Spring 2009

Footnotes, Issue 3, Spring 2009

Department of English

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In 1951 Robert Bradley graduated *cum laude* from the College of Education with a major in English Literature and minors in History and French; he also received the George Sprau award in English. Sixty years later Bradley returns to Western Michigan University to receive the English Department’s Distinguished Scholar Award.

“I feel quite good to have my teaching career recognized,” said Bradley. “I’m very pleased.”

During his time as a student at Western, Bradley was highly influenced by one particular professor, Dr. William Brown. “Dr. Brown was so enthusiastic about whatever subject he was teaching that you would also get excited and want to study that subject yourself. I took more classes with him than any other professor.”

Mr. Bradley recently retired from a career of teaching high school English and History, a career which began at Lapeer Public Schools and finished at Grosse Point Public Schools. Then he and his wife, Ann, moved to the Detroit area. During the years of 1963-1964, Bradley was a Fulbright Scholar in Denmark serving as a visiting lecturer in American Language and Literature.

His published works include book reviews for the *Mensa Bulletin*; *History*, a publication of the Helen Dwight Reid Educational Foundation; and *Best Sellers*, a publication of the University of Scranton.

He has also served as a Program Chairman of the League of Woman Voters of Grosse Point. He volunteers at the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Henry Ford Cottage Hospital, and the Dominican Literacy Center.

In addition he is a member of Friends of Historic East Campus (FOHEC) an organization that is pushing for the restoration of East Campus. “I would like to see the aesthetics brought back to Western, which I feel was an architectural standout when I attended college.”

“Going to Western has really made a difference in my life,” said Bradley, “I was an outcast at Bloomfield Hills High School and really found myself at Western. I am proud to have graduated from there.”

Bradley will speak at the annual Department Awards and Recognition Ceremony that will be held on April 15.

-Aly Worden

For more on Robert Bradley See Alumni Book Reviews on page 5

The faculty and staff of the Western Michigan University Department of English cordially invites you to our Annual Awards Ceremony and Reception, honoring our undergraduate and graduate students

April 15, 2009
3:00-6:30 p.m.
Lee Honors College Lounge

Keynote Speaker: Robert Bradley

2008-2009 Department of English Distinguished Alumnus
“My Three Mentors”
Not a bad year to be an intellectual in the field of English studies at Western: Meaningful polysyllabic words hail from the White House, and an education in English studies, a field imparting the essential career skills of smart writing, reading, thinking, researching, and speaking, continues to attract excellent undergraduate and graduate students to our department and its programs.

How well the department is prepared to teach and hone these skills is obvious from the number of honors and publications faculty and students are producing: Our graduate students cleaned up at a number of competitive venues: Greg Laing (PhD student) received the only full-year WMU Dissertation Completion Fellowship, Lisa Horton (PhD student) and Meghann Meeusen (MA student) received the All University Graduate Student Award for Teaching Effectiveness, and Adam Clay (PhD student) and Kris Peterson (MFA student) the All University Graduate Research and Creative Scholar Award.

Our undergraduate students, led by the active local chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, continue to organize the annual departmental English Studies Conference, participate in Career Day, gain practical experience through internships and editorial work with various publications, including our own Comparative Drama, New Issues Press, Third Coast Magazine, and The Laureate, and successfully apply for positions and graduate school.

And our faculty and staff received the Dean’s Staff and Faculty Appreciation Award (Jonathan Bush, Bethlynn Sanders) and the College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Achievement Award in Research and Creative Activity (Daneen Wardrop) as well as in Teaching (Jonathan Bush). Our guests this spring included the former presidents of the Modern Language Association of America, Gerald Graff, and of the National Council of Teachers of English, Sheridan Blau, to name but two of the distinguished scholars and writers who came to visit and speak with us.

However, let’s not sit on our laurels, because we can even do better than this: In the fall semester, we will run the first experimental section of ENGLISH 2000, a two-hour team-taught class designed to match students up with professors in their areas of interest so that they can develop stronger scholarly, creative, and professional agendas.

