

WORDS³

Polonius: "What do you read, my lord?"
 Hamlet: "Words, words, words."

Volume 1, Issue 2

Spring 2008

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
 Department of English Language and Literature

MA Graduate's Research Gaining Notice in Iceland

Early in 2005 my literary research caused a stir in Iceland when I procured declassified FBI files that proved Nobel Prize winning Icelandic writer Halldor Laxness was blacklisted and a victim of the communist witch hunt which began in the late 40's and lasted until the mid 50's. Declassified FBI documents showed that J. Edgar Hoover had authorized the surveillance of Laxness both in the United States and in Iceland. Although initially cooperative, the FBI and the CIA have resisted turning over all of the documents. The State Department, after a high level review in mid-2007, informed me that the release of the documents would jeopardize national security.

Late in 2007, the office of Senator Barack Obama attempted to assist me in procuring the missing



Chay Lemoine (pictured) has worked on Icelandic writer Halldor Laxness

documents. It was reported to their office by the FBI that the decision to deny me the files was final. Recently, the Foreign Minister of Iceland after a meeting with the Laxness family agreed to speak to the State Department of the United States about denied documents.

In July 2008, I will present a paper to the international academic community on the blacklisting of Halldor Laxness at the "Borders of the Novel Conference" at the University of Scotland in Aberdeen. Since I believe that there is little chance that the FBI will turn over the documents to the Icelandic State Department, I am currently working on a speculative article concerning the contents of the missing files.

—Chay Lemoine, MA AEL, 2004

For a link to the Obama/Laxness story in the Icelandic Review, click here:
http://www.icelandreview.com/icelandreview/daily_news/?cat_id=16567&ew_0_a_id=300499



Congratulations to all of our English majors and graduate students who will receive degrees in May.

"The difference between the right word and the almost right word is really a large matter—it's the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning.

—Mark Twain,
letter to George
Bainton, Oct. 15,
1888



English Department Chair Larry LaFond

Photograph courtesy of Kevin Adkins

International Words: Department Participates in DalDays with University of Lleida

For a second year, the Department of English Language and Literature will participate in a video-conference with the Department of English and Linguistics at the University of Lleida (Spain) as part of their annual DalDays event. ("Dal"="Department d'Angles I Linguistica.") This in-house department mini-conference involves presentations by faculty and students on current research and studies.

DalDays takes place on May 6 and 7. On May 6 at 11:30 in Founders Hall 2300, two faculty and one student will present their work.

Junghyun Hwag, a graduate student in our TESL program, will talk about "Reactions to the Assumptions Underlying EIL: A View from our Expanding Circle;" **Charles Berger** will give a presentation entitled "Reading 9/11 Fiction;" and **John Pendergast** will speak on

"Shakespeare and the Professionals."

Students and faculty from the University of Lleida will present their work on May 7 at 9 am in Founders Hall 0301.

Current and former students and faculty are invited to attend. For more information, contact the event's North American organizer, **Jeffrey Skoblow** (jskoblo@siue.edu).

Words from the Chair

"...skewered through and through with office pens and bound hand and foot with red tape." —Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*

We are pleased to present our second issue of *WORDZ³*, a newsletter of SIUE's Department of English Language and Literature. The 2007-2008 academic year has been a very active one in the Department, much of it focused on a heavy recruitment season which

resulted in the successful hiring of three new faculty members: Jessica Despain (American Literature to 1900), Kristine Hildebrandt (Linguistics), and Mary Beth Sullivan (Composition/Rhetoric). This edition of the newsletter also gives us opportunity to reflect on the many successes our faculty have experienced

this year in grant writing, scholarship, and teaching, and to highlight the accomplishments of some of our students, particularly those who have recently won Departmental awards in recognition of excellence in various areas of language and literature studies. Enjoy!

—Larry LaFond

River Bluff Review Release Set for May 1st

Work is nearly complete on this year's *River Bluff Review* – volume 17. The students of English 494, Literary Editing, have been working furiously to put this issue together since the semester began. The two days lost to snow threw a slight wrench into the organized chaos of these too-brief weeks of preparation. Happily, production is somewhat

streamlined thanks to the new InDesign software installed on the computers in Peck Hall 3310.

