers and learned how to get ready; equally important, I've learned that the pleasure of mentoring students through significant research projects can be as gratifying as the positive reception of one's own work. This August, as I sat in a lecture room at Queens University in Belfast, Ireland, and drank in my graduate student Jane Asher's forcefully argued, gracefully written paper on *Bleak House*, and as I listened to Jane answer questions from some eminent Dickens scholars, questions for which she was entirely prepared, my conference experience soared to a new high.

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*Professor Cole is currently teaching Dickens, among others, in courses on British and British Victorian literature.*

## News Shorts



### Whitman's *Leave of Grass* Featured at 2006 Read-In

On Monday, November 20th, the English dept. sponsored our 2nd Annual Read-In. This year's event featured a continuous reading of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* in the Fireside Lounge. Students, faculty, alumni and friends of the department took turns reading ten-minute blocks of poetry. Whitman published six editions of *Leaves of Grass* in his lifetime. The read-in celebrated the 1856 edition. This year's read-in was built on the success of last year's inaugural event featuring William Blake's epic poem, *Jerusalem*.

### Translation Workshop a Success

On September 19, the English dept. sponsored an event on literature and translation. The workshop featured 6 area translators and scholars who presented varying approaches to the creative side of translation. Representative languages included French, Polish, Greek, Romanian and German. The event, the brain-child of Visiting Professor **Doris Runey**, herself an accomplished translator of Romanian poetry.

### Gilson Tapped to Write Reviews

In yet another sign of her growing influence on the world of contemporary letters, **Annie Gilson** will be writing regular monthly book reviews for *Publisher's Weekly*.

### Mitzefeld Teams with Nissan

Special Instructor **Pam Mitzefeld** is currently teaching a series of report-writing seminars at Nissan Motors in Farmington Hills. Mitzefeld designed and now teaches the seminars, aimed at Nissan engineers and technical people. The seminars, for a diverse group of professionals from all over the world, focus on improving report-writing skills and reviewing writing fundamentals. For Mitzefeld, the experience has been rewarding. "It's been a great opportunity," she says, "but it also gives me a wealth of real-world scenarios to share with my business-writing students, and it makes me a better overall ENG 382 instructor."

### Seminar Brings STEP Graduates Back to Campus

Last April, Professor **Nancy Joseph** hosted our first ever New Teachers Seminar. This professional development event, sponsored by the Department of English, gave former STEP English majors the opportunity to share teaching ideas and review classroom strategies and materials. More than a dozen STEP graduates from 2005 and 2006 attended the event. **Mary DuBois**, supervisor of English interns, assisted with the seminar. Door prizes for the New Teachers Seminar were donated by Teachers Discovery.

### OU Hosts Maya Angelou

On October 2, **Kathy Pfeiffer** had the distinction of introducing guest speaker **Maya Angelou** at Meadowbrook Theater. A crowd of more than a thousand gathered to hear Angelou deliver a pastiche of song, poetry, anecdote, and story, all centered on the theme of "rainbow in the clouds." After the event, Prof. Pfeiffer and M.A. grad **Melinda Booth** spent some 30 minutes alone with Angelou conversing about the Harlem Renaissance and African-American literature.

### Cole Joins Michigan Academy

**Natalie Cole** has been elected to serve a two-year term as a member of the Executive Committee of the Michigan Academy of Arts and Sciences. Congratulations Prof. Cole!

### Faculty Team Competes in Detroit Free Press Marathon

For the third consecutive year, English dept. faculty competed in the Detroit Free Press Marathon 5-person relay. This year's team included **Brian Connery**, **Nancy Joseph**, **Kevin Laam**, and **Jeff Insko**. The team was led by Prof. Connery, who pulled double-duty, running the first two legs of the relay and completing the full marathon himself— all 26.2 miles. Way to go, Prof. Connery!



