

Write Now!

Fall 2008 • University of Delaware Department of English Alumni Newsletter

ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Blue Hen Erinn Batykefer Wins Red Hen Book Award

ASHLEY HORAN AND DEREK SPENCER

From blue to red, this former hen has changed her colors and found her niche in the world of creative writing. Erinn Batykefer attributes her recent success largely to time spent here at the University.



Erinn Batykefer

Batykefer, a 2004 graduate of the University of Delaware's creative writing program, has won the Red Hen Benjamin Saltman First Book Prize for her manuscript *Allegheny, Monongabela*. Chosen from approximately 2,000 entries, *Allegheny, Monongabela* "uses the confluence of rivers in Pittsburgh as a metaphorical lens to investigate the emotional collisions between the world and the self in a complex and difficult sibling and family relationship." The manuscript is her first poetry collection.

The Benjamin Saltman First Book Prize is important for Batykefer because "Winning a prize is one of the only ways for a first book (and often second or third book, if your first press isn't one to retain their authors) to get published." She believes that having her book published has legitimized her as a writer. "In a lot of ways, it makes you an official poet or writer," she says.

But this wasn't always Batykefer's dream for herself. In fact, if you had asked her when she was in high school what she pictured herself doing in ten years, she would most likely have answered with a paintbrush in hand, not a pen. Batykefer, like many students, had

a change of heart upon completing her first year at the University of Delaware. "What I wanted to be in high school wasn't the same as what I was growing into," says Batykefer. "As part of the foundations curriculum, I took an art history course and realized how much I missed reading and writing about art and literature."

Batykefer's advisor at the time, and still a close friend today, Professor Cruce Stark suggested UD's writing workshops, which turned out to be a step in precisely the right direction. "I submitted an application for Jeanne Walker's beginning poetry workshop and was accepted for Fall 2001, my sophomore year," Batykefer recalls. "I immediately realized this was exactly what I needed to do. I couldn't get enough of writing, workshopping, talking about writing, editing—I was so happy to know what I wanted to do that I flung myself into it."

As an undergraduate at UD, Batykefer took every creative writing class offered. She also worked as an editor for *Caesura* and received a Summer Scholar grant. Post-graduation, Batykefer received two Alumni Grants and had the opportunity to work with Professors Jeanne Walker, Marilyn Nelson, Bernie Kaplan, and Cruce Stark—all of whom remain her close friends and advisors.

She attributes her success as a writer thus far to the many opportunities she was afforded as an undergraduate here at UD. "I feel so lucky to have had gone to Delaware when it had a strong, workshop-driven creative writing program."

Batykefer is keeping busy these days as the Stadler Poetry Fellow at Bucknell University. "The Stadler is a two-year, post-MFA fellowship that gives emerging artists both the time to write and a chance for professional development that you just can't get from most MFA programs," she explains. As an Associate Editor, Batykefer is learning the editing and arts administration skills that she believes will help her in a crowded job market.

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Message from the Chair



I hope this edition of *Write Now!* finds you well. Inside, you will discover news about us, but also about yourselves. We have featured the accomplishments of a number of our alumni—people who are publishing, teaching, reporting, and working in ways that attract attention. You will find news of department programs, including initiatives to involve undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty on collaborative research teams. And you can read about our interdisciplinary partnerships with the Center for Material Culture Studies, under the leadership of Professor Debby Andrews and with the involvement of many faculty.

You can read about our new hires in composition, journalism, and English Education. We will continue to hire in these fields this year, as well as in 19th-century British literature. We occasionally lose good faculty; most recently, Vinnie Piturro and Jim Furman both left us to take new positions at different universities. We are also faced with retirements — Lois Potter's, the Ned B. Allen Chair, was the most recent. We will miss her teaching of Renaissance literature and the life she brought to the department through her emphasis on dramatic performances and reading. Carl Dawson will also officially retire in December 2008. Professor Dawson was past chair, a masterful teacher, and a very accomplished scholar.

Many of you knew our administrative assistant, Dottie Carroll, who recently took her retirement. Dottie's voice was a cheerful, friendly, supportive one, and we miss her on a daily basis. In her place, we welcome Donna West, who brings an impressive history of work at Du Pont and UD. We will have additional turnover in our English office, as Suzanne Potts is retiring in December. We have relied on Suzanne for many years to help us coordinate our undergraduate programs and to help us on the technical side with our computers and software.

I am reminded to be grateful for the commitment of our many faculty and staff who continue the good work of the department. We continue to build a record of outstanding teaching and fine scholarship.

As I write, it was only a week ago that we received news that Leo Lemay had died. Leo was on a research appointment and had not been teaching the past couple of years, but he spent long hours everyday in his office, working on his definitive biography of Ben Franklin. Leo was an immense presence in the department for 31 years, influential on an international scope but also important to our graduate students and the many scholars he had trained who are now teaching at other universities. We were also saddened last spring by the death of Jan DeArmond, whom some of you knew as a leading faculty member and central presence in the department for 41 years. To help you appreciate the contributions of these two faculty, we have created a special two-page spread in this issue.

As I remark on these events, I am reminded to be grateful for the commitment of our many faculty and staff who continue the good work of the department. We continue to build a record of outstanding teaching and fine scholarship. And we continue to be grateful for the interest and support of our many alumni.

Stephen A. Bernhardt
Chair

WriteNow! Contributors

Editor: Kathryn A. M. Gamgort

Contributing writers:

Bridget Bialecki
Heather D. Boettger
Jesse F. Cusatis
Billy Desautels
Elizabeth Desimone
Jennifer Doyle
Stefani Farmer
Sean Feeley
Diana Gialo
Supraja Gudimallam
David D. Haring
Ashley Horan
William E. Jennings
Joseph Kammerer
Katie Kerr
Phylcia Rose
Joe Sorrels
Derek Spencer

To contact the editor, faculty and other alumni, write to:

WriteNow! Alumni Newsletter
Department of English
212 Memorial Hall
University of Delaware
Newark, DE 19716-2537
or e-mail english@udel.edu

www.english.udel.edu

The True Author of *True Confessions of a Hollywood Starlet*: Lara Zeises

JENNIFER DOYLE AND ELIZABETH DESIMONE



Lara Zeises a.k.a. Lola Douglas

Lara Zeises is Lola Douglas. Lola Douglas is Lara Zeises. It can be confusing, but at the end of the day, Lara Zeises and her pen name/alter ego Lola Douglas have become successful young adult writers. Writing as Lola Douglas, Zeises produced *True Confessions of a Hollywood Starlet* and *More Confessions of a Hollywood Starlet*—two books that have captured the attention of teenagers across the United States. With five successful published books and one book made into a *Lifetime Original* movie, this author, who describes herself as “a dorkus extremus and pop culture junkie,” has earned national recognition. Despite her recent Hollywood publicity, the author of *Hollywood Starlet* stays close to her University of Delaware roots.

As an English major, Zeises not only learned the fundamentals of writing, she also found strong mentor relationships with her professors. At age 16, Zeises met Professor Cruce Stark, who would be her mentor for over half her life. In college, her journalism professor, Harris Ross, constantly pushed her to do her best by calling her out in class and showing her work. Both Professors Stark and Ross have remained Zeises’s mentors to this day.

While earning her M.F.A. in creative writing at Emerson, Zeises published *Bringing Up the Bones* and *Contents Under Pressure*. *Bringing Up the Bones* earned the Delacorte Press Prize in 2001, while *Contents Under Pressure* won the Blue Hen Teen Book Award in 2006.

Zeises’s last book, *Anyone But You*, won the Teen People Top 10 Pick. The adaptation of the book *True Confessions of a Hollywood Starlet* into a movie, which stars Joanna “JoJo” Levesque and Valerie Bertinelli, has also created a new group of Lola Douglas fans.

Although Zeises graduated from UD with a concentration in journalism, her dream was to work in television. The writer’s strike in January 2008 gave her that opportunity. The strike led to some production problems for *Lifetime’s* adaptation of her book. Because members of the production crew were unable to cross picket lines, Zeises finished the movie adaptation by doing voiceovers. Although thrilled with the opportunity, she prefers her life as a teen fiction writer.

The future for Zeises is quite busy. Lola Douglas is currently working on her next book, *Forget You* (Spring 2010), while Zeises is releasing *The Sweet Life of Stella Madison* (July 2009) and planning a February 2010 wedding. Zeises plans to continue her career as a writer for young adults because the genre is “different, raw, honest, and gets straight to the heart of the matter.”