In a rigorous, blind review process, students read, discussed, and deliberated on 185 prose and poetry submissions and almost 40 works of art. From these, 26 written works and 8 artworks were accepted. Heather Kniffel, in

Marketing & Design, is helping to arrange for a tour of the press while the *RBR* is being printed in April.

A reading and release party is scheduled for **May 1 at 3:30 p.m.** in the Meridian Ballroom.

—Valerie Vogrin
River Bluff Review
Faculty Advisor



Cover of the *River Bluff Review*, Volume 17, 2008

Cover art by Amanda Dickson, SIUE, MFA Student, Art & Design

Students Win Departmental Competitions

To commend excellent work in literature and language studies, the Department of English Language and Literature conducts several awards competitions each year. The winners receive a modest monetary stipend and are recognized at the Honors Day Convocation.

The Department is pleased to honor the following the students:

The William Carlin Slattery Memorial Award in Poetry or Drama (for creative and original work in poetry or drama by undergraduate or graduate student)

Cassandra Howard and **Heath Luster**, winners; **Megan Hudgins**,

honorable mention

...

The Faye and Phillip Benjamin Honor Award in English Language and Literature (given to an outstanding English student)

Elizabeth Moore, winner

...

The Garry N. Murphy Memorial Award in English (given to an English major or minor exhibits precision in written English)

Jacob Carlson, winner

...

The Mimi Zanger Memorial Award in Fiction (for outstanding fiction by an undergraduate or

graduate student)

Ashby Tyler, winner

...

Edwin Graham Memorial Award (given to a graduate student for precision in written English)

Elizabeth Wood, winner

...

Friends of the Lovejoy Library Student Teaching Award (for excellence in student teaching in English)

Andrew Crider, winner

...

The Gertrude Drake Award (for academic excellence in the study of Latin or Greek)

Nancy Staples, winner

Don't see an award you think the department should have? All awards are funded by faculty, emeriti faculty, and alumni. If you would like to endow a new award or contribute to an already established award, contact Marilyn Marsho, Director of Development for the College of Arts and Sciences at: 618-650-5050 or mmarsho@siue.edu



Award Winners left to right

Back row: Ashby Tyler, Elizabeth Wood, Nancy Staples, James Goltz, and Larry LaFond

Front row: Cassandra Howard, Jacob Carlson, Heath Luster, and Elizabeth Moore

Honors Day 2008
 Photograph courtesy of SIUE



Athena
Bronze statute found in Piraeus, 4th Century BC National Museum, Athens
23 April 2008. <http://www.timelessmyths.com/>

“There is nothing wrong, really, with any word—all are good, but some are better than others. A matter of ear, a matter of reading the books that sharpen the ear.”

—William Strunk, Jr. & E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*

Student and Alumni Highlights

Kelly Schmickle's blog, “Sounding My Barbaric Gulp!” at kags99.blogspot.com, has been featured on FoodBuzz.com since December. Kelly posts restaurant reviews, recipes and more culinary related information. She's also been hired as a cooking class assistant at the Kitchen Conservatory (near the St. Louis Galleria). In addition, Kelly teaches composition courses at SIUE.

Richard Grumbine (MA, TESL and Philosophy) taught English and Philosophy at the SIUC campus in Niigata, Japan from 2000-2005. He later took a position with Ariake National College of Technology in Fukuoka, Japan as an Associate Professor of English. He recently received tenure and was made the vice-chair of International Relations. His research is in the area of self identity and language learning. He spends his free time motorcycling around Japan, though now that he and his wife have welcomed their first child, Hanzo Honda Grumbine, he'll likely have less time for that.

Rumyana Hristova (MA, AEL) had her first scholarly publication in December 2007: “Blake, Dante, and the Bogomils.” *Blake Journal* 10 (2006): 67-85.

Rachel Garlinghouse (MA, ToW) is writing a blog for a new diabetes website. You can read Rachel's blog at www.diabetessisters.com and looking under (HT: Diabetes and Adoption).