Professor Bruce Fleming

### Scholar Speaks on Literature and Global Politics

Professor **Bruce Fleming** of the English Department at the U.S. Naval Academy, presented a talk and discussion on Tuesday, November 14, at 4:00 p.m. entitled "Teach Globally, Think Locally," in Gold Room A of the OC. Professor Fleming is the author of *Why Liberals and Conservatives Clash* and *Annapolis Autumn* and a Fulbright Scholar for two years in Rwanda before joining the faculty at USNA in 1988. Fleming's talk was a stimulating blend of literary studies, politics, international relations, and the current state of academia.

## AUTHORS EXPLAINED...GEORGE GASCOIGNE *by Kevin Laam.*

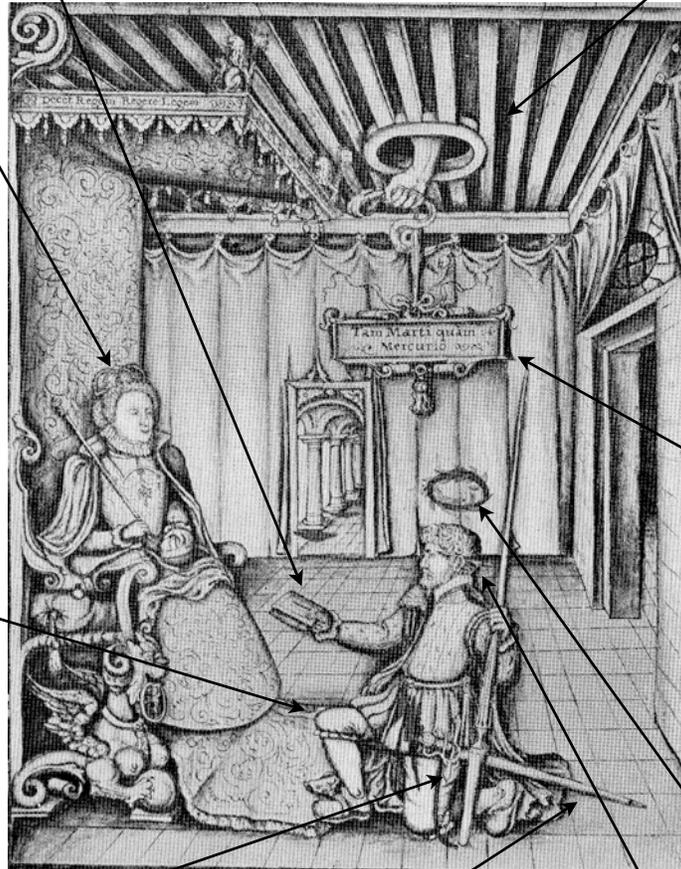
### A LIFE IN LETTERS.. AND LAWSUITS

In this 1576 frontispiece, the English poet George Gascoigne is shown presenting Queen Elizabeth I with a manuscript of "The Tale of Hemetes the Heremyte." The work was a romantic allegory that, by the poet's admission, announced his transformation from "Gascoigne the idle poet" to "Gascoigne the Satirical writer, meditating each Muse that may express his reformation."

While the smile on Elizabeth's face indicates that Gascoigne carried her favor brilliantly, his day-to-day dealings with the opposite sex were not so lucrative. In 1561 he married the well-to-do widow Elizabeth Bretton, who as it happened was still legally wed to her second husband, Edward Boyes. Gascoigne spent the next decade wrangled in legal disputes with both the Bretton and Boyes families, which likely prompted him to resume his legal studies at Gray's Inn in 1565.

Gascoigne kneels before Queen Elizabeth in the posture of the perfect courtier. The poet's aspirations of entering the royal court were first kindled in 1558, when he participated as an almoner in the coronation of Queen Elizabeth I. Gascoigne served in place of his ailing father, who later sued the other almoners for refusing to share the fees receivable for this honor.

Gascoigne sports both a spear and sword, perhaps to deflect attention from his ineptness with a trickier weapon: the crossbow. Gascoigne was an avid hunter but a notoriously poor marksman. In his most famous poem, "Gascoigne's Woodmanship," he admits that despite his best efforts, he "shoots awry almost at every mark."



