

Department of English Newsletter -- Spring 2009, No. 2

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EVENTS and DEPARTMENTAL NEWS

This semester's **MA TESOL Conference** will take place on Friday, May 8. All are invited to a full day of presentations by the spring graduates. Presentations will focus on a variety of topics, including helping students overcome anxiety, integrating reading and writing in post-secondary ESL, and teaching composition to Generation 1.5 students. For more information, see the conference website at <http://nowsf.net/sfsumatesol>.

Antonin Dvořák in Spillville, Iowa--Summer, 1893. A celebration with The Alexander String Quartet playing Dvořák's String Quartet in F Major ("America"), and selected readings from Patricia Hampl and Josef Škvorecký. Friday, May 15, 2009, 2 pm, in HUM 133. (Sponsored by the English Department; please call 338-2264 if you have any questions.)

The department will host a **reception honoring students in the department** for their achievements on Thursday, May 14 in HUM 203, 3-5 p.m. Department faculty are welcome to come and enjoy this more personal tribute to students in English who have won scholarships and awards this year.

On **Commencement Day**, May 23, the English and Creative Writing departments will hold a reception for graduates and their families and friends immediately following the main ceremony in HUM 111. The presence of faculty means a great deal to our new graduates!

The celebration in honor of Steve Arkin, Gayle Davies and Tom Scovel will take place on Friday, June 5 at Seven Hills Conference Center, 4-7 p.m. Please send a message to junefifth.2009@gmail.com to *RSVP* or to request more information.

Dolora Cunningham, Professor Emerita, has generously endowed a new scholarship to be awarded annually to a graduate student in the literature program. Dolora taught courses in Renaissance literature in the department for many years.

FACULTY AND STAFF ~ NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

Peter Welter, Professor Emeritus, has been publishing his work this year. "Stalking Quentin Compson" in *Clapboard House* (February); three long poems, "Saipan," "Jake," and "Pilgrim" in *Vitruvius Journal* (April); an e-chapbook titled "Laguna Beach: After Shelter," in *Barnwood International Poetry Mag* (February); and, forthcoming is a volume of poetry, *From a Lost Faust Book*, from Finishing Line Press in October.

Jennifer Arin's essay on using *The New Yorker* in English 414, "A Matter of Course," has been accepted for publication by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Special thanks to Anita Cabrera, Meg Schoerke and Mary Winegarden for their input. Also, Jennifer's recent pedagogy paper, "Arts & Letters Revisited," has been solicited for inclusion in the book *Teaching Creative Writing to Undergraduates: A Resource and Guide for Fountainhead Press* (forthcoming 2010).

Jennifer Trainor was invited to post an essay on diversity to CCCC's "Conversations on Diversity" blog. The title of the essay is "Talking Back to Contemporary Multicultural and Whiteness Pedagogies." Jennifer will also present a paper titled "Creating an Online Home: Domesticity, Literacy, and Conservative Christian Bloggers" at this year's Computers and Writing conference.

Elana Dykewomon has been elected to the Hormel Advisory Committee to the San Francisco Public Library. She will attend the Saints & Sinners Literary Festival in New Orleans in May to read and to receive the Duggins Outstanding Mid-Career Novelist Award. In conjunction with the release of her new novel, *Risk*, she spoke at San Diego State University in late April. Elana is also due to give a reading at the BJE SF Jewish Library on May 6th; perform at the QCC National LGBT Festival with Jewelle Gomez on June 3rd; and, read at Modern Times on Valencia on June 24th.

At the April Western Regional EDUCAUSE Conference, **Amy Love** presented "Navigating the Digital Landscape with the Net Generation" with Lisa Ho and Mig Hoffmann of the Division of Information Technology, Yolanda Gamboa of Counseling and Psychological Services and Maggie Beers of Academic Technology. Two of Amy's articles on Universal Design for Learning were reprinted in the April newsletter for the Design for All Institute of India. And, Amy just learned that she won a position as a Faculty Associate with CTFD in the fall; she will assist with the expansion of Universal Design Learning (UDL) on the campus, and with the implementation of other ongoing projects. Amy and **Jerome Schwab** expect their freshman composition reader, *Changing Society: Readings for the Engaged Writer*, to be available from Pearson in August. Although publication was delayed because of the current state of the economy, the extra time allowed them to add an article on the Obama phenomenon in the chapter on youth civic engagement.

George W. Tuma, Professor Emeritus, is editor of *Medieval Forum*, a website for scholarship in Middle English literature and related studies. A special edition, "Harken to Me: Middle English Romances in Translation," was issued early this year. *Medieval Forum* was previously a journal, and past volumes of articles can be accessed on the website, which is co-edited by Dinah Hazell and hosted by the SFSU English Department: <http://www.sfsu.edu/~medieval>.

