

# News from the Third Floor

The Newsletter of the Department of English and Languages  
East Central University, Ada, Oklahoma

Visit our home page at [http://www.ecok.edu/english\\_languages/index.htm](http://www.ecok.edu/english_languages/index.htm)

## Literary Arts Festival

The 12th Annual Literary Arts Festival was held Thursday, November 9, 2007. The Oklahoma Literary Arts Festival is an exciting event designed to stir love for the literary arts in students and teachers alike. Through various workshops and activities taught by ECU faculty and upper-level students, as well as select guest presenters, 9th-12th grade students explored the many facets of literary arts. Twenty students from each high school are permitted to attend sessions. Each year the festival gets bigger. Director Teresa Rothrock admits that, even though they fill every slot available with student sessions, schools always get turned down. However, she believes that the new Fine Arts building will alleviate the overcrowding. One special guest this year was a cast ensemble from the Cross Timbers Theatre Company, who presented the Complete Works of William Shakespeare.

The Festival is a part of the Scissortail Series, funded by a humanities grant. Dr. Eril Hughes began the Literary Arts Festival, but Dr. Teresa Rothrock, the current festival director, has

headed it for five years now.

## English Classes Provide Service Learning Credit

In compliance with the new university policy on service learning, the English Department will provide service learning components in *Originals* Practicum, Technical Writing, and upper-division creative writing classes, as well as service learning units professors may incorporate into additional classes.

## Dept. Acquires New Faculty

**Dr. Jennifer McMahon**, a new faculty member this year, replaces Dr. Lewis Parkhill as the chair of the Department of English and Languages. McMahon and her husband originally moved to central Oklahoma to pursue their dream of running a full-size cattle ranch—a dream they have achieved with their 950-acre cattle ranch near Stratford. After teaching for a year at the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, McMahon relocated her career closer to home at East Central University. McMahon and her husband have two children, ages three and five.

**Dr. Robin Murphy** is another one of the newest members of the faculty here on the third floor. She has a PhD from Bowling Green State University in Ohio. She received both of her masters degrees from NSU in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, and her bachelors degree from Oklahoma State University. She is married to an ECU Alumnus and has no children - with the exception of her 15½ year old weenie dog, Norman. She had numerous reasons why she was drawn to East Central University, including her origins in southeastern Oklahoma and her desire to work with students much like herself—it was a “back to my roots” decision, she says. She further mentioned that East Central’s student-centered philosophy aligned closely with her own desire to offer one-on-one help for students. After meeting other faculty and some students, she felt at home here at East Central University.

## Scissortail Writing Festival

**Dr. Ken Hada** is very proud of his success with the Scissortail Creative Writing Festival on the ECU campus the past two years. He will be directing the upcoming

Third Annual Scissortail Creative Writing Festival April 3-5, 2008. He expects over 50 authors, including Dayna Dunbar, Phil Heldrich, Diane Glancy, Jim Barnes, Rilla Askew, Tim Tingle, Carol Hamilton, and many more. He urges all English majors, as well as the rest of the department, to attend this spring. Anyone who wants more information should contact him at khada@ecok.edu.

### **Sigma Tau Activities**

Sigma Tau Delta is the National English Honor Society. Our local chapter, Upsilon Pi, is sponsored by Dr. John Yozzo and new co-sponsor Dr. Joshua Grasso. The local chapter has been working with the English club Literati to sponsor a movie night. Sigma Tau is also planning both a fall and spring induction ceremony for new members. For more information contact John Yozzo at 559-5546.

### **Literati News**

Meetings for Literati are now underway. The club usually meets in the afternoon or evenings in room 340 of Horace Mann. Literati is a place where students can meet with their peers and discuss literary mediums such as literature, film, and poetry. "Literati is a low-key social academic club," says Dr. Teresa Rothrock, who is now in her second year as the club's sponsor. The club is not limited to English majors but is open to any academic interest. Membership is still open.

There is a membership fee of \$5.00, however food is provided at meetings, along with

intellectual companionship. For more information on club activities, contact Dr. Teresa Rothrock at trothrock@ecok.edu.