In the poem accompanying this portrait, Gascoigne notes that his sword is not fully sheathed, suggesting his need to be on constant guard. He may have been wary of sudden attacks on his sheep. In 1568 he charged that his brother John Gascoigne, "being Riotously arrayed with swords Bucklers daggers staves and divers other kinds of weapons both invasive and defensive," had stolen his "tith lambes". John claimed that he was only following their mother's orders.

The pencil tucked behind Gascoigne's ear indicates his workmanlike approach to writing. Indeed, Gascoigne's body of work was immensely prolific; he produced lyric poems, plays, satires, prose fiction, translations, moral treatises, as well as the first work of English poetic theory, *Certain notes of Instruction concerning the making of verse or rhyme in English*.

The hand descending from the ceiling may suggest that Gascoigne's appearance before the Queen was a divine vindication for the long-suffering poet, among whose most fabled indignities was his disinheritance. It was long believed that Gascoigne's youthful indiscretions prompted his father, Sir John Gascoigne, to disinherit his son. It has since been determined that the conflict was over property, not proper morality. While father and son were not on good terms, George was not deprived of his inheritance—just lowballed.

Gascoigne fancied himself equal parts soldier and scholar, a reputation he burnished by adopting the motto *Tam marti quam Mercurio* ("As much Mars as Mercury"). True to form, he completed the final edits of his first major collection, *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres* (1573), from Holland while fighting in the Dutch wars.

The halo of laurel leaves perched above Gascoigne's head bespeaks a poet of sincere motives and impeccable virtue. The truth was not so flattering. Gascoigne may have wished to repair his image following the publication of his *Posies*, a volume of works whose occasionally salacious and slanderous elements famously riled the censors.

## MOVIE REVIEW

## Murderers, Fugitives, Thieves... Shakespeare Would Have Loved These Guys *by Niels Herold*

Permitted by a courageous prison warden to bring their cameras into Luther Luckett Correctional Complex in Kentucky, prize winning writer/director Hank Rogerson and his producer Jillan Spitzmiller filmed a theatrical company of inmates—in rehearsal for a production of *The Tempest* and in their dormitory cells where they become the prime subjects of searching interviews, later edited together by the filmmakers into confessional soliloquies. In front of the camera heinous crimes are graphically narrated, owned and repented: “this thing of darkness / I acknowledge mine.” As one of the actors submits, “The death scene in *Othello* (when Othello kills Desdemona) was similar to the crime I committed. I couldn’t think of my victim as a person then. I do now.”

At an early point during their year inside the walls, Rogerson and Spitzmiller discovered that their documentary would unfold as two different but profoundly related stories—an Elizabethan double plot of sorts. One of the remarkable achievements of the finished film is the way its different levels of plotting turn out to be mimetic of the double-play of tenses in *The Tempest*, a play in which the important action has already occurred and what fills the present is the intensive remembrance of crimes past. In other words, the self-revelatory soliloquies of the inmates about their previous lives operate on the production scenes for their staging of *The Tempest* the way *The Tempest’s* poetry of recollection does on Prospero’s special designs in Shakespeare’s play.

This invocation of time past in both film and play creates, then, an extraordinary experience of interiority and intimacy, as you suddenly find yourself in the presence of folks to whom you wouldn’t dream of giving the time of day. Watching this disturbing film re-draws the boundaries between us “gentles” and them—violent criminals. Through their wonderfully crafted and humane performances of the clowns Trinculo and Stephano, of the monster Caliban and spirit Ariel, and of Prospero himself and his daughter Miranda, we witness the personal suffering and moral redemption of human beings who once acted out their fears and rage at the very outer limits of irrational behavior.

What does it mean that William Shakespeare is the agent of these disturbing transactions?