During some sessions of ENGLISH 2000, the entire class will work with a team of professors to debate an idea in a recently published essay or to explore how technology has revolutionized the teaching of English. At other sessions, interested seniors might take part in a graduate school application workshop, while other students might meet with a visiting writer or learn about the way that folklore is taught across the disciplines.

You get the idea: The goal is a holistic view of the field of English studies so that our students will be able to make informed choices as they move forward on their various academic and non-academic professional paths.

A second exciting project to move us forward is the Western Michigan Review, a journal that encourages concise critical reflection on cultural productions in all areas of English Studies. For the WMR, we invite all the friends of the English Department, alumni/ae, emeriti/ae, students, and faculty to submit reviews of books, movies, performances, etc., that demonstrate the principal skills an education in English Studies provides: critical comparative thinking, awareness of the power of words and linguistic structures, and imaginative, engaged, creative, graceful, and smart writing. Please consider joining us in this innovative way of sharing your reading and viewing experiences with the many others who enjoy critical intellectual exchange.

You can find WMR at: www.wmich.edu/english.

As always, if you’re in the vicinity, drop by and please consider coming to any department events. We’d love to welcome you back.

Regards,
Richard Utz, Chair
The 2009 Presidential Scholar in English is Philip M. Taylor who is in his fourth year at Western Michigan University working towards a double major in English Literature as well as Women and Gender Studies with a minor in Art History. Currently, he is focusing his academic interests on the application of Queer and Feminist theory to literary analyses and linguistics. Working with Dr. Ilana Nash of the English Department, Philip is using Judith Butler’s theories of gender performance to create an analysis of American literature written between 1950 and 1970. This exploration of masculinity and gender performance is an attempt to dismantle the convoluted divisions of gender that exist within contemporary American culture.

Anticipating his degree, Philip is planning on attending graduate school to further his interest in academic studies. Planning on focusing upon American Literature and Cultural Studies, Philip is determined to achieve higher education and would like to work within the scholarly community. By continuing his education, Philip hopes to become an instructor at a university where he can continually develop and hone his academic skills.

Along with being the Presidential Scholar of both the English Department and the Women and Gender Studies Department, Philip is anticipating the publication of his poetry and prose within the 2009 edition of The Laureate. Philip has also been awarded with the Dean’s Scholar Grant and the Academic Medallion Scholarship.

Initially arriving at Western Michigan University to major in Musical Theatre Performance, Philip quickly transferred to the English Department and would like this opportunity to thank all of those who have encouraged and supported him during his academic career.

From left. Dr. Lisa Minnick, Presidential Scholar Philip Taylor and Dr. Richard Utz

“Star-crossed Majors: From Science to English”

In my second semester at WMU, I took Shakespeare (with Dr. Meg Dupuis) and Literary Interpretation (with Isle Schwietzer). The fusion of these two classes inspired me to declare English as my second major, after biomedical science, and has had indescribable influence on my life.

Following that semester, I was recruited by the Footnotes committee as their intern. I worked with Beth Amidon from June-January putting together this fall’s edition of Footnotes. Her encouragement and the experience that I gained from working on this newsletter have been essential to my writing career, and have helped me immensely in my quest for graduate school. I could not have bridged the Science/English gap without her.

Many contemporary scientists don’t make it out of their area of expertise, and this makes communication across topic borders very difficult. The Footnotes internship, along with my other English classes, has given me these valuable skills and has helped to set me apart from other applicants to graduate school. During my interviews, I was asked a common question, “Do you have any writing or communication experience,” and my answer was simply, “Yes, I’m an English major.” I can’t stress enough how much my experience within the English Department has made it possible for me to pursue my dreams in the Science field.

Following graduation, I will be entering the D.O./Ph.D. (medical school and graduate school) program at Michigan State University in May and will graduate in 2016. My Ph.D. concentration is Pharmacology & Toxicology and the D.O. is Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine, I have not declared my medical specialty yet. This is one of the most competitive programs in the state, and I have been awarded a graduate assistanship with reduced tuition and a stipend.