### **Honors News**

The Honors Program, headed by **Dr. Trisha Yarbrough**, has many new projects going on this year. The year started with the annual convocation, with Dr. Barton giving the address. At the end of the ceremony the Honors Student Association dedicated the bench in the Honor Plaza to Dr. Dennis Boe, former Honors Director. Students raised the money for the bench with help from a sizable contribution from the MENC (Music Educators National Conference).

The new Honors Dorm in Knight Hall has been established and there are high hopes for its success. The dorm offers a living/learning community for honors students where many activities for students will occur. The honors faculty will schedule course-related activities in the hall. These activities are meant to create a more informal atmosphere between the students and faculty. Dr. Yarbrough says the dorms will overall "foster a sense of community."

Dr. Yarbrough is very proud of the progress the Honors Program has made. She said many more students are opting to write an Honors thesis rather than do small assignments. She sees this as a "positive sign." There are also many projects and presentations to look forward to, both on and off campus. There are currently 25 Honors projects and all of them will be presented, whether in class or other activities, on campus this semester; double the amount of last year. Out of these 25, 13 projects

will be presented off campus at events like Research Day or in print publications. Some students will present at the Great Plains Honor Conference, which is held annually in the spring semester. There will also be numerous fundraisers and service projects throughout the year. Everything will culminate in the annual banquet, at which awards will be distributed.

### **Student News**

**Caleb Holton** presented a paper at the Southwest Christianity and Literature Conference in Dallas this September. His was the only undergraduate paper accepted.

**Katie Beth Benson** and **Sara Caldwell** lead a discussion session at the International Writing Center Association Conference last April. Dr. Kevin Davis was program chair for the conference and also presented a paper.

**Rachel Miller** presented her paper, "The Uncolonized Colony: The Postcolonial Poetry of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Japan," at the 2007 Alpha Chi National Honor Conference in San Antonio this past March. She later tied for first place with Cristin Davis in the Academic Excellence Day competition on the ECU campus.

**Charlotte Weber** was married on January 5, 2008 to Michael Freeman. The ceremony was held at Calvary Baptist Church in Shawnee.

**Holly Dunegan** and her husband are celebrating the birth of their first child, a daughter named Grace, this past spring.

## Faculty News

**Dr. Jennifer McMahon** has added a significant number of pieces to her resume, including two in-print publications. The first is an essay entitled "The Existential Frankenstein," published in the *Philosophy of Science Fiction*, and the second is "After Hours: Scorsese on Absurdity," published in the *Philosophy of Martin Scorsese*. Also, Dr. McMahon is currently preparing essays profiling characters in entertainment, both on television and on the silver screen. TV figures include House, M.D. ("House M.D.: A Misanthrope's Message on Sociality," published in *House, M.D. and Philosophy*) and Jack Bauer ("24's Jack Bauer, Noir Hero, Existential Man of Revolt," published in *The Philosophy of TV Noir*). An example of a movie piece is *Lost In Translation* ("Momentarily Lost: Finding the Moment in *Lost In Translation*," published in *Finding the Ox: Buddhism and American Culture*).

**Dr. Joshua Grasso** has achieved a number of academic distinctions as well. This spring, he presented his paper "What A Vast and Charming World He Had Been Master Of: Travel Writing and Colonial Innocence in Behn's *Oroonoko*" at the SEASECS (Southeastern Association of the Society for Eighteenth Century Studies) at Auburn University, February 14-17, 2007. Also, he presented "Behold These Meadows Stocked with Cattle: Expectations of Englishness in the *Journals of Captain Cook*" at the South

Central Society for Eighteenth Century Studies conference February 22-24, 2007. Also, Dr. Grasso had six entries – three on V. S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas* and three on Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* – accepted to the Encyclopedia of General Themes in Literature, Facts on File, Inc., to be published in 2009.

**Dr. Teresa Rothrock** was accepted for two presentations at the CCCC in New Orleans, which will be held in April of 2008. The presentations are "The Making of a Writing Teacher: How Writing Center Pedagogy Informs Writing Teacher Education" and "Conflicting Realities of the Five-Paragraph Essay". Also, this April, she presented at the International Writing Centers Association Conference held in Houston. She is on the OCTE Executive Board as College Chair and Web Director. She is also on the Governing Board for the Oklahoma Writing Project (second term), and serves as a judge for both NCTE Writing Achievement and Excellence in *Student Literary Magazine*.