Alumnus Wins the Drue Heinz Literature Prize

BILLY DESAUTELS AND JOE SORRELS

Thirteen years after graduating from the University of Delaware with an English degree, Anthony Varallo gained critical acclaim among his literary peers when he was awarded the John Simmons Short Fiction Award for his book, *This Day in History*. Three short years later, he’s done it again. His short story collection, *Out Loud*, won the prestigious 2008 Drue Heinz Literature Prize earlier this year.

Many of Varallo’s inspirations for writing came from reading, as well as his life experiences in Delaware. “Growing up in Delaware had a lot to do with my being a writer,” he says, citing the variety of scenery and the slower-paced lifestyle as inspirations that stuck with him throughout the



Anthony Varallo

years. “I feel like all of my stories are somehow set in a fictive Delaware.”

“The stories more emotionally reflect my own experiences,” he continues, “and by that I mean the feelings that the characters are feeling are drawn upon things that I recognize from my own life.” Varallo says that while the emotional elements of his stories are influenced by things he felt and experienced, the characters themselves are not directly related and the events did not necessarily happen. “If there’s a father character, it’s not my father, it’s not my brother, it’s not my high school teacher,” Varallo explains. Rather, his writing is more hypothetical, using intellectual and emotional experiences to frame his stories.

Varallo starts his stories with a single character or scene and branches from that point to make a story, but he does not have a specific direction he plans to take it from the beginning. “I’m convinced anything I’m writing is the worst thing I’ve ever written,” he says, “and then, somehow, you get to the end.” He gets his joy from writing stories others can relate to and enjoy. “The rewards

of writing, it’s writing itself,” Varallo says. “If I write just one good sentence a day I’d be happy. That’s all I want out of my own writing.”

Varallo’s desire to write started in his childhood, but was further developed with his first English creative writing course with Professor Bernard Kaplan. “He was a good teacher for me,” Varallo remembers.

“He was the first professor to ask me, ‘How are you writing a story?’” Varallo explains that

Professor Kaplan encouraged him to write by not being harsh with his criticisms, advice a fledgling writer needs.

While his writing is somewhat rooted in his own life, Varallo does not write with a message for the reader, another lesson he learned from Professor Kaplan. “I don’t have any messages for anyone and I try to discourage my students from doing that, because any time you’re doing that, you’re trying to out-fox your story—you’re trying to be smarter than your story. You want your story to be smarter than you.”

So far, most of Varallo’s success as a writer centers on his many short stories, but he said that he is writing a novel. He says he also enjoys reading novels and

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loves developing characters. He would like to stick with a character throughout a whole novel, but he has a habit of moving on to something else.

"I feel that my ability is somehow more suited to the short story, but that's just my limitation as a writer," he says. "I read a lot of short stories so I write a lot of short stories, and that's a big reason why I'm a short story writer. I just love the form. I write short stories because I really, really love them."

Varallo still manages to be humble, saying his latest award was fortunate. "It reminds me that a lot of being a writer is really, in part, luck," he says.

In addition to the honor it affords, the Drue Heinz Literature Prize also includes a \$15,000 award. So, how did Varallo spend the money? "I put it in the bank," Varallo says, saving the prize for his wife and two children.

He says he felt that being an English major at UD was a great experience. The variety of courses offered him insight into the world of literature and his semester abroad in London, England, brought more insight into world literatures. In fact, Varallo admits to still having his old Norton Anthology with him.

After he graduated from the University of Delaware, Varallo went to the University of Iowa for his Master's degree in fiction and ultimately earned a doctorate in creative writing from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 2005. He is now an assistant professor of creative writing at the College of Charleston.

UD Doctoral Graduate Receives New Hampshire's Top Award in Education

HEATHER D. BOETTGER

When interviewed for the New Hampshire College and University Council's Excellence in Education Award, Meaghan Byrne Cronin (Ph.D. '93) was dubious after her interview. "I thought I blew it," she said.



Meaghan Byrne Cronin

But the Council was more optimistic and awarded the "ED"ie to Cronin, an associate professor of English at Saint Anselm College in Manchester, in June 2006. Criteria for the award include outstanding classroom teaching, strong rapport with students and colleagues, and the desire to encourage independent thought and intellectual development. It is the state's highest educational honor.

"As both a scholar and faculty member, [Dr. Cronin] epitomizes the very best qualities of educational excellence," says Thomas Horgan, president of the Council. "She is dedicated to the individual success of every student." Saint Anselm enthusiastically agrees. When asked for comment, the response from students and faculty members across the college was quick and vigorous.

"She is perhaps the most popular faculty member in the English department," says fellow professor and longtime colleague Ann Norton, who notes that Dr. Cronin's classes on Romantic and Victorian literature are always filled to capacity. "While Professor Cronin treats students with disarming courtesy and empathy, she demands their highest efforts and never takes shortcuts in grading or instruction."

"Professor Cronin expects students to participate and talk about their own interpretations or reactions to literature," says Siobhan Geary, a senior English major at Saint Anselm who has taken several of Dr. Cronin's classes. "She creates a laid-back, student-driven atmosphere that encourages us to really think about and discuss what we're reading."

Cronin attributes her teaching style to her graduate experience at Delaware. She credits the University's English department—particularly former graduate program director Charlie Robinson and writing program head George Miller—as a defining influence on her approach. "George and Charlie taught flexibility, ingenuity, and engagement," she says of her mentors. "They

"She is perhaps the most popular faculty member in the English department," says fellow professor and longtime colleague Ann Norton, who notes that Dr. Cronin's classes on Romantic and Victorian literature are always filled to capacity.

showed me that teaching at students might provide them momentarily with your expertise or knowledge, but not with the ability to learn, to think, to analyze or to write."

Upon completing her Ph.D. in 1993, Cronin applied her Delaware experience to teaching at Saint Anselm, where she feels most challenged by devising ways to engage students and striving to meet their individual

needs. "As a teacher, you realize that students don't necessarily know how to come to where I am in a more experienced reading of literature," Cronin states. "I need to lead them there, and there are so many ways to do that."

Anna Daigle, a junior chemistry major, agrees. "Students are encouraged to bring in their own opinions, experiences and backgrounds. Some of the most interesting and educational moments have been when two people's opinions conflict."

Cronin also credits Delaware's commitment to scholastic breadth and the "well-rounded student" for developing her appreciation for academic and intellectual diversity. Indeed, Cronin has freely taken on many challenges outside the scope of Saint Anselm's English department. In her 15 years at the college, Cronin has held a seat on the Faculty Senate, served as interim chair for the Department of Fine Arts and Music, advised English majors and undeclared students, and recently produced a student performance of *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

"Professor Cronin has consistently and cheerfully taken on more than her share of work," says Norton. "She brings to all these activities unfailing energy and good will—her efforts are always wholehearted and effective."

In her spare time, Cronin coordinates the college's freshman composition program and facilitates a biannual "Mind over Major" conference in which students from various disciplines discuss their best work. Outside of Saint Anselm, she has also served on a five-person leadership team who—in only six months—reorganized, purchased, and renovated the Villa Augustina School, a Catholic elementary/middle school in Goffstown, NH, formerly owned and run by the Religious of Jesus and Mary.

In Cronin's view, a small, Catholic liberal arts college like Saint Anselm provides unique breadth opportunities. "We don't have an ivory tower here," she jokes. "The presence of the Benedictine monastery reminds us that we need to express our best selves in *everything* we do—not just the classroom."

Like her mentors at Delaware, Cronin maintains her modesty in the face of glowing admiration on all sides. "I think the best qualities of teaching are those that come naturally," she says. "When you have a group or a body commending that, you think, 'why would I be any other way?'"

Recent UD Grad Receives News Award

SEAN FEELEY AND STEFANI FARMER

"Set yourself aside from what everyone else is doing and find your own compelling side of the story," advises Todd Frankel, a 1997 graduate of the English Department who recently won the deadline news reporting prize from the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) for distinguished writing. Specifically, he won the Jesse Laventhol Prize for Deadline News Reporting by an individual. Frankel prides himself on finding the most compelling angle of the story that he is covering. As he notes, "A dozen journalists can look at the same thing and many will report back the same thing. The trick is looking for something different."

Frankel has a long list of achievements, including several prestigious national awards. In 2002, he received the Casey Medal for Meritorious Journalism and the Sigma Chi Delta award for Feature Writing. In 2006, he was a finalist for the 2006 National Livingston Award. Frankel credits much of his success to the education he received at UD. As a matter of fact, he won one of his first awards here, on campus, for fiction writing. Back in 1993, Frankel was a freshman business major, sitting in one of his accounting classes when he thought he heard his professor talk about "parables." This piqued his interest, until he realized she was talking about "payables." That was when he knew he was in the wrong major.