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*On October 13, Professor Herold traveled to Luther Luckett Correctional Complex in Kentucky to observe the company rehearsing Measure for Measure.*

## POEM

## Amish Roadway

*by Ed Harworth Hoepfner*

A fat rain blunts  
against cobblestone, drops  
bursting into little crowns.  
It’s the rain of end, no princess  
rain, and princes disappearing  
in Allegany deluge. Not  
poverty: like the smell of bread.  
Trench rain, the earth mined  
as if it were wet pelvis  
drilled: marrow, the tiny prisons  
torn out. Here clouds  
go past like shadows  
of the trees we drive through,  
strobe-light, fusing on  
and off, each inflated  
as the rooms of childhood:  
the hallway cloud, cube of sleeping  
or, as tall ships carried  
cannon, underneath  
the eaves of every slewing  
barn we pass, wooden  
ladders hang and yawn.

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*Professor Hoepfner’s most recent collection of poems is Rain Through High Windows.*

# Faculty Notes

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## IN PRINT

**Kyle Edwards's** essay, "Brand-Name Literature: Film Adaptation and Selznick International Pictures' Rebecca (1940)," was published in the Spring 2006 issue of *Cinema Journal*.

Distinguished Professor **Jane Eberwein** published "Where -- Omnipresence -- fly?': Calvinism as Impetus to Spiritual Amplitude" in the *Emily Dickinson Journal* in 2005.

**Doris Runey** has co-translated a collection of poems from the Romanian poet Ion Bogdan Stefanescu's *Of Stones and Birds*.

**Jude Nixon** has received a research grant from the American Philosophical Society to assist his contribution to the 8 volume *Collected Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Prof. Nixon is responsible for Volume 5, *Sermons and Spiritual Writings*.

The current issue of the *Oakland Journal* features **Brian Connery's** essay, "Bigger/Better: Enrollment and OU's Vision 2010," as well reviews by **Professor Emeritus Brian Murphy** on new poetry and books on John Lennon. The forthcoming Winter 2007 issue of the *Journal* will include **Natalie Cole's** review essay on crime, detective and suspense fiction: Ruth Rendell's *Thirteen Steps Down, End in Tears*, and Barbara Vine's *The Minotaur*.

## AT THE PODIUM

Emily Dickinson, the famously homebound poet from Amherst, Massachusetts, continues to keep **Distinguished Professor Jane Eberwein** on the move. Eberwein was in the poet's hometown in October for Emily Dickinson's World, the biennial bed and breakfast weekend sponsored by the Unitarian-Universalist Society of Amherst. Eberwein will deliver the keynote address on "Emily Dickinson as Reader's Friend."

Back in August, Eberwein traveled to the University of Maryland campus for the annual meeting of the Emily Dickinson International Society. A new feature of that program was an hour-long conversation in which Professor Martha Ackmann of Mount Holyoke College interviewed Eberwein about her research and teaching interests. Finally, in November, Eberwein will chair a round-table on "Women, Monsters, and Freaks: American Poetesses, Authoresses, and Savants in the Nineteenth Century." at the Society for the Study of American Women Writers international conference in Philadelphia.

**Rob Anderson and Jeffrey Insko** presented "The Hourglass Contemned: Time and Labor in Blake and Whitman" at the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism annual conference at Purdue University in August. The collaborative project grew out of a seminar the pair team-taught last year called "Blake verses Whitman." This semester, they are teaming up again for a course on "Transatlantic Romanticism."

**Rob Anderson** delivered "The Calamity of Labor: Godwin and Romantic Leisure" at the International Conference on Romanticism in Arizona State in November.

Also in November, **Kyle Edwards**, attended the Literature/Film Association Conference in Maryland. He will speak on "Warner Bros., Efficiency and Film Adaptation: Recycling The Maltese Falcon, 1931-1941"

**Susan Hawkins** attended the American Literature Association's Symposium on American Fiction, held in San Diego, September 28-30. As part of the Cormac McCarthy Society's panel on the writer's latest novel, she delivered a paper entitled "Chronicles of the Late World: Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*."