News of **Bernice Biggs**, Professor Emerita, came to light recently. The Democratic Women's Forum awarded Professor Biggs its 2007 Eleanor Roosevelt Award. In addition to noting her 43 years at SFSU, the announcement on DWF's website recognized her as being a leader in establishing the Women Studies Department here, as well as being a founding member of the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library.

At the annual meeting of the Friends of the Leonard Library at SF State, **Manfred Wolf**, Professor Emeritus, will read from his new book, *Almost a Foreign Country*. The date is May 7, in Science 270, beginning at 3 p.m. Also, on May 11, at 7:30 p.m., at the Noe Valley Ministry, Professor Wolf will give a joint reading with Professor **Maurice Bassan**, who will be reading from his new book, *Twice Told Poems*. Both Professors Wolf and Bassan have also given separate readings at the Fromm Institute for Lifelong Studies. Bev Voloshin adds that Professor Wolf was interviewed recently by Michael Krasny on KQED's *Forum*.

Julie Paulson gave papers on medieval drama at the Medieval Association of the Pacific's Annual Meeting at the University of New Mexico in March, and at a conference entitled "After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth Century England" which was held at the University of Oxford in April.

Rachelle Waksler has been elected president of SFSU's chapter of Phi Beta Kappa.

Bruce Avery and **Bev Voloshin** have been involved in establishing the San Francisco Teachers Institute, a collaboration among SFSU, the University of San Francisco, and the San Francisco Unified School District. The SF Teachers Institute is affiliated with the Yale Initiative to Support Teaching in the Public Schools.

Emily Merriman has published a book review of *Soundings: Hopkins Studies in Transition* in the latest edition of *The Hopkins Quarterly*. Also, Emily's essay "'Redeemed Swots': Geoffrey Hill's Pedagogically Touched Poetry" has been published in *LISA* e-journal, 7.3 (2009) (*Littératures, Histoire des Idées, Images, Sociétés du Monde Anglophone*) as a contribution to a Festschrift honoring René Gallet.

NEWS ABOUT CURRENT AND FORMER STUDENTS

Pamela Vanhaitsma (Composition) will present "Class Matters in Composition: Constructions of 'Basic Writer' and 'First-Generation College Student,'" as part of the Identities Intersecting in the Teaching of Writing Panel at the Working Class Studies Association Conference, to be held at the University of Pittsburgh in June. Pamela will enter a Ph.D. program in English at the University of Pittsburgh this fall, and this summer will do a research internship there that is funded by her Sally Casanova Pre-Doctoral Fellowship from the CSU.

At CATESOL's annual convention in Pasadena, **Keith Anderson**, **Ian Stuart** and **Dina Wilson**, graduate students in TESOL, along with **Gail Weinstein** and **Maricel Santos**, participated in a symposium for community-based educators who want to bring learner-centered principles into the fabric of their teaching, curriculum and program design. Keith, Ian and Dina presented materials they have developed on family and health literacy in English 735, and discussed their experiences as participants in this collaborative process.

Matt Hammill (TESOL) will begin doctoral work at Arizona State University this fall under Paul Kei Matsuda in second language writing, linguistics, and rhetoric/composition.

Barton Creeth (Literature) has been accepted to Yale Divinity School and the Institute of Sacred Music at Yale University, where he will study for a Master of Arts and Religion degree. Barton has been awarded a full fellowship.

Avram Mendelson (Literature) was accepted to Brandeis University's Ph.D. program in English, with a fellowship.

We noted in the last newsletter that **Garrett Morrison** (graduate work in literature) was offered a fellowship for doctoral work in English at Northwestern. Since then Garrett has also been offered a fellowship at Iowa; he has decided on Northwestern.

In March, **Jasmine Kitses** (M.A., 2004, and former Lecturer) presented a paper at the Suffolk University Conference on "James Baldwin: In His Time, In Our Time," essentially a consideration of Baldwin as a Beat writer, with emphasis on "Sonny's Blues."

Dinah Hazell (M.A. '93) has a book forthcoming this summer, *Poverty in Middle English Literature: the Meene and the Riche*, published by Four Courts Press. She is also co-editor of *Medieval Forum*, a website hosted by the SFSU English Department.

Eileen Herrmann-Miller (M.A., '85) is co-editing a book of essays on Eugene O'Neill, titled *O'Neill's Bohemians, Radicals and Progressives: Essays on the Playwright's Contemporary Lefties*, to be published by McFarland Press in Spring 2010.

Steve Arkin, Gayle Davies and Tom Scovel are retiring this year after many years of service to the department and the university.

We thank Bruce Avery, Elise Wormuth, and Rachelle Waksler for composing the tributes on the following page.

After 32 years as Professor, Chair, mentor, and colleague, Steve Arkin is retiring. The third floor office corridor will never be the same, nor will San Francisco State.