See “Star-Crossed” page 6.....
Since I began teaching in 1995, I have experienced the “next great thing” make its way across the educational landscape several times, impacting the profession and requiring me to continuously assess and adapt my classroom practices. Multiple intelligences, brain-based teaching and learning, differentiated instruction, technology integration, IDEA for students with special needs, curriculum reform in Michigan, and the large-scale national reform of No Child Left Behind, among others, have required that I approach teaching as work in progress, and that I am always a student of my profession.

This on-the-job-training has never been a problem for me. In 1996 I was a fellow in the Third Coast Writing Project at Western Michigan University, and that experience gave me the training I needed to adopt a continuous-improvement approach to teaching, and it connected me to a network of the most creative and committed educators in Southwest Michigan with whom I would share ideas and learn to think big about our own contributions to improvement in the profession.

What began in 1996 with four weeks of intense study of writing pedagogy and the spirited sharing of best practice at WMU has become more than a decade of really good work. In 1997 I joined seven other TCWP fellows and forty teachers from across the country for the Rural Voices, Country Schools project, a three-year study of the best teaching practices in America’s small-town and rural schools, and then later turned that experience into the Digital Storytelling Project, a three-year effort to share a powerful technology integration practice with teachers and professors in Southwest Michigan. I have presented my work with TCWP locally, across Michigan, and across the country. I have worked with other TCWP fellows to publish an anthology of writing, a half-hour public radio broadcast, professional articles, personal writing, and multiple other publications, projects, presentations, and professional gatherings of teachers. TCWP has kept me busy, but it has always been fun, challenging, meaningful work, and work that I’ve shared with the best teachers anywhere.

I know that my profession will continue to change, and I know there are challenges to come and problems to solve as classroom teachers. But the orientation I bring to my work, thanks to Third Coast Writing Project, means I will remain on top of school and teaching improvement efforts, I will take a best practices approach to everything I do, and I will remain connected across the National Writing Project network who approach each new challenge and change as the opportunity to do more good work. Reform is not something that happens to a writing project teacher; reform is something that writing project teachers welcome, and often initiate and lead in their classrooms and schools. It is the National Writing Project way, and the reason the Third Coast Writing Project has been so powerful for me and my colleagues for more than a dozen years.

-Cory L. Harbaugh, Gobles Middle/High School

2009 Third Coast Writing Project Programs
- 2009 Invitational Summer Institute (June 22-July 17) Our flagship program features a strong professional development community for teachers at all levels and in all content areas. It includes a tuition grant of more than a $1,000 for each participant. Interviews will occur in April. Early application advised!
- Writing 2.0 Workshop: Teaching Writing in the Digital Age (June 15-19) Participants will explore ways to teach writing using today’s tools for tomorrow’s world—digital stories, blogs, wikis, podcasts and vodcasts, photo-editing, and more.
- Teacher as Writer Workshops: Workshop I – Teaching Writing through the Lens of Poetry (June 22-July 3) Workshop II – Teaching Writing through the Lens of Narrative (July 6-17)
- Workshop for Thinking and Comprehension (June 15-19) Teachers of all grade levels and in all content areas learn practical, research-based strategies that will help their students become stronger writers, readers, and thinkers.
- Connecting with English Language Learners in the Classroom (July 6-8) Join our ELL teacher team as they provide effective strategies being used in southwest Michigan classrooms to support students for whom English is a second language.

http://www.wmich.edu/thirdcoastwp.
Alumni Book Reviews

The English Department has launched the Western Michigan Review, an opportunity for alumni, students, friends, faculty and staff to publish scholarly reviews of their current readings. Visit our blog at www.wmich.edu/english for submission information.

To start us off, our distinguished alumnus, Robert Bradley, has sent a few reviews for us.


Death is the narrator of this book. Set in Germany during World War II, its themes include one’s desire for words, words found in books that might make the world more understandable, and how rewards can come from the most unlikely people. Liesel, the heroine, learns to read from her foster father who is himself semi-literate. Similarly, she finds that her foster mother who always addresses her with crude, hostile language, shows tenderness toward her at a critical time. And the wealthy woman on the Grande Strasse from whom Liesel thinks she is stealing books, reveals herself as having been fully aware of “the thefts.”