**Rachel Smydra's** paper "Problems and Solutions Regarding Online Exams as Assessment" has been accepted for the 2006 Academic Integrity Conference to be held at the University of Boulder, Colorado.

Last August, at the 2006 Dickens Symposium in Belfast, Ireland, **Natalie Cole** presented "The river that ran with us:: *Great Expectations*, the Road Movie"

Last July, **Gladys Cardiff** read her poetry for a Springfed Arts - Metro Detroit Writers sponsored program entitled "Poetry at the Opera House: An Evening of Michigan Poets". She was also the featured reader at Central Washington University for the President's Performing Arts Series on October 3. The title of her reading was "The Paths From Every Direction."

**Doris Runey** recently returned from a research trip to Romania, funded by the URC, the English dept. and the Office of the Provost for her current translation project: *Selected Short Stories by Ion Luca Caragiale*. In November Prof. Runey will present a paper on self-translation of original poetry in Romanian to English at the SMLA Conference in North Carolina.

Currently on sabbatical, **Kathy Pfeiffer** reports that research for her biography of the 20th-century writer Waldo Frank continues apace. She has had several conversations with Frank's eldest son, now 84, and has been reading Frank's letters and tracing the events of his young adulthood. Frank's long and varied life included friendships with Charlie Chaplin with, Fidel Castro, Alfred Stieglitz, Sherwood Anderson, Earl Browder—a remarkable list

# Student News

## Join Sigma Tau Delta

Attention English Majors and Minors: are you interested in literature, writing, and good conversation with students and faculty? If so, check out Sigma Tau Delta and the English Club! Sigma Tau Delta, the English Honor Society, has many exciting things planned for this semester, including a writing contest, dinner and movie nights, and community service opportunities. In addition, Sigma members have the chance to win members-only scholarships and to be published in one of the international organization's literary journals. Being a member of an honor society also looks great on resumes! To join Sigma, students must have completed two English courses, at least three semesters of college coursework, hold a 3.0 GPA overall

and in English classes, and be within the top 35% their classes.

## 2006-07 Scholarship Winners

Last Spring, the English dept. announced the 2006-07 student scholarship winners. The Doris J. Dressler Scholarship was awarded to **Jason Kallicragas** and **Kerri Cosgro**. **Rachel Banner**, **Jianna Hair**, and **Christina Fontana** were awarded the Mr. and Mrs. Roger Kyes Scholarships, and **Winniefred Rockentine** and **Therese Shmina** received the Eva L. Otto Scholarship for outstanding nontraditional students. The department congratulates this year's fine group of students and thanks the Dressler, Kyes, and Otto families for their generosity and support.

## Swallow the Moon Seeks Contributing Writers

The OU Student Writers' Group welcomes submissions of original student writing for its literary journal *Swallow the Moon*. The deadline for submissions is November 30. For

more information, visit their website at: [http://geocities.com/student\\_writers04](http://geocities.com/student_writers04)

## Department Welcomes New Teaching Assistant

First year graduate student **Danny Runey** has been awarded a teaching assistantship. Danny graduated from OU last year with an English major. He joins Lisa Czapski as one of our two TAs.

## Michigan Academy Conference Set for March

The Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters annual conference will be held March 9-10, 2007 at Ferris State U in Big Rapids, Michigan. Presentations are 10-15 minutes long, followed by discussion. Students and faculty, many from OU, will present papers on a range of topics. More information on the conference can be found at the Academy website: [www.alma.edu/michiganacademy](http://www.alma.edu/michiganacademy).

## ON THE ROAD: REFLECTIONS OF AN ASPIRING SCHOLAR by Jane Asher

When I returned to my seat after giving my paper at the 2006 Dickens Symposium in Belfast, Ireland, I knew why I had spent my entire summer laboring over Bleak House and Kristeva.