It wasn't until his sophomore year



Todd Frankel

that Frankel officially decided to switch to English. "I liked writing," he says, "and I wanted to get paid to write. What a thrilling idea that seemed to me." However, it was not until much later that he realized he wanted to write for newspapers.

Making the change to English as his course of study set Frankel on the path of success he follows today. Some of the experiences that stand out most to him are his literary journal seminar, taught by Professor Kevin Kerrane, and a technical writing class he took with Professor Deborah Andrews that focused on the "nitty gritty of writing." Professor Kerrane convinced Frankel to enter a contest for a news writing and editing fellowship with the Poynter Institute for media studies. Frankel took the chance, and landed a spot in the six-week program in Florida, which started after he graduated. "I don't really know what I'd be doing without it," he admits.

Frankel also recalls working with Ben Yagoda on his book, *About Town*. Yagoda, a journalism professor at UD, continues to invite students to help him with his published works.

Frankel is currently working for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch where he passes on advice to the English majors attending the University today. In His words, "Work hard, be curious, and take chances." Internships are very helpful as well; Frankel says that he wouldn't be where he is today without the knowledge he gained from the internships he held as a student at UD. "Journalism is, despite its troubles, an exciting career."

Back in 1993, Frankel was a freshman business major . . . when he thought he heard his professor talk about "parables." This piqued his interest, until he realized she was talking about "payables." That was when he knew he was in the wrong major.

Message from Ben Yagoda, Director of the Journalism Program

The journalism program at the University of Delaware is entering an exciting new phase. From the late 1970s through 2007, we offered a Journalism Concentration for English, History, Communication, and Political Science majors. Well over a thousand students graduated from the program; almost all of them were at one time writers or editors for the campus newspaper, *The Review*. Today they work at the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, the *Baltimore Sun*, CBS News and allhiphop.com; they write books about Barry Bonds and Charlemagne; they are lawyers and teachers; they work in communications for Vanguard Mutual Funds, Disneyland, and Del. Sen. Tom Carper.

For a variety of reasons, including the expanding and changing nature of journalism in the 21st century, the faculty decided last year to replace the concentration with a Journalism Minor, open to students in any major. English is working closely with Communication in this new minor so students can gain experience in broadcast and electronic journalism. The goal, as always, will be to teach writing, editing and analytical skills that will help some graduates pursue journalism as a profession, will assist others in a variety of different careers, and will prepare all of them to be sophisticated and lifelong consumers of the news.

You can find a list of UD alumni who studied journalism here, are working in journalism now, or both at www.english.udel.edu under Journalism Minor>Alumni. If you are not on the list, please e-mail byagoda@udel.edu to be added.

Spotlight on the Department

FACULTY NEWS

ENGLISH FACULTY AWARDED RESEARCH GRANTS

DIANA GIALO AND JOSEPH KAMMERER

American Literature is the center for recognition this fall! Three esteemed and respected UD English professors, Martin A Brückner, Susan Goodman, and Marcy Dinius, all specializing in American Literature and Material Culture Studies, have been awarded fellowships to continue research for their current book projects.

MARTIN A. BRÜCKNER

Martin A. Brückner, associate professor in the English department and Center for Material Culture Studies, has recently received a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) fellowship. According to the NEH website, the individual research initiative “provides grants to individuals devoted to advanced study and research in the humanities” and “provides scholars with research time and access to additional resources found outside of their home institutions.”

In spring 2009, Professor Brückner will begin his semester-long research leave at the Winterthur Museum & Country Estate in Winterthur, Delaware, to begin the last phase of research for his current book project. As described on the museum’s web page, Winterthur is an American country estate and the former home of Henry Francis du Pont (1880-1969), an avid antiques collector and horticulturist. It is also home to more than 85,000 objects made or used in America between 1640 and 1860. Here, Professor Brückner will have full access to paintings, prints, and drawings once owned by early Americans.

Author of *The Geographic Revolution in Early America: Maps, Literacy, and National Identity* (2006), Professor Brückner plans to continue his research on the cultural and social value of maps in North America between 1750

and 1850. The book discusses the nature and logic behind maps as a symbol in early-America. (See photo with NEH article on page 9 of this issue.)

Professor Brückner has also published articles in *English Literary History*, *American Literary History*, *American Quarterly*, and many other prominent text and online essay collections.

SUSAN GOODMAN

Susan Goodman, H. Fletcher Brown Chair of Humanities and Professor of American Literature, recently received a year-long National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) senior fellowship for 2009-10. This fellowship is part of the “We the People” program, aimed at expanding our knowledge of American history through the exploration of major events and cultural beliefs that define America.

Specializing in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century American literature, Professor Goodman will use the grant to continue research on her latest book project about *The Atlantic Monthly* magazine. *The Atlantic Monthly* was a unique publishing venue for a number of political and social writers, including minority authors who gained a national voice through the magazine. Her research will focus on the publication from 1857, the year in which it was founded, to 1925, when *The New Yorker* began its own publication.

This research is exciting for Professor Goodman. “Being a literary scholar,” she says, “is like being a detective.” From January 2009 through January 2010, she will sift through the many editions of the magazine to understand more about the lives of its writers. The University of Delaware library includes all the issues of *The Atlantic Monthly* and presents an ideal location for Professor Goodman to learn more about the authors who wrote for the magazine. This research will also provide a foundation for an upcoming graduate course on the magazine.

Professor Goodman’s achievements during her 14-year career at the University of Delaware include a number

of other books as well as several other prestigious fellowships. She has been the recipient of an Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship (2006), a Guggenheim Fellowship for Biography (2002-03), a William Dean Howells Memorial Fellowship in American Literature (2001), a Dorothy M. Healy Visiting Professorship at the University of New England, and a resident fellowship at the Virginia Center for the Humanities.

MARCY DINIUS

For a period of eight months starting September 1, 2008, Assistant Professor Marcy Dinius will conduct research at the Library of Congress in the nation’s capital on daguerreotypes and the cultural impact of this early form of photography. She has been awarded the John W. Kluge research fellowship, a nationally competitive fellowship that presents her with a great opportunity to enrich her study of early photography.

Daguerreotypes first interested Professor Dinius during her graduate school years at Northwestern University. This grant allows her to expand on her dissertation research on daguerreotypes and narrative.

She hopes to learn more about the impact of this early form of photography in a very interesting literary period. The Library of Congress has one of the largest collections of Augustus Washington’s daguerreotypes, probably best known for his daguerreotypes of John Brown. More specifically, the Library has the images Washington took of the first Liberian government and of the African American free blacks and freed slaves who resettled in Liberia.

The Library contains other invaluable resources as well, including speeches by Frederick Douglass that discuss the importance of early photography. Professor Dinius considers daguerreotypes an important cultural landmark that “gave people a new way of thinking about themselves and others, changed how they thought about the passing of time, measuring progress, and recording history.”

In support of this book project, Professor Dinius also received an Andrew

W. Mellon postdoctoral fellowship in 2005–2006 from the Penn Humanities Forum at the University of Pennsylvania and a General University Research grant from UD. This is, however, her first book project and one she hopes can “allow us to reframe and re-envision a moment of momentous artistic, political, technological, and social change.”

BLOGGING FROM INDIA

DORRY ROSS, INSTRUCTOR IN THE UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER

How can your students convince you that they are thinking critically about your course and relating it to their own lives? Last January, Dr. Carolyn Bitzer’s students did just that during a study abroad trip to India, and they did it by blogging in near real time.

As one of the English Department’s Writing Across the Curriculum consultants, I worked with Carolyn, a professor in Women’s Studies, when she pioneered her first study abroad trip to India in 2006. We developed two writing assignments. The first was a daily personal journal where each student mused on her activities and experiences. We expected these to be unprocessed, venting, reflective, whatever, and they were.

The second was a weekly 500-word entry in the class blog where each student dug into one topic or issue mentioned in her journal; the blogs had to meet much higher standards, not only for content and writing style, but also because they were part of an electronic community document, written for an audience of family members, friends, and people the students met in India. In other words, the students needed to be aware of content, word choice, and cultural biases due the readers’ varied viewpoints and backgrounds.

As part of that audience, I felt the students’ enthusiasm and sense of discovery jumping off the page. There was no doubt that they were expanding their knowledge and developing respect for a different culture. At the same time, both Carolyn and I realized that the students were not always relating their experiences and knowledge to the focus

of the course: gender relations—the roles, beliefs, and practices associated with being male or female.