The narrator speculates on the characters, including those in an air raid shelter during an Allied air raid. Death takes note of these people seeking refuge: “How many had actively persecuted others, high on the scent of Hitler’s gaze, repeating his sentences, his paragraphs, his opus? Did they all deserve to die?”

Irony abounds. Alex Steiner makes it home on furlough after the bombing. Since the news of his brother Rudy’s death, Alex had been “whittled away.” “Crucified Christ,” he said, “if only I’d let Rudy go to that school. “You save someone. You kill them. How was he supposed to know?”

“The only thing he truly did know was that he’d have done anything on Himmel Street that night so that Rudy survived rather than himself. That was something he told Liesel on the steps of 8 Grande Strasse, when he rushed up there after hearing of her [Liesel’s] survival. That day, on the steps, Alex Steiner was sawn apart.”

History is contingency. “For want of a nail…” It was randomness in the outside world no less than in the death camps. And all this brings the reader to the final sentence of the book, spoken by death after it has narrated the entire story of Liesel:

I am haunted by humans.


Long ago in a not-too-far away galaxy, this reviewer wrote a paper connecting what William Wordsworth called “spots of time” in his The Prelude with the “intermittances of the heart” in Marcel Proust’s Remembrance of Things Past. What the paper did was to show how the two writers described a created awareness or perception of that which the conscious intellect cannot bring to us.

The book reviewed here is fascinating in that it’s almost a continuation of that paper. The subjects of the book are Paul Cezanne and Virginia Woolf, among others.

Lehrer says that Cezanne’s paintings are criticisms of painting. Everything has been bent to fit the canvas. What we see has been bent to fit our canvas which is the brain. A painting of green apples is what gives us to experience. Here, Lehrer seems a bit labored. Could not the statements that he makes apply to a genre stiff life by Chardin, or one by a contemporary artist William Bailey?

We come to Virginia Woolf. She said in 1920 that the popular novelists of the time – Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy—ignored the mind’s interior. What did she propose as an alternative? Two of her novels, Mrs. Dalloway and To the Lighthouse, were the alternative. In the former, she presents a single day, rendered intensely, that becomes a window into a psychology shown by the main character’s fragility. To the Lighthouse is full of what Woolf terms “falling thoughts.” The characters overflow with impermanent impressions and inchoate feelings. Woolf simply believed that science must surrender its claims of absolute knowledge. For her, experience trumps the experiment.

Lehrer’s book is an enormously suggestive one, with its treatments of Walt Whitman, George Eliot, Auguste Escoffier and Igor Stravinsky, in addition to the people presented above. The great strength of the book in addition to its suggestiveness is its treatment of artists in the culinary arts and music as well as in literature.
Memories of Diether Haenicke

When Diether Haenicke came to WMU in 1985, things changed all at once. We’d been through a really painful strike in 1984, which left everyone--faculty and staff and administrators alike--upset, angry, and distrustful. Enrollments were steady after years of fluctuation, but the campus looked threadbare and colorless, and there had been no hires for so long that we were sick of looking at each other.

Then Diether. He had visited the English Department pretty much as soon as he’d got here, and hadn’t been completely pleased with what he’d found. He wrote a letter to the chair which said, in effect, that he felt that an English Department was the heart of any successful university, but that our department wasn’t doing so well, and until we could show him increased scholarly activities, increased graduate enrollments, a revivified campus presence in Faculty Senate, Senate Councils, teaching awards, etc., he wasn’t very interested in supporting us.

The effect of this letter was galvanizing. It’s like we’d been shaken awake. It was fun; we regained group focus, we polished up our research bona fides. Shirley Scott became the Chair. We began work on the PhD program; we revised the undergraduate majors and curricula from top to bottom; we began to hire many new faculty members.

Diether was involved in and helped us with these hires. He called candidates. He worked to find employment for trailing spouses. He oversaw departmental change in a kindly and avuncular way.

And he read the work we produced. If he liked it, he sent you a bottle of Roederer. He corrected your footnotes. He sent you tickets to events at Miller Auditorium. He sometimes called you on the phone to be sure you were keeping office hours.