**Dr. Mark Walling** scripted the film *When I Find Bin Laden*, which was produced by Phigment Films of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The film was accepted at over a dozen festivals, including The Night Gallery Film Festival - an international affair which screens at locations in the United States, Australia, and New Zealand during one week in October. Representatives from the Screen Actors Guild, The American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, Panasonic, and Spielberg/Dreamworks will award a

special "best overall" prize to one of the top ten films selected by audience ballot.

**Dr. Hugh Tribbey's** poetry chapbook *Asteroid* was published in June. *Asteroid*, along with Dr. Tribbey's other works *Finish Your Sentence*, *Juvjula Detours*, and *Orl Ful Rust*, were included in the Cherokee Strip Museum in an exhibit of Philips University authors for the Philips University Centennial. He also read his original poetry at the Centennial Reunion this past August. In February, Dr. Tribbey chaired a creative writing session at the Southwest/Texas Popular Association/ American Culture Association in Albuquerque, which included a performance by George Hartley, who wrote the first book length critical study of the Language poetry movement. In August and September, he participated in the Brewster Street Market open-mike night and was the featured author of the open-mike in October. Dr. Tribbey continues to be the Area Chair for Experimental Writing and Aesthetics for the SW/TX PCA/ACA conference. He has also placed ten poems in Peter Ganick's Archive Project: *Spaltung* and *We*.

**Dr. Mara Sukholuts kaya** went to China in June as a participant in the Chinese Bridge to American Schools program. She had the opportunity to visit universities, elementary schools, and high schools in Beijing and in the Henan province. She saw the Great Wall of China, the Forbidden City, Shao Lin monastery, and other unique cultural sites.

Dr. Sukholuts kaya also took 18

people (students and community members) on a Study Abroad trip to Ukraine and Russia. They visited Kiev, Moscow, and St. Petersburg. Two classes were offered in conjunction with the trip.

She presented a paper at a Regional (SWCOLT) Conference in Las Vegas in April.

She also presented a paper at an International Russian Language Congress of MAPRYL in Varna, Bulgaria in September.

She worked during the summer on the Merit Pay Committee, and received an International Ambassador of Cultural Exchange Award from the Russian-American Center in Dallas in February 2007. In addition to receiving an ECU Teaching Excellence Award, she supervised the approval of a Russian Area Studies Minor by the Board of Regents.

**Dr. Ken Hada** has been very busy this year, publishing many pieces and participating in three conferences in the past year. Besides the Scissortail Festival, Dr. Hada has also served as Review Scholar for the biannual Red Dirt Book Festival in Shawnee, and as Area Chair for Literature: Ecocriticism & the Environment, for the Southwest/Texas Popular Culture Association meeting in Albuquerque.

Despite his busy schedule, Dr. Hada has written and published a number of papers and poems in the past year. He wrote "The Power to Undo Sin: Race, History and Literary Blackness in Rilla Askew's *Fire in Beulah*," which will be published in the October 2007 edition of *College*

*Literature*. Next, he published "Voices in the Earth: How Regional Writing Validates the Other," in the November 2006 edition of the *Journal of the American Studies Association of Texas*. He also published "Thinking Ecology in First-Year Composition Courses" in the Spring 2007 edition of the *Oklahoma English Journal*.

Besides his papers, Hada has enjoyed some success at publishing his poetry. His poem, "The Tornado" was published by *Crosstimbers: A Multicultural, Interdisciplinary Journal*, in the Spring/Summer 2007. "Blue River" was selected by *Meridian Anthology of Contemporary Poetry*. Lastly, "Dominos" was published in the Fall 2007 issue of *Kansas City Voices*.

As if that impressive list were not enough, Hada also published several book reviews. *Texas Books* published his review of *John Graves, Writer*, edited by Mark Busby and Terrell Dixon. *Concho River Review* (Spring 2007) published his review of *Out Here In The Out There: Essays in a Region of Superlatives and Good Friday* by Philip Heldrich. Lastly, the *Journal of the West* (Winter 2007) published his review of *Chickasaw Society and Religion*, by John Swanton, and also a review of *Crossing the Rio Grande: An Immigrant's Life in the 1880's* by Luis Gomez.