For the 2008 study abroad program to India, Carolyn was awarded a Center for Teaching Effectiveness grant that included support for a Writing Across the Curriculum consultant to increase the students’ writing experiences and develop ways to assess their writing. We added storyboarding and podcasts assignments, and the students astonished us with their results (to see some of these go to www.udel.edu/WomensStudies/bitzer/winter2008/podcasts.html).

However, this article focuses on the blogs because they provided concrete proof of the students’ increased knowledge and self awareness. We tweaked the personal journals, encouraging students to write freely about any topic because these writings provided the inspiration for both the weekly blog entries and the podcasts. Before refining the blog assignments, we reread the 2006 blogs and chose two or three that exhibited the thinking and insights we were looking for; these served as models for the 2008 travelers. In addition, we added more readings on gender, race, class, caste, gaze, and privilege.

With this done, we reworked the assignment to have very specific requirements to encourage the students to write more reflective and focused entries—not only about their experiences in India, but also about the ways



“[W]e reworked the assignment to have very specific requirements to encourage the students to write more reflective and focused entries—not only about their experiences in India, but also about the ways these related to the goals of the course: personal growth, sensitivity towards another culture, and the nature of gender relations in Indian society as seen through a feminist lens.”

these related to the goals of the course: personal growth, sensitivity towards another culture, and the nature of gender relations in Indian society as seen through a feminist lens. The blog assignment also included detailed grading criteria, ranging from language sensitivity to audience awareness to reflecting on the way the topic had influenced (or not influenced) the writer’s view of gender

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SPOTLIGHT ON THE DEPARTMENT
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relations in India and the United States. The students used these as a checklist before posting their blogs.

Did these focused blogs meet Carolyn's and my expectations? Keep reading and judge for yourself.

One student commented about the practice of prenatal sex selection, noting ". . . such 'advances' will only make it easier for women to be selected against. My life would have been different in so many ways if my parents lived in India. That is the thing about culture. It becomes so much a part of person that it is hard to say how you would act if what you knew was something completely different from what you know now."

After learning more about globalization, another student wrote, "I feel fortunate to have the opportunity to see the other side of globalization that I had never seen in a classroom. While I still support the benefits of it, seeing the consequences of globalization firsthand gives me a greater understanding and desire to help the people who get overlooked. Hopefully, my eyes will stay open throughout this trip, as I continue to learn what textbooks never teach me."

One blog looked at the economic realities Indian women face. "There is a patriarchal assumption in this society [Indian] where men often implement their power as the head of the household despite women's enormous contribution," noted another student. She continued, "I find it baffling that women are still

perceived as a financial strain. . . Imagine the cost of paid labor to complete all the work that one woman accomplishes in a day. Why is there failure to recognize such hard labor and savings?"

Writing of the influence the media has, a student wrote, "Though the specifics—what's desirable and what must at all costs be changed—may vary across cultures, the overall idea, as far as I can tell, remains the same. Whether you live in Massachusetts or Mumbai, the media is constantly reinforcing the notion that there's one way to look. Anyone who can't fit within that mold becomes, to an extent, socially invisible."

Another student reflected on the observation made by one of the Indian instructors who said that when she [the instructor] visited some of the villages it was difficult for the men to digest that a woman could have so much freedom. She wrote, "I found this statement particularly interesting because it made me think more about why there was so much staring. For the most part I assumed that it was my skin color and my sex that garnered all of the stares, but I did not think about what those factors represented. My assertion of equality through simple acts like going to visit a factory may be seen as threatening to them. While I am trying to respect their cultural norms through my increasingly conservative dress, I cannot hide the fact that I am a woman in the public sphere."

This final sample muses on a weekend in the westernized city of Mumbai where the students visited a McDonald's and listened to Bruce Springsteen and Jennifer Lopez.

"I loved Mumbai with a passion, but my fun-filled weekend there perfectly highlighted the reason many Indians aren't so keen to embrace these newly westernized elements of their culture."

"But as much as I loved the quasi-American atmosphere of Mumbai, the visit presented some difficult questions. Do we really need a home away from home on the other side of the world? When a woman abandons her nation's traditional garments for trends from London and New York, is this simply a fashion choice, or is it perhaps a reflection of waning national pride. Is India truly benefitting from the introduction of Jennifer Lopez?"

I loved Mumbai with a passion, but my fun-filled weekend there perfectly highlighted the reason many Indians aren't so keen to embrace these newly westernized elements of their culture."

These focused blogs not only helped students clarify what they learned, but they also allowed readers to share in the excitement of learning. Best of all, they presented convincing evidence that the students have undergone a transformational learning experience.

ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS:
ERINN BATYKEFER

continued from page 1

The Fellowship also provides enough time for Batykefer to work on her literary pursuits. "Even though the editing duties I have at West Branch could easily add up to 8 hours a day, especially when we are getting ready to

go to press, the editor will send me home after the allotted 4 hours." This craft-first approach is something Batykefer loves about her job and about those with whom she works. "It is wonderful to work with people who are also writers and understand the kind of time necessary to produce literature."

Batykefer is currently working on her next book. She hopes to have the manuscript finished before she leaves

the Stadler Poetry Fellowship next year. *Allegheny*, *Monongabela* is tentatively scheduled for release in mid-February 2009.

"I can say, without doubt, that if Cruce had said, 'I'm sorry Batykefer, there are no English courses like that,' when I told him I missed the studio, I would not be where I am."

DEPARTMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

NEH Challenge Grant Enriches Graduate Education and Promotes Public Engagement

BRIDGET BIALECKI WITH DEBBY ANDREWS



Students with coordinators Matt Kinservik (second row, left) and Joyce Hill Stoner (first row, right) on last day of the 2-week institute in June 2008

The English department is one of seven departments and graduate programs on campus awarded a \$500,000 challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to support graduate education and scholarship in material culture and to promote public interest and engagement in the interpretation and preservation of America's cultural heritage. The university must match the challenge grant with \$2 million through fundraising.

In awarding the grant, the NEH cited the University's international reputation as a leader in the humanities-based, interdisciplinary study of American material culture. For over 50 years, University graduate students have excelled in such studies and gone on to publish their work to wide acclaim and assume prominent positions in academe as well as in museums, historical societies, and other cultural institutions around the world.

Annual income from the endowment will support new programming to ensure that competitively selected graduate students can focus year-round on

their dissertation research, an approach common in the sciences but less so in the humanities. Students will also participate in an intellectual community that brings together a wide range of disciplinary perspectives. Three graduate students in English—Joshua Calhoun, Kristina Huff, and Kathleen Slauch-Sanford—were included in the first group of fellows supported by the grant. These students received a \$4500 summer stipend for the summer of 2008.

In addition, NEH summer fellows are equipped with a suite of traditional and innovative communication skills to enhance their ability to present their work to broad audiences, to cultivate a regard for the public value of their work, and to instill the lifelong commitment to public advocacy on behalf of our cultural heritage. To that end, they attended a 2-week institute in public engagement. This first institute, held in June 2008 and titled "From Avatars to Radio Sound Bytes: New Digital Technologies to Inspire the Public," was coordinated by Matt Kinservik, professor and director of graduate studies in the English department, and Joyce Hill Stoner, Professor of Art Conservation. The 10 summer fellows were joined by four additional graduate students at the institute, including Amber Kerr-Allison of English. Several of the institute participants are presenting their research this fall in a colloquium series on campus, "Interpreting Objects." Many others will extend their reach beyond campus next spring in a series of talks at the university's Academy of Lifelong Learning in Wilmington (www.academy.udel.edu/index.html). Also speaking in the series will be Julian Yates, Associate Professor of English, who was the keynote speaker at the summer public engagement seminar as well.

Material culture studies comprises the history and philosophy of objects made or modified by humans, by definition an interdisciplinary pursuit. UD students study such objects as books (and the paper within books), maps, photographs, archival documents, decorative and fine arts, clothing, domestic possessions, toys, architecture, and archeological remains. They uncover new relationships between people and their objects and help find answers to such large social questions as the politics of consumption, the environmental costs of resource use and waste, and strategies for conserving and displaying our material heritage as a culture.

The endowment funding builds on the strengths and track record of the

In addition, NEH summer fellows are equipped with a suite of traditional and innovative communication skills to enhance their ability to present their work to broad audiences, to cultivate a regard for the public value of their work, and to instill the lifelong commitment to public advocacy on behalf of our cultural heritage.