Bradford Nadziejkjo (post-bac certificate, ToW) was hired as an assistant professor at Southwestern Illinois College's Red Bud campus beginning in January. He and his wife, Robin, welcomed daughter Genevieve Elizabeth on January 28,

Cassandra Howard (MA, CW), is one of just eight winners of this year's “Intro Journals” competition sponsored by the Associated Writing Programs. Her poem, “Observe the Animals” won a \$100 prize and will be published in the journal *Quarterly West*.

Amanda Wiehl (MA, TESL) has been awarded a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship and will be teaching and doing research at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poland this coming academic year.

Janella Moy (MA, AEL, post bac certificate ToW) presented “Teaching Students to ‘See’ the Text” at the Popular Culture Association Conference in San Francisco in March.

Sadly, the Department learned of the death of former student **Walter Hickey**, who died on March 24, 2008. Hickey, 59, had an extended battle with cancer. He received his MA in literature from SIUE in 2002 and taught as a lecturer in the department from 2003-2006. He completed a PHD in British Literature from St. Louis University in 2006. Hickey's short fiction and poetry had been published in *Sou'wester*, *Prairie Light Review*, and the *Atlantic Monthly*. He also established the *Nicholas T. Joost Memorial Award* to recognize the best MA thesis in American or British Literature.

CAS Colloquium 2008: Thinking about the University

Charles Berger, Seran Dogancay-Aktuna, Eileen Joy, Brian Abel Ragen, John Savoie, Ron Schafer, Catherine Seltzer, Jeffrey Skoblow, and Valerie Vogrin each gave presentations as part of the College of Arts and Sciences annual Colloquium. This year's theme was “Thinking about the University” and featured keynote speaker Joseph Carroll, Professor of English from the University of Missouri-St. Louis who spoke on “Literary Darwinism.”

Faculty Highlights

Matthew S. S. Johnson has been appointed Reviews Editor for *Journal of Gaming and Virtual Worlds*. His publications include “Teaching Iron Chef,” *College English*, 70.4 (March 2008); “Teasing out Everyday Culture: Why Simple Questions are Worth Asking,” in *From Hip Hop to Hyperlinks: Practical Approaches for Teaching Culture in the Composition Classroom* (Joanne Paull, ed.); and “Combat to Conversation: Towards a Theoretical Foundation for the Study of Games.” *Dichtung Digital* 37.1 (December 2007). He also presented “Rekindling Rhetoric: Oratory and Marketplace Culture in Guild Wars” at the National Conference of the Popular Culture Association, San Francisco, March.

Stacey Brown’s poetry book, *Cradle Song*, won the 2007 Cider Press Review Book Award and will be published in January 2009.

Jeffrey Skoblow’s short story “C’est Moi” was published in *The Submission* (www.thesubmission.net).

Eileen Joy published “Good-bye to All That: The State of My Own Personal Field of Schizoid Anglo-Saxon Studies,” in *The Heroic Age*, 11 (Winter 2008). She gave invited lectures at Wake Forest University and at the Medieval Club of New York

(CUNY Graduate Center). She was a respondent to panel presentations at the 43rd International Congress of on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University and at the Sexuality and Phenomenology: Reading Sara Ahmed’s *Queer Phenomenology* Intensive Seminar at University College, Dublin, Ireland. She was a featured speaker at “Beholding Violence: A Conference on Medieval and Early Modern Representation and Culture” at Bowling Green University, Ohio. She gave also gave a presentation entitled “Dying is an Art, Like Everything Else: The Lowly, Unsettled Aesthetics of Guthlac-Becoming” at the 43rd International Congress of on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University. Along with co-writers Cohen, Hurley, and Steel, Eileen Joy was awarded a 2007 Cliopatria Award for Best Group Blog for *In the Middle*.

Anushiya Sivanarayanan’s translation of the Sri Lankan Tamil writer Shobasakthi’s memoir *Gorilla* has been published by Random House India (March). She read excerpts from the work and other writings by Shobasakthi at “Words With Purpose” on Feb. 16. She presented a lecture entitled “English is My

Mother Tongue—And So is Tamil” at the St. Louis Branch of the English-Speaking Union in January.

Joel Hardman presented “Nurturing Perspectives of Second Language Writing Teachers” at TESOL’s annual conference in NY.