At that moment, I heard the applause of individuals whom had spent entire lifetimes reading, studying, and publishing on Dickens. I received smiles and looks of approval from Dickensians whose work I had read and studied all year. Professor Cole leaned over and whispered to me, "You rocked."

It didn't matter that I couldn't feel my arms or feet, that my mouth was as dry as cotton. My 19-hour detainment at Heathrow was now just a blur. The previous months that I had spent researching, writing, and worrying culminated in the moment I realized that I didn't have to fear the question and answer session that followed. I knew my stuff, completely—genuinely. For the first time in my life, I felt like a bit of an expert.

That taste of expertise, even in something as specific as Esther, the brickmaker's family, Guster, and abjection, cultivated the desire for more. I knew without a doubt that in the future I needed that scholarly confidence and



*Prof. Cole and Jane Asher in Belfast.*

knowledge on a daily basis. More than ever, I felt a drive to earn a Ph.D. and teach at a university—to join the Literary Elite, to be one of the professors who possesses a passion and extensive knowledge of their specific field.

My experience at The Dickens Symposium—the individuals I met, the papers I heard, the UK culture I encountered—was just what I needed at this point in my life. Doubts about my ability to receive a Ph.D. and later a tenure-track position no longer plague me. If after only a year of research I can handle difficult questions from distinguished international scholars, I can

only imagine what I'll be able to accomplish in five more.

I am forever grateful to Professor Natalie Cole and to my new Dickensian friends. Call it a conference high or call it a revelation. Whatever it is, it will never cease challenging and beckoning me to its edge.

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*Jane Asher is currently completing a Master's project and applying to graduate schools.*

# Alumni Corner

***The English Channel* aims to keep you informed of the latest happening up on the fifth floor of Wilson Hall. "The Alumni Corner" is your chance to share news about what you are up to. We're pleased to say that this Alumni Corner is our beefiest yet. So please keep the contributions coming. Send your news to Prof. Grimm at [grimm@oakland.edu](mailto:grimm@oakland.edu)**

M.A. graduate **Nancy Ellison** reports "I enjoyed the recent edition of your newsletter, 'The English Channel'. I live in the Dallas area with my 4 kids. I enjoyed the articles, as well as Kathy Pfeiffer's essay about the impact that studies in English Literature can have on one's life and career in this technology-oriented society. I can certainly attest to that!"

"I was a T.A. in the English Department and then an Associate Instructor at another university. The job market for college instructors or professors in English Literature is never good and is sometimes downright dismal, so I changed careers. I was a Ph.D. student in English Literature with a minor in Renaissance Studies facing the prospect of becoming an 'academic nomad' -- short, non-tenure assignments at various colleges. During the struggle to change from a person with English Literature degrees to a computer programmer and systems engineer, I did actually question the time I spent as an English Literature major, imagine that. However, I eventually came to a different conclusion!"

**Alisa Clapp Itnyre, '89**, is teaching English literature and children's literature at Indiana University, East. During her sabbatical this fall, she is traveling and doing research in England.

**Joanne Chiu** is enrolled in the M.A. Mental Retardation/Autism program at Teachers College, Columbia U.

**Jeff Klein**, another graduate from the M.A. program has had an essay on Thomas Lynch, which began its life as a Master's project accepted for publication in *The Journal of Arts and Religion* published at Notre Dame.

**Dan Lafferty**, a 2004 STEP graduate with an English major, was recognized as "Rookie Teacher of the Year" by Gray Middle School in Groveland, Florida. Dan recently married fellow teacher Susan Marshall, and they make their home in Mascotte, Florida. Congratulations and best wishes!

Several STEP graduates have accepted teaching positions in other states: **Monique Garrison**, **Kim Majewski**, and **Kelly Duffy** in Florida; and **Andrew Doman** in Georgia. Several other STEP graduates secured local teaching positions: **Lauren Wummel**, Algonac Schools; **Mike Jones**, Clintondale Schools, **Sandra Evans**, Charter School-Detroit; **Jennifer Jahn**, Utica Schools and South Lake Schools.