Center for Material Culture Studies, an interdisciplinary endeavor established in 2000 and now directed by Debby Andrews, Professor of English. The Center fosters conversation across a broad spectrum of university departments and programs and coordinates activities with regional cultural institutions. The Center encourages the sharing of resources, promotes collaborative research and teaching, and fosters new opportunities and motivation for public engagement in the humanities. According to Professor Andrews, "Delaware definitely has a reputation as the go-to institution for scholarship in material culture, a reputation enhanced by such activities as the Material Culture Symposium for Emerging Scholars, now in its 7th year and noted in the NEH Grant. Organized by UD graduate students in conjunction with Winterthur, this symposium has gained international standing among scholars and practitioners and a grow-

—continued on page 11



Professor Brückner discusses iconography of maps in UD Library with Lorena Baines. For additional information, see Brückner on page 6.

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Inside the “Labs” of English Courses: Part Two

DAVID D. HARING AND JESSE F. CUSATIS

Research within the English major is typically an activity that students think of as a personal endeavor. Over the last few years, however, the University of Delaware’s English department has taken strides to dispel this school of thought and to emphasize group research that extends beyond campus. Coupled with the Provost’s award for graduate student involvement, this research provides students within the English department ample opportunities for expanded group work.

Several years ago, a few professors within the English department received grants to conduct research. Department Professor McKay Jenkins decided it would be beneficial to allocate funds for undergraduate journalism students to travel abroad in pursuit of research. Upon returning from such far-away places as Nepal and Peru, Ian Palkovitz (Nepal) and Dan Jordan (Peru) drafted their senior theses and gathered into groups to review and edit their work.

Following the initial research, Professor Jenkins allowed two students to travel again. Aaron Holm traveled to India just prior to the 2008 Olympic Games to follow the Tibetans marching into Tibet to protest the Chinese; Kate Gibson traveled to India to supplement her writing about the indigenous people who are being overwhelmed by India’s economic expansion, especially the building of a massive new dam there.

When asked about the outcome of this pilot research, Professor Jenkins responded, “I think the benefits and dividends paid off remarkably well, I mean the theses they turned in were outstanding. . . . All four of them were just really great.” Professor Jenkins noted that he intends to use further research grants in this capacity. Professor Jenkins is looking towards expanded projects in the future and is seeking students to continue this type of research.

Another faculty member who



*Alice Lippincott and Brion Abel at the
Theobald Wolfe Tone Irish Patriot Memorial in Kildare, Ireland*

played a vital role in the organization of the undergraduate research program is Department Professor and Director of Graduate Studies Matthew Kinservik. He took funds from the research grant and chose Alice Lippincott and Brion Abel of the undergraduate community to travel to Ireland to assist in researching Archibald Hamilton Rowan, an Irishman who fled to Delaware during the Irish Revolution. While in Ireland, Alice and Brion had the opportunity to stay in a castle still owned by descendants of Rowan. They spent many days and nights reviewing original manuscripts, in addition to Rowan’s own leather-bound scrapbook containing newspaper clippings he selected and preserved.

The most interesting fact is that Alice and Brion—although they no longer receive credit for their research—are still working with Professor Kinservik on this project. Professor Kinservik reflected upon the research as highly positive, stating, “This is an experience that can be really life changing. Just by traveling to a place like Nepal or Dublin County, you meet people whose stories you want to tell, even if they have been dead for a couple of hundred years. That was a part of the goal of these teams . . . to give students an experience you truly can’t get in the classroom.”

The English department plans to implement this model of research for graduate students, with funding provided from the Provost. This award allocates \$1.2 million, provided in part by the UNIDEL foundation and the Provost’s office, to fund graduate programs and enhance their visibility to the public. The

English department itself will receive \$30,000 from the Provost, and the department will add an additional \$10,000 for two years to set up four research teams per year.

Faculty members from the English department will apply for funding to start a team. Those who receive these grants will then begin recruiting students for research. These teams will include graduate students as well as undergraduates.

Professor Kinservik, who is also heading up the call for proposals, feels that there are still a few questions to be answered. “Will the faculty want to do it? And if they do, I think that graduate students will. But then, will the undergraduates want to do it . . . and how do you then get everybody together? How do you help faculty identify undergraduate students?” While there are still some kinks to work out for this new award, if it is half as successful as the undergraduate program, the public will be sure to take notice.

Research has always been a fundamental tool for learning. With the continuation of undergraduate research teams, and the Provost’s new award for graduate student involvement, the English department is making research a life-changing experience indeed.

“Inside the “Labs” of English Courses: Part One” can be found at the Department Web site: www.english.udel.edu/ under Alumni Relations>WriteNow! Newsletter>Fall 2007.

ing audience of participants from our regional community." Plans are underway for the 2009 symposium, to be held at Winterthur on April 25, 2009.

Tom Apple, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, points out that "many of our strongest faculty" work in material culture studies. That work is enhanced through partnerships with Winterthur Museum & Country Estate, the Delaware Art Museum, the Hagley Museum, and the Delaware Humanities Council, partnerships that "allow our students' discoveries to profoundly impact our communities through lectures, exhibitions, and dissemination of their research via electronic media."

Faculty in the English department, according to Department Chair Stephen A. Bernhardt, "work on a host of projects that depart from traditional research in literary history or theory to take new perspectives on books and other texts within their material contexts. New courses in book history and print culture are teaching students to ask not just 'What does this work mean?' but 'How did this text come to be?' 'How was this text distributed and received?', and 'What happened over the life of this text?'"

"Unlike most research in the sciences, research in the humanities is by necessity a more isolated and isolating enterprise," comments Ann Ardis, Professor of English and Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, remarking on how the grant aims to create a cohort of students. "Original research in the humanities can involve working with archives at remote sites, and it involves intensive reading, by yourself. This grant helps us model a new approach to graduate education in the humanities in which students from different disciplines work together and with diverse faculty to sustain their progress toward their degree. The institute also helps them develop a lifelong habit of regarding their academic work as something of public value, extending beyond the walls of academe."

The departments and graduate programs that developed the proposal are the departments of Art Conservation, Art History, and English as well as the Hagley Program in the History of Technology, the Preservation Studies Doctoral Program, the Program in the History of American Civilization, and the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture.

Spotlight on the Graduate Program

The Graduate Program initiated a Summer Research Fellows program in 2008. Through a competitive application process, nine of our students won summer fellowships of \$4,500 each, freeing up their summer schedules and allowing them to work on original research projects. The students are Hannah Eagleson, Mike Edson, Ginny Garnett, Alison Klaum, Mike McGehee, April Pelt, Heidi Pierce, Mike Steier, and Monica Zaleski. They will present their work to the department in a series of symposia on Oct. 16, Nov. 20, and Feb. 12. This fellowship program is our first step toward our ultimate goal of providing 12-month funding to all graduate students.

Three of our PhD students participated in the Public Engagement and Material Culture Studies Institute (PEMCI) this past June. PEMCI is a two-week institute that brings together graduate students from various disciplines to learn about material culture studies methodologies and how to present their academic research to the broader public. Through a series of lectures, workshops, and visits to archives and collections, the students shared and sharpened their skills in object study and effective presentation skills. Josh Calhoun, Kristina Huff, and Kate Slauch-Sanford represented the English Graduate Program and were awarded summer fellowships of \$4,500 each to pursue dissertation-related research projects involving material culture study. And as part of their award, they will each be giving a public outreach presentation over the course of this academic year.

Three of our PhD candidates recently won short-term research fellowships. Heidi Pierce received the Helm Fellowship from the Lilly Library at the University of Indiana, designed to support the Lilly's children's collection and British manuscripts. Kristina Huff won an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellowship at the Library Company of Philadelphia and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania to do research on anti-slavery gift books in the antebellum United States. And Josh Calhoun won a University of Delaware International

Graduate Student Research Grant that enabled him to travel to the British Library to study 16th- and 17th-century books and manuscripts.

PUBLICATIONS FOR 2008

Cheryl Wilson (PhD 2005) *Literature and Dance in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Jane Austen to the New Woman* (Cambridge UP, forthcoming Spring 2009).

Tara Stern Moore (PhD 2006) *Victorian Christmas in Print*, forthcoming from Palgrave Macmillan in 2009.

Corey Taylor (PhD 2007) "Blue Order: Wallace Stevens's Jazz Experiments." *Journal of Modern Literature* 32.2 (Winter 2009).

Forrest Lehman "'Seditious Libel' on Trial, Political Dissent on the Record: Account of the Trial of Thomas Cooper as Campaign Literature." *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (January 2008).