The old place popped when Diether Haenicke was President, and we’re still involved in the work of becoming what he’d imagined we could be. We’ll miss a wonderful man, a devoted scholar, a gifted university administrator.

-Tom Bailey
and
Katherine Joslin

Student News Continued...

“Star-Crossed”

I have no doubt that over the next seven years, my English education will be imperative in my professional development. I have no doubt that without my English education, I would not be in the position that I am today. Thank you, WMU English Department!

-Lauren Azevedo

Lauren will Graduate in April 2009 with a Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Sciences with a minor in Chemistry and a Bachelor of the Arts in English Practical Writing.

Sigma Tau Delta

Fall 2008 Inductees were: Meghan Dykema, Rodger Swan, Sasha Boersma, Crystal Kelly, Kalyn Golland, Madeline Baker, Tyler Evans, Kimberly Knopf, AndrewWeissenborn, Scott Benzenberg, Sarah Ashley McFee, Julia Valentine, Randi Easley, Megan Runyan, Courtney De Smit, Josephine Tucker, Caitlin Popa, Eric Szubinski

Spring 2009 Inductees are: Peter Cullen Bryan, Thera Card, Sarah Clawson, Carly Fricano, Diane Hall, Tiffany Lynn Lunk, Katrina Murphy, Nathan Norton, Patric Nuttall, Kathryn O’Brien, Kenneth John Odle, James Roberts, Virginia Shedd, Jeff Spisak, Ashleigh Verdier, Aubrey Watson, Samantha Wigent, Helena Witzke, Katherine York
Ashley Dempsky (class of ‘08)  
“AmeriCorps, which is often called the ‘domestic Peace Corps,’ is a multi-faceted government volunteer program wherein members can serve in different ways. I work in the education area of AmeriCorps for a program called Kern-Corps AmeriCorps, named after Kern County in California. Due to the socioeconomic challenges many people in the poorer areas of Kern County face (gang activity, poverty, unstable family life, etc) their education often suffers. I work at what is called a ‘community high school’ where students who have been expelled from the public school system attend until their expulsion period is over. The two areas in which these students struggle the most with are Reading and Math; many of them are below fourth-grade standards. I work with about 20 students a week, tutoring them and helping them prepare for their high school exit exams which they need to pass in order to receive a diploma. AmeriCorps’ state and local programs require a one year commitment, so I will be busy with this until next summer! It’s challenging but rewarding at the same time.”

Kristen Tracy, (PhD 2005)  
Kristen Tracy’s first teen novel, Lost It, was published last year by Simon & Schuster. It received a starred review in Publishers Weekly, was selected by the New York Public Library as one of their “Books for the Teen Age,” and is already in its third printing. Her second teen novel, Crimes of the Sarahs, was also published by Simon & Schuster and came out this spring (It’s set in Kalamazoo). Her first middle-grade novel, Camille Mcephee Fell Under the Bus, will be published this year by Random House with a second novel to follow in 2010. Her poems have recently appeared or are forthcoming in Threepenny Review, Prairie Schooner, TriQuarterly, New York Quarterly, Puerto del Sol, and AGNI. She recently found out that Ted Kooser has selected her poem 7 “Rain at the Zoo” to be reprinted in American Life in Poetry. She lives and writes in San Francisco, where she is very very happy.

Rose Swartz (BFA 2006) is in her second year at Arizona State. She’s currently the poetry editor of Hayden’s Ferry Review, and just won Hot Metal Press chapbook contest for mss entitled “Things I’ve Left Between.” She’s been awarded a fellowship to Prague for this summer and also an artistic residency to collaborate with another artist from someplace in the world for a month in Tabor, Czech Republic.

Mark Derks, an undergrad CW major who graduated a year or two ago, has been accepted with full funding into the MFA program at Virginia Tech, institutional home of Nikki Giovanni. Todd Kuchta says that although he has never read any of Mark’s creative work, he taught him in two classes, and thought Mark was among the smartest students and best writers he’s taught anywhere.