Sharon James McGee and Joanne Addison co-presented “Writing in High School, Writing in College—A Reality Check: A report on the CCCC Sponsored Research Grant” at CCCC, New Orleans, April. She also chaired a session at the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing Conference, New Orleans, April.

Valerie Vogrin’s short story “Little Miss Hot and Cold” appeared as part of *Esquire* magazine’s Napkin Project: <http://www.esquire.com/fiction/napkin-project/valerie-vogrin-napkin-fiction>

Also appearing as part of Napkin Project is **Geoff Schmidt’s** short story “Planet Esquire”: <http://www.esquire.com/fiction/napkin-project/geoff-schmidt-napkin-fiction>

Catherine Seltzer presented “Diverse but Limited Spaces”: Transnational Notions of Home in Eudora Welty’s *The Optimist’s Daughter* and Edna O’Brien’s *House of Splendid Isolation* at the Study of Southern Literature Conference.





http://www.school-clip-art.com/graduation_clipart.shtml

May MA Graduates

Congratulations to these graduate students who have completed the requirements for the MA in English:

Teaching English as a Second Language

Elizabeth Burke (Larry LaFond, chair)

Amanda Wiehl (Seran Aktuna, chair)

Gosia Moll (Joel Hardman, chair)

Teaching of Writing

Melissa Braunschweig (Anushiya Sivanarayanan, chair)

Keith Edwards (Matthew S.S. Johnson, chair)

Mary Jenny Margarida (Sharon James McGee, chair)

Bradford Nadziekjko (post-bac. certificate)

Janella Moy (post-bac. certificate)

Creative Writing

Orvil Dale Hill (“Dancing,” Valerie Vogrin, director)

Patricia Maniaci (“All Good Things,” Geoffrey Schmidt, director)

Katrina Wharton (“Deciphering,” Allison Funk, director)

American and English Literature

Janella Moy (“Robert Lowell: Poetry, Power, History,” Charles Berger, director)

Celebrating the Bard and SIUE



Taylor, John. *The Chandros Portrait: William Shakespeare*. National Portrait Gallery, Britain. Alchin, L. K. *William Shakespeare Info (The Complete Works Online)*. 24 April 2008 <<http://www.william-shakespeare.info>>

On April 19, the Department held the 11th annual Shakespeare’s Birthday (mini-marathon) Reading Party, this year in conjunction with SIUE’s 50th Anniversary. (The Bard would have been 444.) The event began in the Morris University Center’s Goshen

Lounge and then moved to the upstairs Art Gallery. Department Chair **LaFond** welcomed those assembled (see photograph on page 2).

We had readings from Shakespeare’s plays and sonnets by faculty and students, including a large contingent from **Sue**

Garrison’s ENG 111 class, an ASL (American Sign Language)-signed “To Be or Not to Be,” and some hip hop Bard-o-metrics from alumnus and performance artist **Jason Braun**. And since this was a birthday party, we had cake as well!

—Jeffrey Skoblow

Upcoming Literary Birthdays

May

1 Bobbie Ann Mason
7 Robindranath Tagore
19 Lorraine Hansberry
25 Ralph Waldo Emerson
28 Walker Percy
30 Countee Cullen
31 Walt Whitman

June

7 Gwendolyn Brooks
7 Nikki Giovanni
11 Ben Jonson
13 William Butler Yeats
16 Joyce Carol Oates
19 Salmon Rushdie
28 Luigi Pirandello

July

2 Herman Hesse
7 Louise Erdrich
12 Henry David Thoreau
12 Pablo Neruda
18 William Thackeray
21 Ernest Hemingway
26 George Bernard Shaw

Test Your Knowledge of Spring Poetry

Spring in southern Illinois has been capricious this year: wet for weeks, then warm, then cold, and immediately warm again. To coax Spring to full bloom, to honor National Poetry Month (April) and Shakespeare’s Birthday (April 23), test your literary chops on these excerpts from spring-themed poems. Answers appear below.

A.
April is the cruelest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and Desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.

...

B.
When daisies pied, and violets blue
And lady-smocks all silver-white
And cuckoo-birds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadow with delight.

...