Michael Edson Rev. of Peter W. Graham, "Jane Austen & Charles Darwin: Naturalists and Novelists" in *The Times Literary Supplement* (6 June 2008), p.29.

Kathleen Miller "Sarah Waters's Fingersmith: Leaving Women's Fingerprints on Victorian Pornography." *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies*. (2008).

"The remembrance haunts me like a crime": Narrative Control, the Dramatic, and the Female Gothic in Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's Mathilda" *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*. (Spring 2008).

Mike Steier "Transgressing the Borders of English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." *In Studies in Romanticism* (24 pp, typescript).

JOB PLACEMENTS FOR 2008

Darlene Farabee: Assistant Professor, tenure-track position teaching Shakespeare/Early Modern Literature at the University of S. Dakota.

Michelle Filling: Assistant Professor, tenure-track position teaching American Literature at Cabrini College, Radnor, PA.

Kainoa Harbottle: Supplemental Faculty, UD.

Lisa Lettau: Visiting Assistant Professor at Hood College, Frederick, MD.

Rachel Mayrer-Minnie: Production Associate, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Therese Rizzo: Assistant Professor, tenure-track position teaching American Literature, U of N.C., Pembroke.

Brad Ryner: Assistant Professor, tenure-track, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ.

Melissa Sullivan: Assistant Professor of English, Rosemont College, Rosemont, PA.

Welcome New Faculty

KATIE KERR AND SUPRAJA GUDIMALLAM



BONNIE ALBERTSON

Bonnie

Albertson might be new to the English Department, but she's no stranger to the University of Delaware. For 10 years, she was a faculty member

in the Education Department but has recently made the jump to the English Department. When asked about the change, she said that "it was a natural leap" since she has been working with student teachers from the English Department for the past three years and occasionally teaching classes as well. This semester she is teaching courses on grammar and on teaching methods to English Education majors.

Before becoming a faculty member at UD, Professor Albertson was an English educator at Concord High School and a writing assessment consultant for Pearson Assessment, formerly Harcourt Assessment. Professor Albertson says that she is happy that teaching involves less writing assessment and more focus on English and education.

Professor Albertson received her M.A. from West Chester University and her Ph.D. from the University of Delaware. Her main focus of study was Rhetoric and Composition with her dissertation in Writing Assessment.



STEPHANIE KERSCHBAUM

Stephanie

Kerschbaum is excited to be teaching at the University of Delaware.

With her focus on rhetoric and composition, Professor Kerschbaum is

teaching introductory and second writing courses this fall. Of her classes she says, "The students are challenging in good ways." She notes that she is learning a lot about teaching. As a new faculty

member, she has enjoyed her transition to the department because of its encouragement and friendliness.

Professor Kerschbaum's research focuses on differences negotiating interactions surrounding writing. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2005 and taught classes throughout graduate school. Most recently she taught at Texas A&M.

HUNT HOWELL

Hunt Howell

received his Bachelor's degree in English from Cornell University (1998) and his Ph.D. from Northwestern University (2005). Specializing in the latter half of eighteenth-century American Literature, he is particularly interested in the relationships between literature, politics, and material culture. His passion is evident through his various fellowships: the John C. Slater Library Resident Fellowship for one month's research, a two-quarter research Fellowship from the Graduate School in Philadelphia, one-quarter Heltzel Fellowship, and McNeill Center Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow from 2006 to 2008. He was also awarded the Jean H. Hagstrum Prize for best dissertation and has published a major article, "The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of U.S. Nation Building, 1770-1870" (review) in the *Journal of the Early Republic* (2008).

Before teaching at the University of Delaware, Howell taught at Northwestern University and the University of Pennsylvania. He is teaching American Literature to 1865 and Texts and Contexts, focusing on "the rules of evidence." In this course, he "uses detective fiction as a way of elaborating the interpretive standards and practices of the English major." For spring semester, he plans to teach a section of Texts in Time (on American literature in the year 1855), and a section of the 200-level American Literature survey.

Reflecting on how his experience helps in his teaching, he wrote: "It sometimes seems to me that there's really no way to prep for working in the classroom except getting up there and teaching. I taught at Northwestern for a year and at Penn for two years before coming to UD, and so I had a chance to develop a bunch of courses and to work with a lot of great students. I've learned more from



them about books (and about how to talk meaningfully about books) than I have from pretty much anything else, and I'm grateful for all they've taught me. I look forward to learning even more from the UD students."



ELIZABETH MCCLURE

Elizabeth

McClure is excited to teach new courses she has never taught before at the University of Delaware. In the spring semester,

she plans to teach Texts in Time (probably focusing on late-nineteenth century science fiction/horror novels), Texts and Contexts (probably focusing on lesbian/gay literature and theory), and Victorian Fiction. Reflecting on her teaching experience at the University of Delaware, she says "Delaware is also offering me a chance to teach courses I've never taught before, and to develop new courses, which is a great opportunity for me—I get to explore material from new directions, which helps not only in terms of making classes interesting but also in terms of helping me make connections I'd not made before. In short, it keeps me interested in what I'm doing, and reminds me why I enjoy teaching so much."

Currently, she is enthusiastically teaching Approaches to Literature and a Senior Seminar on Gothic, Sensation, and Horror Fiction. Before the University of Delaware, she worked at the University of Maryland for six years, teaching courses from classical literature to twentieth-century European fiction."

Reflecting on how her past and present experience will help in her job, McClure wrote that the broad teaching experience she acquired at the University of Maryland has been "helpful in the courses I'm teaching at Delaware. I'm excited to see the differences between Maryland and Delaware; it's been really interesting to be in a new place, and I'm learning a lot."

Specializing in Victorian Literature, especially on the connections between nineteenth-century science and aesthetics, McClure received her Bachelor's degree from California Lutheran University, her Master's from American University, and her Ph.D. from the University of Maryland. She was awarded the Alice L. Geyer Prize for her dissertation and the Graduate School Mabel Spencer Dissertation Fellowship.

English Department Faculty and Staff Retire

KATIE KERR AND SUPRAJA GUDIMALLAM



CARL DAWSON

Carl Dawson, Professor of Nineteenth Century British Literature, is ecstatic about his retirement and looks forward to focusing on writing, and carpentry, among other things.

Currently, he is working on *Mary Austin and the American West*, a biography of a prolific writer in the late-nineteenth century, along with Professor Susan Goodman, to be published as hardcopy in January 2009.

Professor Dawson is a prolific writer, especially, of biographies of eminent nineteenth century writers. His books include: *Living Backwards: a Transatlantic Memoir* (University of Virginia Press), *Lafcadio Hearn and the Vision of Japan* (Johns Hopkins Press), November 1948 (University of Virginia Press), *Prophets of Past Time: The Seven Biographies* (Johns Hopkins Press), *Victorian Noon: English Literature in 1850* (Johns Hopkins Press), and *His Fine Wit: a Study of Thomas Love Peacock* (University of California Press). In addition to biographies about prose writers, Dawson has written about the writing career of a poet in *Matthew Arnold, the Poetry: the Critical Heritage Series* (Routledge and Kegan Paul).

Specializing in nineteenth-century British literature, Professor Dawson completed his Bachelor's degree at Occidental College, and his Master's and Ph.D. at Columbia University. He has been awarded fellowships from the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Guggenheim. He received a Fulbright Scholar award as well. Before coming to UD, Professor Dawson taught at Dartmouth College, the University

of California, the University of New Hampshire, the Free University of Berlin, and Kobe-Shion University of Japan.



LOIS POTTER

Lois Potter, Ned B. Allen Professor of English, led a busy life as a faculty member. In her 17 years as a UD professor, she taught Renaissance literature, Shakespeare, and drama to

hundreds of students, organized Robin Hood-related events, and conducted numerous play readings. While she will likely be remembered most for the play readings, one of Professor Potter's own best memories of the Department was the 2005 Robin Hood conference. "The support I got for the conference was wonderful," she says. She will also fondly remember class activities and recalls, "I loved seeing my undergraduates perform scenes from plays in my classes."

Although retired, Professor Potter will continue to lead a busy life. "I have an enormous number of commitments," she says. Those commitments include work on a book, two lectures, three essays, and the organization of a workshop. Reflecting on her retirement, Professor Potter says, "To me, teaching is only the tip of an iceberg and I feel as if I have just crashed into the rest of the iceberg."