Matt Mullins has been offered the tenure track position teaching screenplay/scriptwriting and poetry at Ball State University. He credits Arnie Johnston, emeritus, much for his support throughout this and his other applications. He states that Dr. Johnston’s help during grad school and beyond has really meant a great deal. Mullins writes: “It’s an amazing opportunity. A 3/3 teaching load—all creative writing including screenwriting courses I will develop at the grad level. They’re already making feature/indie films down there at the telecom dept and an institute they’ve set up downtown. They have brand new state of the art equipment and production facilities (here’s a link to the site featuring the film they’re about to release: http://www.mynameisjerry.com/). I’m still in a state of disbelief, but I’m eager to take this on.”

Darrin Doyle, who got his MFA from us, then went onto the U. of Cincinnati for his PhD, just was hired by Central Michigan University as an assistant professor, tenure-track, in the Dept. of English. His first novel, Revenge of the Teacher’s Pet, has just appeared from Louisiana State U. Press, and he has a second novel under contract to Simon & Schuster. He’ll be reading at WMU (with Michael Davis) on April 9th.
Richard Utz, Chair, is pleased to announce that Eve Salisbury and William Olsen have received the Chair’s Distinguished Faculty Award for their work with the English Department’s publications: *Comparative Drama* and *New Issues Press*.


“The Changing Other,” an extended essay on John Berryman’s Homage to Mistress Bradstreet, appears in *Words Overflown By Stars*, a collection of essays by writers (Writers’ Digest Books). His poetry is discussed in the most recent issue of *American Poetry Review*; in “On Capaciousness,” an essay by David Wojahn. He read his poetry for the inaugural *Court Green Literary Magazine* of the MFA Program in Columbia College in Chicago, and this spring he will read at Westminster College in Utah.

Slawinski Delivers Paper on Vickery’s Admirers: On a wonderfully warm Halloween, Scott Slawinski presented “Of Public Epistles and Personas: Sukey Vickery and her Della Cruscan Admirers” at the annual conference of the Northeastern American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies. The conference was held in Finger Lakes town of Geneva, NY, with the hotel situated right on the shore of beautiful Seneca Lake.

Then Scott Spends Spring Break in Bermuda, or Sally Wood Lives! At the Society of Early Americanists binannual conference in Hamilton, Bermuda, amidst lively discussions of transatlanticism, Puritanism, and print culture, panelists on “Sally Wood and Early Republican Culture” delivered intellectually invigorating presentations on this little known but crucial novelist of the early republic. The panel’s paper topics included: “Women Writers and Women’s Rights in the Correspondence of Judith Sargent Murray and Sally Wood” (by Karen A. Weyler, University of North Carolina at Greensboro), “The Speculation of Dorval” (by Scott Ellis, University of Southern Connecticut), “Gothic Anxiety and the Illuminati in Sally Wood’s Julia and Charles Brockden Brown’s Ormond “ (by Michael Cody, East Tennessee State University), and “Sally Wood’s Complex Portrait of Europe” (by Scott Slawinski, Western Michigan University). The panel was organized by Scott Slawinski as a method of raising Wood’s profile in the field of Early American studies, introducing her to new audiences, and demonstrating the depth and richness of her work.

In addition, Slawinski chaired a panel titled “Angry Americans: The Development of National Rhetorics of Violence.” Consisting of three very fine up-and-coming scholars, Sara Crosby, Heidi Oberholtzer Lee, and Margaret Abruzzo, the panel’s goal was to continue a conversation begun on the early American listserv about Susan Faludi’s controversial article in the *New York Times* wherein she discussed King Philip’s War and American mythologies concerning the wilderness and Indian warfare, drawing connections to American foreign policy and terrorism in the wake of the September 11th attacks. Engaging conversations ensued during the excellent Q and A sessions for both panels.

ASTRA Award Winners: Jonathan Bush, Charie Thralls, Karen Vocke, and Allen Webb have all been awarded ASTRAs for their projects.

CAS Faculty Achievement Awards: Daneen Wardrop has been selected to receive a CAS Faculty Achievement Award in Research and Creative Activity.

Jonathan Bush has been selected to receive a CAS Faculty Achievement Award in Teaching.

These awards recognize faculty contributions to the research and teaching goals of the College and include a $500 research account to be used for research, creative activity, teaching, or professional development.

What are you up to?

