

ENGLISH *Matters*

The BGSU English Department Newsletter

Spring 2009

Write from the Chair...Dr. Kristine Blair

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter, *English Matters*. As one of the largest and most diverse units in the College of Arts and Sciences, the Department of English plays an integral role in the education of many students at Bowling Green State University. In addition to our nearly 300 majors, 40 minors, and 90 graduate students, our courses in Literature, Linguistics, and Rhetoric and Writing serve as the core content area for approximately 200 Integrated Language Arts majors and 200 Middle Childhood majors.

Our Creative Writing Program, part of the Center of Excellence in the Arts, contributes to various arts education initiatives, such as the Arts Roundtable, the Arts Village, and the Arts Extravaganza, while our English as a Second Language Program serves over 300 international students. Several of our literature courses function as important general education requirements, and courses in Scientific and Technical Communication serve as undergraduate and graduate requirements and electives within programs in Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, and Technology. Clearly, we are a diverse thriving community of scholar-teachers devoted to fostering liberal education, encouraging the generation of knowledge, and contributing to the good of the community through both our undergraduate and graduate programs. As Department Chair, one of my primary goals has been to create forums and venues that establish and celebrate our community, including our recent blog "Great Expectations" at <http://bgsuenglish.wordpress.com/> and our recent Facebook group. To that end, the pages of this inaugural newsletter contain profiles of both graduate students and undergraduate alumni, not to mention new and emeritus faculty, all showcasing the many talents of students and faculty across programs, including those of Suzan Aiken, doctoral student in Rhetoric and Writing, who serves as both designer and editor of this newsletter. Equally important, this newsletter celebrates the past, present, and future successes of a department that I am honored to chair. I hope you will email me with feedback or send along your most recent activities and accomplishments to kblair@bgsu.edu so that we may include them in an upcoming issue of *English Matters*.



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Check in online at:

English Department Blog—
<http://bgsuenglish.wordpress.com/>

Creative Writing
<http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/creative-writing/>

English As A Second Language (ESL)—
<http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/esl/index.html>

Literature
<http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/english/grad/literature/>

Rhetoric & Writing—
<http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/english/rcweb/index.html>

Scientific & Technical Communication—
<http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/stc/>



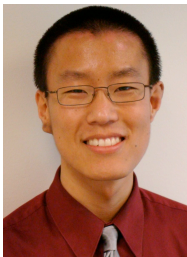
Where They Are Now: Alumni

Not everyone knows the name Evelyn Waugh, but Emily Shreve does. Emily graduated in December of 2006 with a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature, and Evelyn Waugh provided Emily with a connection to an academic community.

Emily first considered becoming an elementary school teacher. “I knew I always wanted to teach,” Emily remembers. She credits BG English Department teachers with helping her discover a different, professionalized path. Emily recalls the enthusiasm and passion of several professors, and treasures the opportunities to talk with them and share ideas. In fact the encouragement from professors like Simon Morgan-Russell and Phil Dickinson motivated Emily to participate in civic involvement, and in professional development such as an Evelyn Waugh (2006) essay contest. Emily says her experiences helped open her eyes to the teaching, research and service aspects of academic life and prepared her for graduate work. Similarly, her winning Waugh essay introduced her

to other academic communities. Emily still writes for the *Evelyn Waugh Newsletter*, and maintains her professional connections with the Evelyn Waugh Society, a community which Emily feels she may not have found without the inspiration of her professors.

The excitement for academic and professional work first kindled at BGSU is very apparent in Emily’s voice. She insists this kind of interest and enthusiasm is available to any student at BG; her advice is to get involved as a way of discovering opportunities for professional work. Emily acknowledges the ongoing faith and support she receives from faculty and staff at BGSU as a critical element of her own continuing professional development. She is currently working on her Masters thesis at Lehigh University, and Emily plans to continue her work pursuing a doctorate degree.



Where They Are Now: Graduate Student

“Keep an open mind.” Those are words that guide Bobby Kuechenmeister’s research. A second-year student in the doctorate program in Rhetoric & Writing, Bobby has discovered a new interest: writing pedagogy that incorporates video games. New technologies and new pedagogies aren’t always the easiest topics to research, but with some help from Dr. Kris Blair, Bobby has taken on the challenge of discovery in this area of teaching. Currently, Bobby teaches General Studies Writing. He believes that his work and study at Bowling Green will give him a stronger knowledge of the field than programs at other universities. BG offers more variety and more scholarship in Rhetoric and Composition.