Lois Potter received her B.A. from Bryn Mawr College and her Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge. She has written and edited various volumes including *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature 1641-1660* (Cambridge University Press), *Twelfth Night: Text and Performance* (Macmillan), *A Preface to Milton* (Longman), and *Shakespeare in Performance: Othello* for the University of Manchester Press/Palgrave. She has also edited two collections of essays for the University of Delaware Press: *Playing Robin Hood: the Legend as Performance in Five Centuries* and *Shakespeare: Text and Theatre, Essays for Jay L. Halio* (with A. F. Kinney). She was general editor of two volumes in the *Revels History of English Drama, Vol. I* (Medieval Drama, 1984) and Vol. IV (Drama 1613-1660), to which she also contributed; she wrote the section on "The Plays and the Playwrights" in Vol. II (1500-1575).



DOROTHY (DOTTIE) CARROLL

Dottie Carroll retired at the end of August and will be remembered as an ever-cheerful administrative assistant. Over the years, Carroll assisted faculty with administrative tasks as well as served a number of department Chairs. She also answered many questions and readily greeted visitors to the office.

Carroll, who worked at the University for 19 years, is excited to be retired. "It's like getting out of school for summer vacation," she says. Carroll will use her free time to pursue various interests, including learning the German language and traveling.

SUZANNE POTTS

Suzanne Potts has worked at the University of Delaware for 30 years, and has been in the Department of English for 25 of those years.

While Potts has held various roles during her tenure in English (she was even the Department CITA from 1999-2005), she most recently served as the Administrative Coordinator. In this role, she handled course scheduling and staffing, and assisted with advisement and registration, among other things. Overall, she has been a great resource for faculty, staff, and students; whenever anyone needed to know something, Suzanne either knew the answer or knew who to ask.

After all her years in the Department, Potts says that she will most miss "the congenial feeling the Department has, and how everybody seems to care for one another." Although Potts says she will miss working at the University, she is also glad to be retiring at the end of December so she can turn her attention to other plans. Those plans include travel and watching her grandson on a regular basis. "I wasn't able to stay at home with my own children because I had to work," says Potts, "so being able to watch my grandson grow up is a blessing."



A Tribute to Jan DeArmond, Professor Emerita

PHYLICIA ROSE AND
WILLIAM E. JENNINGS

“Inspiring,” “life changing,” and “full of passion” are just a few of the many heartening words used to describe Anna Janney DeArmond, a woman who came to represent both power and change. Throughout her extraordinary 41-year teaching career (1934–75) at UD, Dr. DeArmond recorded many “firsts.” She was the first woman to advance to full professorship, won the Excellence in Teaching award twice (in 1954 and 1972), and became the first faculty member to be awarded the Medal of Distinction. DeArmond was proud to be a part of the Blue and Gold community, and showed her passion through her love for football; she never missed a game. She was also a founding member of Phi Beta Kappa at the University of Delaware, and one of the first professors to teach a women’s studies course. However, her accomplishments far outweighed the awards and medals she earned. With all these acclamations, Dr. DeArmond’s major concern was her students.

“What I attempt to do is help people understand and particularly to engage them to think about the material and to form their own opinion. It’s nothing special,” Dr. DeArmond said in a Delaware Online interview in 2000 with a former student. Retired University of Delaware Professor, Marcia Halio, knew Dr. DeArmond as both a fellow colleague and as a student. “She is one of our heroes,” exclaims Professor Halio. “She gave her life to teaching.” Dr. DeArmond



had taught Professor Halio English Literature in the 1950s, and later in life had strongly urged her to attend graduate school, challenging her to continue learning. “Dr. DeArmond once told me that learning is as natural as breathing, and it shouldn’t stop within the classroom.” Dr. DeArmond was an example of her own advice, and continued to teach even after she retired at age 65. Professor Halio and other students of Dr. DeArmond stayed in

touch through e-mail, calling themselves “Jan’s Daughters.”

Another former student, Diane Kuckich, now a technical writer for the College of Engineering, acknowledges that Professor DeArmond “is responsible for my career choice. I owe her a lot.” Recognizing greatness in her students did not come along with the job description, but Professor DeArmond took extreme pride in pushing her young scholars to do their best. Never accepting anything but hard work, she wanted them to learn to think for themselves. Class time was devoted more to lively discussion of her pupils’ thoughts and opinions of the text rather than lectures. Kuckich explains, “She put everything she had into her teaching and mentoring her students,” the reason why her passion as an instructor and advisor set her aside from the rest.

Dr. DeArmond was blessed with a gift that allowed her to teach with fluidity but command respect in the same breath. She was not scared to give a student a lower grade if she felt that it was what the student deserved on a paper. She always stressed never taking the easy way out when it came to writing. If there was something that a student could improve on, she was willing to point it out and have the student correct it. Although Dr. DeArmond could come off as intimidating, she was warm-spirited at

heart. “Of any teacher in this university she was the best well known,” says Professor Don Mell. Her dedication and knowledge made her courses demanding yet enjoyable.

Dr. DeArmond traveled the world spreading her love for knowledge. She was a visiting professor at the University of New England in Australia, a Fulbright lecturer at the University of Munich, and spent some time lecturing at the University of Sheffield in England and Qingdao Ocean University in China. She also taught at other U.S. colleges. After retirement, Dr. DeArmond enjoyed teaching at UD’s Academy of Lifelong Learning.

Her legacy will continue through her students, and not just those in the United States. Toward the end of her life, Dr. DeArmond received several letters and cards from people all over the world. One day while sitting down with Professor Halio, she asked, “Marcia, why do they remember me?” Professor Halio replied, “Jan, we will always remember you.” Professor Anna Janney DeArmond passed away a couple of months later at age 98 on March 26, 2008.

On a more personal note, one day when I (William Jennings) returned home I asked my mother, a graduate of the UD, if she had ever heard of Professor DeArmond. She explained to me that not only was Dr. DeArmond her British Literature professor, but she had also taught my great aunt and uncle in the early 1950s. “She was a woman who possessed an overwhelming sense of understanding and an inspiration to learn,” says Mrs. Roberta Tomczyk, my great aunt. Mr. and Mrs. Tomczyk had visited Dr. DeArmond at the Methodist Country House in Greenville, Delaware, a couple of months before her passing. Mrs. Tomczyk recalls, “She [DeArmond] had a twinkle in her eye for teaching even in her later years.”

J.A. Leo Lemay

HENRY FRANCIS DU PONT
WINTERTHUR PROFESSOR
OF ENGLISH, DIED ON
WEDNESDAY, OCT. 15.
HE WAS 73.

Professor Lemay, of Newark, Del., joined the University of Delaware faculty in 1977 as the Winterthur Professor of English. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Maryland and his doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania.

One of the nation's leading Benjamin



Franklin scholars, Professor Lemay spent decades researching Franklin for a seven-volume biographical work, being published by the University of Pennsylvania Press. The first volume covers Franklin's life up to his 1730 marriage and explores previously unknown influences on Franklin's philosophy and writing. Volume two covers the period between 1730 and Franklin's retirement from printing in 1748. It assesses Franklin's writings up to that point and notes

the birth of William Franklin, Franklin's illegitimate son.

Volume three, covering the period from 1748-57, is scheduled to be published this month.

The first two volumes were reviewed and praised by such periodicals as the *Journal of American History* and the *Library Journal*. *The New York Sun* selected both volumes for its "best books of 2006" list.

"Lemay's in-progress biography of Franklin is...magisterial," a staff writer at the *Journal of American History* wrote in a review in December 2006. "His *Life of Benjamin Franklin* is the fruit of a lifetime of careful, dedicated and loving research, and we are all the richer for it."

In 1997, Professor Lemay launched a Web site chronicling Franklin's life [www.english.udel.edu/lemay/franklin]. He also published an earlier, critically acclaimed book on Franklin, *Benjamin Franklin: Writings*, which was cited in best-selling books on Franklin by Walter Issacson, Gordon Wood and Edmund Morgan.

His other books include *Robert Bolling Woos Anne Miller* (1990) and *The American Dream of Captain John Smith* (1991), published by the University Press of Virginia, and *Did Pocahontas Save Captain John Smith?* (1992), published by the University of Georgia Press.

Professor Lemay's honors include a Guggenheim fellowship, a National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship, a Huntington Library fellowship, grants from the American Philosophical Society and Colonial Williamsburg and being named a Distinguished Scholar of Early American Literature by the Early American Literature Group of the Modern Language Association.

He is survived by his wife, Ann, a daughter, Kate, and two sons, John and Lee.