Please tell us where you are and what you’re doing. We’d like to have an alumni update section in our newsletter and include you. Please include the year and degree with which you graduated, as well as something interesting that you’ve done since your time as a Bronco.

Please email us at: engl_news@wmich.edu
development. Recipients were honored in March during a recognition dinner at the Black Swan.

**Arnie Johnston** and **Deborah Ann Percy** *Duets: Love is Strange* is an evening of six one-act plays that explore the relationship between men and women, one couple at a time. By turns funny, explosive, tragic, and thoughtful, *Duets* can be a tour de force evening for two fine actors, providing a view of the human heart in the tender war of love.

And also just reprinted by Arnie: *The Witching Voice: A Novel from the Life of Robert Burns*, with a review from our own Stu Dybek. Here is literary history served up in a surge of life, humor, poetry, and song. Johnston gives us a life of Burns that is at once unsentimental and yet deeply felt. He convincingly conveys Burns as a man of his time, while opening up the lyrical beauty and energy of his work in a way wholly accessible to a contemporary reader.

– Stuart Dybek, recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship; author of *I Sailed With Magellan*

**And the play opens:**

Arnold Johnston’s

THE WITCHING VOICE

A PLAY WITH MUSIC HIGHLIGHTING THE LIFE AND LOVES OF SCOTS POET ROBERT BURNS

Opens March 27 through April 25

WMU Professor Arnold Johnston’s play had its world premiere at The New Vic in 1973 and returns, (with Nate Melvin in the role of Robert Burns), to celebrate the publication of Johnston’s novel, (*The Witching Voice: A Novel from the Life of Robert Burns*), and in celebration of the 250th birthday of Scotland’s greatest poet.

This biographical play covers the life of Scottish poet Robert Burns from 1785 to 1788, when he rose from poverty and obscurity as an Ayrshire farmer to nationwide acclaim and lionization by the aristocracy of Edinburgh, Scotland’s capital and a bastion of the European Enlightenment. Using a lively array of historical characters, the action captures the flavor of Burns’ work, his rich social and romantic life, his struggles to escape poverty, his frustration with a class system that set more store by ancestry than ability, and his bitterly comic encounters with moral and religious hypocrisy. The play is further enhanced by a liberal selection of Burns’ finest songs and poems.

And more news from Arnie….

“I just heard from Phi Kappa Phi Forum (newsletter of the national honor society)--I won their summer poetry competition with a piece called “What’s Underneath,” and it’ll appear in the Summer 2009 issue. Debby and I have a reading at KPL in early May, followed by a mini-reading/signing tour for the novel in Texas. And two productions of *Lonesome Losers* (the Brel show) are scheduled for July, one in Chicago, one in Cincinnati. Things are hopping. We’re looking forward to a few days’ down time!”

**Judith Rypma** has new poems published or forthcoming in *Pearl, Nexus, California Quarterly, REAL, and Flint Hills Review*. She has done two recent readings of her work, including “A Poet’s Tribute to Russia” at Portage District Library and one on campus centering around “rock and mineral” poems. Her 4-act play, *Vasilissa, Baba Yaga, and the Golden Thread*, was performed in November by students of the Marshall Academy (under the direction of English Ed alumna Leslie DeBacker-Katz, who now teaches high school English there).

In addition to directing the academic portion of the annual Russian Festival (which included her own lecture on “Legends of the Missing Amber Room”), Rypma lectured on “Therapeutic Uses of Amber in Baltic Folklore” at Bronson Hospital and led a WMU Alumni Association Book Club discussion on Steve Berry’s suspense novel, *The Amber Room*.

**Staff News**

Bethlynn Sanders is the recipient of the Dean’s Staff and Faculty Appreciation Award. The award recognizes “the great work done over the past year by exemplary staff and faculty” who have “performed well beyond the call of duty.”