One highlight of **Dr. Kevin Davis'** year was attending the International Writing Centers Association conference. The International Writing Centers Association has well over 2,000 members, and held their annual conference in Houston last April at the Magnolia Hotel, hosted by the University of Houston. Dr. Davis

served as program chair for the conference, and was responsible for selecting and scheduling all of the sessions. Two Writing Center Consultants (who are both English majors), Sara Caldwell (a senior from Ada) and Katie Beth Benson (a junior from Cleburne, TX) accompanied Dr. Davis to the conference. Benson and Caldwell lead an open discussion for peer writing consultants attending the conference, one of a special series of informal "conversations" which were held to give conference participants an opportunity to discuss the issues which concerned them. During the conference, Dr. Davis presented a session entitled "Opus 64 for Cello and Word Processor," which was an examination of how his learning to play the cello (again, after a 25-year hiatus) refined his understanding of what students learning to write were attempting to accomplish, and how those attempts are acts not just of learning but of bravery.

Dr. Davis' own playing has progressed to the point that he now plays with the OK Community Orchestra in Edmond, an 80 member symphony which performs four solo concerts a year while also accompanying the Yukon Ballet on December performances of The Nutcracker Ballet.

**John Yozzo** admits he has been too busy for publication. He continues to write poetry, and hopes to read at Albuquerque this spring. He taught six classes this fall term, including two honors classes. Yozzo observes, "I've never been this old."

## Alumni News

**Aaron Gwyn's** short story, "Mate," which appeared in *McSweeney's Quarterly*, was Outback." She graduated in 2001.

**Rebekah Campbell (now Rebekah Powell)**, a 2001 graduate, is attending New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, NM, pursuing a masters in Rhetoric and Composition.

**Carla Rogers** is now working as a librarian at Eastern Oklahoma State College in Wilburton.

**Dallas Fields** is teaching 8th and 9th grades, as well as a new humanities course, at Dove Science Academy in Oklahoma City.

The following Spring 2007 graduates are teaching at high schools in Oklahoma and Texas: **Kerri Duke**, Rush Springs, OK; **Starlene Harper**, Moyers, OK; **Katie Pershall**, Killeen, Texas; **Kara Taylor**, Stuart, OK; **Sarah Moore**, Guthrie, OK.

**Judd Morse** is adjunct teaching first-year composition at Ardmore Higher Education Center.

**Katie Percy**, a 1998 graduate, is currently working as an adjunct faculty member at Murray State.

**Marta Johnson**, a 1998 graduate, is on faculty at Southern Methodist University.

**Leslie Briggs (now Leslie Cook)** now works for the Chickasaw Nation as an assistant grant writer.

**Staci Freeman** is beginning her first year of graduate school in English at OSU.

**DeCarla Wallgren**, ECU grad and former English major, was recently named Teacher of the Month, for October, by the Administration of Maud Schools.

recognized as **one of the top one-hundred short stories of 2006 in *Best American Short Stories***.

**Jenny Campbell's** essay, "A Heroic Date," originally written for

**Major Tom Hurley**, a 1993 graduate, is currently working as a JAG attorney and is stationed with his wife in Savannah, GA. He will soon be deployed to Iraq.

**Jeremy Streetman** is pursuing a masters in Library Science at OU. He and his wife run a knitting store in Norman.

**Cristin Davis** presented "The World Beyond the Page: The Ideal Marriage of Optimism, Pessimism, and Ecological Criticism," in the Southwest/Texas Popular Culture Association in Albuquerque, NM. She later tied with Rachel Miller for first place in the Academic Excellence Day Competition on the ECU campus. She graduated in May 2007.

**Sheridan Irick** presented "God in the Box: The Rhetoric of Televangelism" at the 2007 Alpha Chi National Honor Conference in San Antonio this past March. She graduated in May and is enrolled at the M. Div. program at Southern Methodist University at Dallas.

**Adam Hampton** is celebrating the birth of his first child, a son named Ford Spencer. He has completed his third film with Outsiders Productions and is employed as a social worker in Pottawatomie County.

**Alicia (Cook) Ivy** and her husband, David, are celebrating the birth of their first child, a daughter, last summer.

an ECU course, has been published in *Range*, a quarterly magazine which describes itself as "The Cowboy Spirit on America's