C.
A little Madness in the Spring
Is wholesome even for the King.

D.
I am amazed at the spring, this conflagration
Of green fires lit on the soil of the earth, this blaze
Of growing, and sparks that puff in wild gyration,
Faces of people streaming across my gaze.

...

E.
Oh, give us pleasure in the orchard white,
Like nothing else by day, like ghosts by night;
And make us happy in the happy bees,
The swarm dilating round the perfect trees.

...

F.
Though a country be sundered, hills and rivers
endure;
And spring comes green again to trees and grasses
Where petals have been shed like tears
And lonely birds have sung their grief.

Answers

A.
T. S. Eliot
“Wasteland” (1922)

...

B.
William Shakespeare
“Spring” from *Love’s Labour
Lost* (1598)

...

C.
Emily Dickinson XXXVIII

...

D.
D. H. Lawrence “The
Enkindled Spring” (1916)

...

E.
Robert Frost “A Prayer in
Spring” (1915)

...

F.
Tu Fu “A Spring
View” (750)

Why Wordz³?

Some people have asked about the title of the newsletter. We wanted a title that would represent all the areas of study of the department and since our department is about words—reading them, writing them, analyzing them, teaching them—we thought “words” would be appropriate. The phonetic spelling of “words” is “wordz.” Further, the quote from Hamlet underneath banner explores yet one more angle of the department.

To all our supporters and alumni:

The Department of English Language and Literature is committed to helping our students achieve excellence in critical reading, thinking and writing, because we believe these are essential ingredients of a liberal arts education. This work often leads us into many projects and activities that need and deserve funding assistance. We would welcome your continued generous support for student awards and honors, need-based scholarships for Summer Writing Camp, or assistance with graduate student travel for professional conferences or international study. The continuance of our literary journals is made possible through the purchase of subscriptions, and we are thankful to those of you who support our Department in this way. You can make your tax-deductible contribution by visiting <http://www.siu.edu/artsandsciences/giving/> for on-line giving or mail-in giving options. Please call or write if you would like to discuss our current special funding needs and how, through your gifts, you may play an important role in the life of a student or our Department.

Sincerely,
Larry LaFond

Writing Camp 2008

Session I: June 16-27

Session 2: July 7-18

Contact Sue Garrison (sgarris@siue.edu) for more information.

Wordz³ is a collaborative effort of the Department of English Language and Literature at SIUE. Without news from faculty, alumni, and students, we would have nothing to print. We hope that your accomplishments can be noted in the next edition, tentatively scheduled for late fall 2008. Information for the newsletter is channeled through Sharon James McGee (sjmcgee@siue.edu). The editor apologizes in advance for any inadvertently omitted information.

The Final Word: What Members of the English Department are (re)Reading



Cassatt, Mary. *On the Balcony*. 1878/79. The Art Institute of Chicago. 23 April 2008 <http://www.artic.edu/aic/>

Caballeriza by Rodrigo Rey Rosa, *Don Juan* by Lord Byron, and *Nohow On* by Samuel Beckett—**Jeffrey Skoblow**

One Good Turn by Kate Atkinson—**Nicola Schmidt**

View from the Seventh Layer (stories) by Kevin Brockmeier, *The Door* (poems) by Margaret Atwood, and re-reading *Love Medicine* by Louise Erdrich—**Valerie Vogrin**
McSweeney's Joke Book of

Book Jokes—**Joel Hardman**
Frozen in Time: The Fate of The Franklin Expedition by Owen Beattie and *The Gloomy Egoist: Moods and Themes of Melancholy from Gray to Keats* by Eleanor Sickels—**Jack Voller**

Early Christian Greek and Latin Literature by Moreschini & Norelli and *Making Sex* by Thomas Laquer—**Mary Steible**

The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz by Mordecai Richler and *The Emperor's Children*

by Claire Messud—**Helena Gurfinkel**

Amazing Grace by Kathleen Norris and *The Great Tradition* by Richard Gamble, ed.—**Larry LaFond**

Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace...One School at a Time by Greg Mortenson—**Ann Daum (GA)**

Dreams of My Father by Barack Obama, *Flight* by Sherman Alexie, *Harper's*, and *Rolling Stone*—**Jill**