Originally from Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, Bobby Kuechenmeister began his education at the University of Wisconsin in Eau Claire, and completed a Masters degree at Texas A&M. It was under the direction of Dr. C. Jan Swearingen at Texas that Bobby was bitten by the rhetoric bug. “Rhetoric can speak to or speak about so many topics,” Bobby explains. The broad range of study allowed him freedom to investigate both classic and modern ideas.

His work at BGSU has sustained that initial interest in rhetoric. Bobby says it has been the encouragement from faculty and students that has nourished his interest, research and scholarship in comic books and video games. Bobby acknowledges doctoral work is challenging. “The coursework will change, you will question what you know and what you don’t know,” but he offers as advice, “Maintain an open mind.”



Where They Are Now: Faculty

Have you seen the zombies in Dr. Maisha Wester’s office? Dr. Wester is interested in what scares. Wester smiles as she admits “As a kid, I wondered about these representations of women, these images in horror films.” She also smiles when she is able to share her work with her mom—demonstrating that Wester was able to take those interests and turn them into scholarly and productive work. Wester’s dissertation, essays, and work in African American Gothic Literature are just a few examples.

With a Ph.D. from the University of Florida, Maisha Wester first came to work in American Culture Studies and the English Department in 2006. She says the winters are tough, but Wester loves the work and the influence of colleagues. “I can’t single just one person out,” Wester discloses. She feels that faculty and staff are personally invested and interested in their work, so supportive and collaborative discussions happen

in the hall as easily as anywhere else. Wester sees the sense of community extend beyond the walls of East Hall as she is able to talk with professionals in other departments across campus. Her vision for research is expanding, too. Horror deserves our attention for several reasons. Wester notices a change in themes and monsters, and observes, “Horror has been shape-shifting since the early 20th Century.” She points to the things that scare and what they might reveal. In her scholarship and research, Wester addresses cultural ideology, class and gender, and so much more.

While research is a primary interest, Wester speaks thoughtfully about teaching and working with graduate students. She is honored to have had so many stirring, inspiring classroom moments. Wester advises students to talk to professors, ask about the profession. She acknowledges there are layers to the work, to Bowling Green, and to learning. For anyone who might be looking for advice Wester adds, “Don’t be afraid to ask for survival tactics.”

Tony Doerr Accomplished Graduate

The College of Arts and Sciences selected Tony Doerr as one of its Accomplished Graduate Award recipients for this year. The awards were presented at the Alumni Awards 2009: An Evening of Honor and Recognition on the evening of March 27. Tony also performed a reading as part of the Prout Series on Thursday, March 26.

Tony Doerr's third book, *Four Seasons in Rome: On Twins, Insomnia, and the Biggest Funeral in the History of the World*, was released in June, 2008. Additionally, Doerr was named to *Granta's Best of Young American Novelists* 2. He contributed an essay to the book *State by State: A Panoramic Portrait of America* by Matt Wieland and Sean Wilsey. An interview with Tony appears in the Winter 2009 issue of *Sun Valley Magazine*. Doerr completed his MFA in 1999.



Where They Are Now: Emeritus Faculty

Wally Pretzer has had many adventures in teaching, adventures that have lead him all the way to China. After finishing his doctorate in 1963, Wally took a position in the English Department at Bowling Green State University. He taught modern English grammar, literature, and first year writing; and later, taught graduate courses and engaged in administrative work with Dr. Tom Wymer. Wally also instituted an English As A Second Language course. According to Wally, in 1965 the opportunities for international students were rare. Establishing the ESL class as a course with college credit was an important first step toward creating new educational opportunities.

Pretzer helped create another important part of the program at BG: General Studies Writing in the early 1970's with Kathy Hart. Later, in the mid-1970's, Wally invested his efforts in implementation of a Masters in the Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESOL). Throughout

Kayla Williams visited BGSU in April!