I CONDOLE WITH YOU, we have lost a most dear and valuable relation, but it is the will of God and Nature that these mortal bodies be laid aside, when the soul is to enter into real life; 'tis rather an embryo state, a preparation for living; a man is not completely born until he be dead: Why should we grieve that a new child is born among the immortals? A new member added to their happy society? We are spirits. That bodies should be lent us, while they can afford us pleasure, assist us in acquiring knowledge, or doing good to our fellow creatures, is a kind and benevolent act of God — when they become unfit for these purposes and afford us pain rather than pleasure — instead of an aid, become an incumbrance and answer none of the intentions for which they were given, it is equally kind and benevolent that a way is provided by which we may get rid of them. Death is that way. We ourselves prudently choose a partial

death. In some cases a mangled painful limb, which cannot be restored, we willingly cut off — He who plucks out a tooth, parts with it freely since the pain goes with it, and he that quits the whole body, parts at once with all pains and possibilities of pains and diseases it was liable to, or capable of making him suffer.

Our friend and we are invited abroad on a party of pleasure— that is to last forever — His chair was first ready and he is gone before us — we could not all conveniently start together, and why should you and I be grieved at this, since we are soon to follow, and we know where to find him.

- BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, Letter to Elizabeth Hubbard, who was grieving the death of her stepfather John Franklin, Benjamin's brother February 22, 1756

Undergraduate Perspective

Exhaustion and Exhilaration: School, Work, Kids —It's Just Like Riding a Bike

HEATHER D. BOETTGER

By the time I make it to the office every morning, I'm usually ready for a break.

I've gotten ready for work, made breakfast, packed a few lunches, and sent three small children off to school—hopefully with clean clothes and brushed teeth. I've done some reading and writing for my last undergrad class, put the house in order, had some coffee, and—when the kids are with their dad—logged a few miles of training for my next long bike ride.

I returned to UD last fall to put the finishing touches on a Bachelor's degree in Professional Writing after years of putting it off. It was an intimidating proposition. I was already working through a divorce and all the career, family, and lifestyle changes that come with it; completing a degree on top of it all was a tall order. How in the world could I manage returning to college in addition to holding down a busy full-time job and adjusting to the unrelenting demands of single motherhood?

Frankly, I would have been lost without the support and advice of the professors in my concentration, who were always available to listen and

offer their counsel on my many, many questions. Who did I talk to about advisement? What if I forgot how to write a term paper? How could I possibly work an internship into my already bursting calendar? And who would hire me with a Professional Writing degree, anyway? "Fear not," answered Debby Andrews, my editing professor and advisor. "We'll handle it."

Everyone in the Professional Writing concentration has first-hand experience in the corporate world, so we were always able to work out a compromise when professional, academic, and family demands intersected. That same understanding also gave me new insight on my studies and how I could apply them after graduation. Still, even with the steady encouragement of my instructors, coming back to Delaware seemed a daunting task.

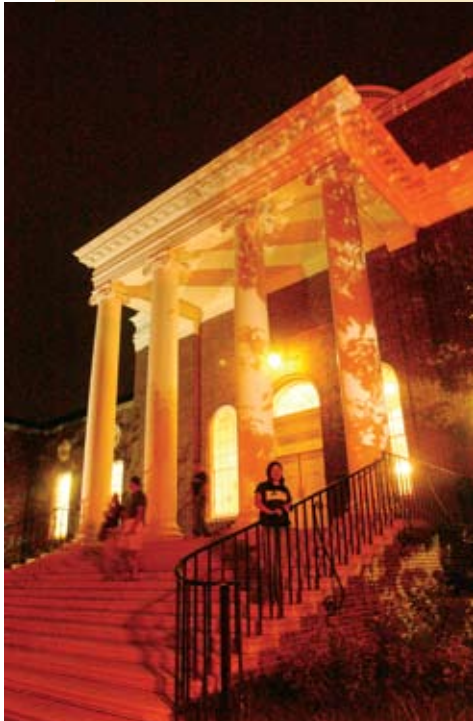
And daunting it has been. Rhetoric, Editing, a literature seminar on Christian myth, and a 300-level class on British history thrown in as an elective. You know—just for fun. Constant deadlines, extensive reading lists, demanding writing requirements, and countless hours defending positions and conquering self-doubt behind the screen of my MacBook. All of this on top of soccer practice, lacrosse matches, tee-ball games, training rides, spin classes, homework (the kids' and mine), and overtime to meet deadlines at work. It's a schedule that leaves almost everyone I know asking, "How do you do it all?"

It's just like cycling. Get to the next stop, catch your breath, and keep going. Are you really up for this? You don't have time to worry. Crushing headwinds? Insurmountable hills? Gear down and focus. You'll get through it. Derailleurs jam up, tires go flat, and your bike falls over at the worst times—usually with you on it. Pick it up and finish. Keep a steady cadence, move forward, and don't worry about who's passing on the left.

Like cycling, coming back to UD has been exhausting and exhilarating. I've tested my intellectual limits, and surprisingly, it has been a resounding success. There were times—just like during a grueling ride—when I asked myself why in the world I ever started. And like crossing the finish line, it's the feeling of accomplishment at the end that validates all the stress, the moments of self-doubt, the mental over-exertion.

I'd like to thank especially Professor John Brockmann, who has been a constant source of encouragement and sound advice in my final semesters at Delaware. In his classes, I've done the best work of my academic career and broadened my intellectual horizons. The assignments were challenging, the expectations were high, and many times I didn't feel up to the task. In the end, though, I finished each semester with fresh confidence, renewed academic inspiration, and an enormous sense of accomplishment. And, to be honest, a handful of As, which are still pinned to the walls of my cubicle at work, right next to my first rider number.

Last spring, in his comments on my final seminar paper, Professor Brockmann asked, "Now what?" Honestly, I'm not sure. I might spend a few hard-earned vacation days under the nearest palm tree. I've been looking into a few graduate programs and haven't ruled out law school. Most likely, though, I'll stop for a few seconds to see how far I've come, catch my breath, then get right back on my bike and ride.



Alumni Retrospective

RUTHANN DEVENEY (B.A., 2005)

One might say that I was an English major convert.

During my freshman year at the University of Delaware, I was an eager chemistry major. I planned to do research and earn my doctorate, and I launched into two semesters of math and science. However, those two semesters were completely bereft of reading (other than technical tomes) and writing (other than equations). Much to my parents'

panic, I claimed to have “a major identity crisis”— wasn't I clever? The following year, I changed my major to English, with a chemistry minor on the side.

Compared to the structured chemistry curriculum, coming over to the English department was a burst of freedom, if not chaos. I saw that there were core major classes, but the order wasn't that important. I was confronted with the choice of courses based on the content and the instructor, instead of a proscribed sequence. In my new classes, I was a square among amoebae with my frantic note-taking and constant referral to the syllabus. I did not take naturally to the ebb and flow of discussion, so I read diligently and wrote as best as I could.

I did not stay disoriented forever. Before long, I built up a strong affection for Memorial Hall and the hours I spent there puzzling over literary criticism, picking apart the renaissance man, and laying out mock publications. When I went to my evening lab sessions with my chemistry cohorts, it was no longer my primary residence; I was fully ensconced in the “arts” part of “arts and sciences,” and they never let me forget it. I was, however, greatly sought-after when it was time to produce formal lab reports.

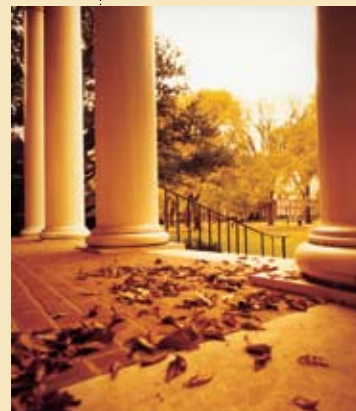
As a medical editor, I'm lucky to work in the writing segment of the scientific sector. My two worlds have collided, and it suits me well. Outside

Before long, I built up a strong affection for Memorial Hall and the hours I spent there puzzling over literary criticism, picking apart the renaissance man, and laying out mock publications.

the office, I can see how my conversion to the English department affects even the smallest parts of my life. I can't stop myself from pausing to listen to political ads just to tease out the rhetoric. I automatically correct typos in newspaper ads, look for the redemption aspect of plots, and identify frame structures in novels.

I knew I was in the right academic field when I attended the first class of my Biblical and classical literature course. The instructor handed out the syllabus, and another classmate whispered to his neighbor, “Man, there's a lot of reading and writing in this class.”

Meanwhile, I could only think, “Yes, please.”



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