**Phi Beta Kappa**, the oldest academic honor society in the country (1776--), has invited the following English majors to join:

Bannon T. Backhus
Sara Bijani
Laura J. Citino
Marie K. Kutz-Marks
Victoria L. Mansberger
Maureen E. Murphy
April M. Porter
Viola K. Riddle
Elizabeth S. Scramlin
Rodger J. Swan
Philip M. Taylor
Daniel W. Brian
Hannah C. Markel
Micealya Moses
Chelsea Thorpe
The culmination of more than a decade of cooperation with Prague’s Charles University, the Prague Summer Program offers writers, photographers and students of culture from a variety of backgrounds the opportunity to be mentored by some of the biggest names in contemporary English-language literature and world photography, as well as by luminaries of Central European culture.

All alumni of WMU’s Department of English are guaranteed a John Woods Scholarship of $750 to $1,000 as a tuition reduction toward a four-week enrollment (two-week option also available, scholarships halved). Additionally, the PSP welcomes alumni and current and former department faculty to visit the program if they are in the region while it is underway.

The eager novice and the seasoned professional alike are mentored with equal seriousness and respect. For the month of July, participants will be members of a unique and vital community of artists and students of art and culture. Unmarked by the wars and brutal occupations it has suffered, Prague is considered by many the most beautiful European city. If indeed Prague has been “the Left Bank of the ‘90s,” as has been asserted in the world media, the Prague Summer Program has contributed significantly to that lofty designation.

The PSP offers morning creative writing workshops in four genres and three culture and social studies courses in the afternoon: Czech Literature, American Literature from European Perspectives, and Jewish Studies. Additionally, the PSP photography offerings reflect the PSP philosophy that strong arts pedagogy dovetailed with culture studies results in a deeply enriching experience.

To learn more about the program, contact PSP Faculty Director Richard Katrovas or PSP Coordinator Margaret von Steinen by calling (269) 387-2594, or write prague@wmich.edu.

Comprehensive program information is accessible online at: www.praguesummer.com

Frostic Travel Grants were Received by the Following TA’s for PSP

Christopher Carter
Andrea England
Joseph Gross
Marcus Johnson
Robert Kirkbride
James Miranda
Isle Schweitzer
Chad Sweeney
Karen Wurl
James Pray

Scenery of Prague

Footnotes Committee
Beth Amidon, Chair
Meg Dupuis
JD Dolan
Karen Vocke
Alyssa Worden, Intern

The Five of Hearts was the name given by its members, all five of whom were friends of long standing: Henry and Clover Adams, John and Clara Hay, and Clarence King. Adams was the historian of the quintet and had probably the deepest intellect. Unlike Adams, the ultimate figure of the New England/Harvard culture, John Hay was very much of the Middle West. Clarence King was an outstanding geologist.

Of the wives, Clover Adams was of great intelligence and was consequently all too aware of the restrictions placed on women in general and of intellectual women in particular. In contrast, Clara Hay was a woman of her time, not an intellectual or even one who questioned in any way “the way things are.”

It was Clarence King whom I found the most interesting of the group since I was unaware of the loss of his father early on in Clarence’s life and that his mother later married a man who was not sympathetic to the young boy. What was fatally lacking was a business sense; the resulting series of financial reverses and the pressure of a clandestine marriage to a black lady marked him as a total failure in his own eyes and in the eyes of others.

Hay’s career began as a secretary to Lincoln and went on to include the ambassadorship to Great Britain and the cabinet position of Secretary of State. Appointed by McKinley, the position turned to ashes for him when Theodore Roosevelt became President and became essentially his own Secretary of State.

Henry Adams is the main subject of O’Toole’s work. Put simply, Adams was a mixture of a mandarin and one’s benevolent uncle. One sees in his marriage to Clover a relationship similar to that of Soames Forsyte and his Irene, the main characters in Galsworthy’s saga. The difference is that Adams was not cruel to Clover, but rather that his intellect smothered any attempt of Clover to engage in any exercise of her background as a sensitive, well read, and insightful person.

Adams the art connoisseur and Adams the historian are the personae who are the most interesting. The Education of Henry Adams remains one of the two greatest American autobiographies. More than an autobiography, that work is a reflection on the age of multiplicity, a contrast to his Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres which had been a study of an age of unity.

Scholarship, effective use of sources, and a smooth style make this a great read.

-Bob Bradley

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**For more information contact jbush@wmich.edu**
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