BG Alumna Kayla Williams visited the Bowen Thompson Student Union on Tuesday, April 14. In 2005, Williams' memoir *Love My Rifle More Than You: Young and Female in the U.S. Army*, was released. Williams was scheduled to speak and attended a reception in her honor. In her book, Williams, a former U.S. Army soldier who served in the Middle East as an Arabic interpreter, discusses her decision to enlist and her experiences during the Iraq war. Important venues such as NPR and CNN have interviewed Williams, and among Williams' current projects is a diary for VetVoice.com. Kayla Williams completed her BA in English Literature in 1997.

Her April visit to Bowling Green included an evening forum.

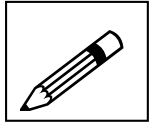
Writer Opportunities: Publication at BG!

Mid American Review

Celebrating more than 28 years of circulation, *Mid American Review* is an international literary magazine dedicated to the mission of publishing the best contemporary fiction, poetry, nonfiction, and translations. Students in the MFA program participate in the publication process of MAR, as do undergraduate students selected for an internship. Visit the web-site for submission requirements at: <http://www.bgsu.edu/studentlife/organizations/midamericanreview>

Prairie Margins

Prairie Margins is an undergraduate publication featuring work from enrolled undergraduate students across the county. Do you work with undergraduate writers? Please consider having students submit work to *Prairie Margins*. Visit the web-site for submission requirements at <http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/creative-writing/pmargins.html>



these efforts, Wally mentored teachers—he recalls bringing snacks to meetings to help keep spirits up—and, concerned about student evaluations, met with students to discuss feedback for teachers.

A professional dedicated to service, Wally Pretzer's investment and enterprise helped to bring about new opportunities for learning. In 1982, Pretzer traveled to Xi'an, China, as part of an exchange with students and faculty, and then formed the Pretzer International Fund to facilitate student travel to and study in China. When he describes teaching and working with others in China, Wally's eyes light up. He says "the greatest reward was the experience" and insists more students and faculty should participate. Precisely this kind of teaching, learning, and cultural interaction is at the root of Pretzer's service-oriented practices. Though retired since 1992, Wally is still actively

**"The
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involved in Bowling Green's community through the Bowling Green Chamber of Commerce. As Emeritus Faculty, he still visits the English Department. When you see him, if you ask, Wally is sure to share a story of his adventures in teaching.

Faculty Accomplishments

The Department's faculty has had a very busy year! Here are just a few accomplishments that are representative of the breadth and diversity of talent and interests here in East Hall. This is only a partial list, so please visit our department blog for more recent updates.

Bill Albertini (Literature) had an article accepted for *Discourse* entitled "Contagion and the Necessary Accident" that will be published in 2009.

Kris Blair (Rhetoric & Writing) co-edited a book collection with Radhika Gajjala and Christine Tulley entitled *Webbing Cyberfeminist Practice: Communities, Pedagogies, and Social Action* (Hampton Press Series *New Dimensions in Computers and Composition Studies*, 2008). In addition, Kris, along with graduate student collaborators, was awarded a \$10,000 Community Action Grant from the National American Association of University Women for the Digital Mirror Computer Camp for Girls, an engagement project designed to develop and sustain adolescent girls' interest in computer technologies.

Kim Coates's (Literature) article "Eros in the Sickroom: Phosphorescent Form and Aesthetic Ecstasy in D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*" was published in the *Journal of Narrative Theory* (38.2) Summer 2008, and her chapter: "Regarding Violence: Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas* and Contemporary Feminist Responses to War" was published in *Virginia Woolf: Art, Education, Internationalism—Selected Papers from the 17th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf* (Clemson UP, 2008).

Lawrence Coates (Creative Writing) has a short story forthcoming in *Pacific Review*.

Jude Edminster (Scientific & Technical Writing) co-authored a chapter with Andrew Mara and Kris Blair, "Digital Studio as Method: Collaboratively Migrating Theses and Dissertations into the Technological Ecology

of English Studies," in *Sustaining Technological Ecologies in English Studies* forthcoming the Computers and Composition Digital Press/Utah State University Press.

Bruce Edwards (Rhetoric & Writing) was the invited inauguration speaker at Daystar University in Nairobi, Kenya in 2008. His address was entitled "Global Professions in Higher Education." Bruce also consulted with Daystar to help them launch a new major in Web-mediated Communication in their Department of Language and Literature. His article "Patches of Godlight: C. S. Lewis as Imaginative Writer" was published recently in *Literature and Belief* (27.1).