He came west from Yale in 1967, just in time for the struggles of the sixties. The department was divided; he marched outside anyway because he believed it was the right thing to do, got fired for his trouble, and came back to form the foundation of the Literature Program. He stood for Chair, was elected, and stayed there--fending off administration outrages, nurturing promising students, disciplining the bad ones, and working through lean times to eventually rebuild the department--for nineteen years. Throughout he maintained his legendary humor, his passion for books and conversation, and his affection for his colleagues and students.

He has always seen SF State as a place where people who'd lost their way, or who'd gotten a late start, or who didn't come from a educated family, or who were just stragglers--people like me, for example--could find a book or an idea to get excited about, and learn enough to pursue that excitement out in the world. After 32 years, there are dozens and dozens of us now, perhaps more, in whom Steve took an interest and then gave a nudge or a word at just the right moment to set us on a path we would not have otherwise found. We are all, to put it mildly, grateful.

As is most everyone in the Department, on nearly every facet of which lies a trace of Steve's fingerprints. Thanks Steve, for all you've done, and best wishes for a lively retirement filled with friends, great food, trips to France, and all those books you've been wanting to get to. (B.A.)

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*The retirement of Gayle Davies will leave a space in the Composition program that will be hard to fill. Gayle has been with us since 1977, when she completed the course sequence that prepared her to teach composition. In the intervening years, she has taught the full range of courses, served on many essential committees, continued her own process of professional development and contributed to that of others.*

*Gayle brought to her teaching and to the program traits that reflect her Midwestern upbringing – kindness, a strong sense of responsibility to both program and students, the ability to get along with a wide variety of people, and a fundamental decency that is apparent from the first time you meet her. She has over and over again stepped up to contribute to the program in any way in which she was needed, and we have been grateful for that. The many reviews she has done of colleagues and new instructors over the years have focused on the person's strong points, while gently directing them toward ways in which they might improve.*

*We hope that in retirement, Gayle can return to her first love – poetry – and we look forward to attending readings of her new work. She will be greatly missed by all of us. (E.W.)*

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Thomas Scovel is a distinguished researcher whose work is wildly impressive in every measurable dimension of scholarship. His four books and over fifty scholarly articles demonstrate a majestic record of publication in theoretical linguistics, applied linguistics, and neurolinguistics. He has served as president of the largest association in his field, AAAL (American Association of Applied Linguistics), an honor which signifies the highest esteem of one's colleagues. Tom has also given over 300 (three hundred!) conference presentations and invited lectures throughout North America, Asia, and Europe.

Tom was born in China, attended high school in India, and taught at universities in Thailand and China before joining the faculty at SFSU in 1983. Here, he has taught courses in linguistics, ESL, psycholinguistics, pedagogical grammar, second language acquisition, and TESOL methodology.

As a colleague, Tom is generous with his time, his intellectual energy, and his spirit. His contributions to our discipline have reflected distinction onto San Francisco State University for the past 26 years. We are very pleased and proud to honor Tom's remarkable career. (R.W.)

2008-2009 Honors and Awards Recipients

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH UNDERGRADUATE HONOREE
CHRISTOPHER VANDERSTOUWE LANGUAGE STUDIES**

GRADUATE STUDENT AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT

**JORDAN HAYES LITERATURE
SARAH PESAVENTO TESOL
TUANGPORN SRISOMPOTE TESOL
PAMELA VANHAITSMA COMPOSITION
SUSANNA WILLIAMS LITERATURE**

**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES GRADUATE HOOD RECIPIENT
JORDAN HAYES**

**ASW SCHOLARSHIP
MAY WHITAKER**

**DEBRA PLOUSHA MOORE & JOHN E. MOORE JR. SCHOLARSHIP
MAISHA JOHNSON, SHEREE CHRISTENSEN, LENA-NSOMEKA GOMES**

**JIM BROGAN – JACK POST SCHOLARSHIP
MAISHA JOHNSON**

**JAN GREGORY POSTSECONDARY READING AND COMPOSITION
SCHOLARSHIP
CAROLINE PRIETO**

**JIM KOHN SCHOLARSHIP
JENNIFER CHAPIN, MADISON LEE, JANG JOO SUN, JEONG YON YANG**

**MAURICE AND ELLANORE BASSAN ENGLISH DEPARTMENT SCHOLARSHIP
JESSICA YOUNG**

**R. JOEL DORIUS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP
MARGARET SNYDER**

**RANDALL NAKAYAMA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP
JORDAN HAYES, CHRIS WILSON SIMPKINS**

**TESOL/GANT SCHOLARSHIP
JOHN CHEN, DAICHI SHIRAISHI, MIN SONG, TIEN TRAN**

**JUDITH ANNE OTT SCHOLARSHIP
CHRIS WILSON SIMPKINS**

**EDWARD B. KAUFMANN SCHOLARSHIP
BARTON CREETH**

**JIM WHEARTY PRIZE
VERONICA ENSMINGER
HEATHER GENDRON
JOHN PAYNE
BONNIE VALENTINO**