**Rianna Amolsch**, BA '05 has just started her first semester of graduate school in English at Wayne State University.

B.A. graduate **Joy Gaines Friedler** writes to share lots of news: "Congratulations to the new faculty – Kyle Edwards and Kevin Laam! I think you have landed in a wonderful location. I've recently been reading my daily journals, kept while an English Major at O.U. from 2000-2005. A continuous theme was threaded throughout: I loved, and was inspired by, my teachers. I loved the accessibility, intelligence and proficiency of the faculty and staff of the English Department. And, I appreciated the enthusiasm they brought with them to the study of literature. Susan Hawkins became my mentor and I will be forever grateful to her.

"How can you not love the name Annie Gilson? And who wouldn't feel at ease in her classroom, grappling with the meaning of a passage by Virginia Woolf or James Joyce, while she sat comfortably on top of her desk. Gladys Cardiff, a fabulous poet, worked closely with me sculpting and molding my work into meaningful and concise language. What a jewel on campus.

"I recently applied to the MFA in Creative Writing program at The University of Michigan. I was not accepted into the program (15 spots for 400 applications) but the fact that I could even apply was an honor for me. I work at Oakland Community College as a group facilitator in the Developmental English Program. I work in the classroom helping students who have not quite reached college level reading and writing skills become more efficient and more inspired readers and writers. I also tutor privately.

"In terms of my craft, I am constantly writing. I have had fifteen poems published in literary magazines throughout the country in the last three years (including those featured in *Swallow The Moon* out of Oakland University) and am currently putting together a manuscript for a chap book. I miss studying and look forward to a chance to go to grad school someday."

Add to this a final, late-breaking bit of news: *The Litchfield Review* has recently awarded Joy first place in their summer contest (\$250) for a seven poem series about her friend, Jim, who died from AIDS. Their comment to Joy was stellar. "We received many fine submissions in all genres, but your work touched us and reminded us of the truth of Wilbert J. Levy's definition of poetry: 'Poetry is the keenest perception of experience and the rendering of that perception in the most richly articulate language.'" Congratulations, Joy!!!

**Kathryn Rice, BA '99** graduated from Cooley Law School in September '05, sat for the February 2006 Michigan Bar, and will be sworn in on May 18th. She adds, "I'm still an English major at heart, though! Continuing to read literary works during law school kept me sane, though literature and law together may have wrecked my eyes."

Recent M.A. graduate **Rachel Fellows** has just begun her first semester teaching at Davenport College.

**Sandra Merriweather** continues to teach a range of classes at Henry Ford.

M.A. graduate **Jenny Toms** has begun her first semester in the PhD program at MSU

## New Faculty Edwards, Laam Settling In



Despite the coming winter, new faculty members Kevin Laam and Kyle Edwards, who come to us from California and Texas, respectively, are settling into their new positions.

Kyle, who was also married just before the new semester, is teaching courses on film adaptation, and the history of Warner Bros. studios. He describes his first weeks here as "hectic and exciting," adding "I have been

gratified to meet Oakland's students and impressed by their dedication and thoughtfulness in the classroom."

In addition to teaching courses on lyric poetry and 17th century British poetry, Kevin recently became the newest member of the department's marathon team, running a swift 5-mile leg in the Detroit Free press Marathon. "I am thrilled to be here," Kevin reports, "and my students have already proven to be first-class, not to mention charming."

The department once again extends its heartiest welcome to them both!

### Also in this issue

#### ***New Light***

Annie Gilson releases debut novel

#### ***Cistern and Fountain***

Rob Anderson earns 2006 Judd Award

#### ***Speaking Jitters***

Cole on the academic conference

#### ***Shakespeare Behind Bars***

Herold on Convicts and the Bard

#### ***Gob-smacked***

A travel narrative by Brian Connery

#### ***Amish Roadway***

A poem by Ed Haworth Hoepfner

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