Allan Emery's (Literature) article, "Evading the Pit and the Pendulum: Poe on the Process of Transcendence," appeared in the latest issue of *Poe Studies*.

Richard Gebhardt's (Rhetoric & Writing) Fall 2007 faculty improvement leave project led to papers at two refereed national meetings, the 4 C's in April 2008 and the Rhetoric Society of America in May 2008, and a revision of the RSA paper has been accepted for the conference proceedings, a refereed book titled *The Responsibilities of Rhetoric*.

Erin Labbie's (Literature) most recent work includes an invited contribution to *A Dictionary of Cultural and Critical Theory*, edited by Michael Payne; "The Long Drive of Courtly Love: The Distance/Time Ratio of Amor de Lonh," which was accepted for *Queer Times, Queer Becomings*, edited by E. L. McCallum and Mikko Tuhkanen; in addition to a number of new book projects in progress and several other articles.

Lance Massey (Rhetoric & Writing) has a book review forthcoming in *Composition Studies*, of *Networked Process: Dissolving Boundaries of Process and Post-Process*, by Helen Foster. A contract has been secured from Utah State UP for the book Lance is editing along with Rick Gebhardt, *Revisiting The Making of Knowledge in Composition: Perspectives on an Evolving Field*.

Sharona Muir (Creative Writing) recently had a series of poems based on Pliny's *Natural History* accepted at the prestigious British literary journal, *Stand*.

Lee Nickoson-Massey (Rhetoric & Writing) co-authored the article "Remediating Knowledge-Making Spaces in the Graduate Curriculum: Developing and Sustaining Multimodal Teaching and Research" along with Meredith Graupner and Kristine Blair in the forthcoming *Computers & Composition*. Special Issue, "The Future of Graduate Education in the New University." Lee also

has a review, "Practical But Not Simple: Edward M. White's *Assigning, Responding, Evaluating: A Writing Teacher's Guide*" in *Pedagogy* 9.2 (Spring 2009).

Theresa Williams (Creative Writing) completed a three-month summer residency at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, MA, a residency sponsored by the Ohio Arts Council, which sends one Ohio creative writer and one visual artist to Provincetown annually.

Sue Carter Wood (Rhetoric & Writing) spent two weeks in July 2008 with Global Volunteers in Kunming, China. The program is hosted by Kunming Teachers Training Institute. Sue, along with her husband Rob, met daily with 12 middle and secondary school teachers from all over Yunnan province, China's southernmost and most ethnically diverse province.



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*I would like to contribute a gift of \$ _____ payable by check
to the English Department Foundation Account.*

Please return this form with your gift to:

Department of English
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, OH 43403

BGSU Notes...



BGSU Remembers...

Philip O'Connor was a faculty member in the Creative Writing Program from 1967-92 and was its first director. In addition to being a widely published and acclaimed novelist, he was also a Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus of English. Phil passed away on August 16th at his home in Kentfield, California.

Richard Hoffman will be greatly missed. We remember his dedication and commitment to the English Department, the Writing Center, General Studies Writing, the Honors Program, and, most recently, the PCC Learning Community. He passed away on Thursday, February 5th.

Special Congratulations!

... to **Dr. Lawrence Coates** as the new Associate Chair and Graduate Coordinator, beginning in Fall of 2009.

...to **Simon Morgan-Russell** on his appointment to the permanent position of Dean of the College of Arts and

Sciences. Morgan-Russell joined the Dean's Office of the College of Arts and Sciences as Associate Dean for Curriculum and Faculty Advancement in August of 2005.

... to **Dr. Phil Dickinson**, Lecturer and Associate Chair, who was named recipient of the 2007-08 Distinguished Lecturer/Instructor Award from the College of Arts and Sciences. Phil received special recognition at the College's Opening Day meeting in August 2008.

... to **Literature Faculty Lynn Campbell, Phil Dickinson, Julie Haight, and Rona Klein, and Creative Writing Faculty member Theresa Williams** who were recently promoted to the position of Senior Lecturer. Congratulations also go to **Dayna Herrington, English as a Second Language**, who was promoted from Instructor to Lecturer.

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