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# Rhetoric & Writing at BGSU

## Rhetoric & Writing Notes - Spring 2001

### Issue Three: Spring 2001

#### Alumni Update from Jim Karpen

After getting my Ph.D. in 1984, I taught freshman composition for a year at Maharishi International University in Washington, D.C. During that time I helped to design a graduate program in professional writing. I moved to the Fairfield, Iowa campus in 1985 and took over as director of the new MA in Professional Writing.

For fifteen years the program was quite successful. We offered training in career-related areas of writing: journalism, magazine writing, book writing, advertising, technical writing, script writing, as well as courses in areas such as literary journalism, poetry, and fiction. In the last couple years enrollment declined, and now the program is being phased out.

Now I'm doing what I love: writing, full time. I'm writing for the University as well as doing my own professional writing--much of it about the Internet. (Do a search on my name in any search engine and you'll come across some of my hundreds of published columns and articles.)

I enjoyed my time at BGSU. The faculty was great, and I am especially grateful to have worked with Bruce Edwards on my dissertation, *The Digitized Word: Orality, Literacy, and the Computerization of Language*. I believe that in some ways my dissertation anticipated the Internet revolution that's been taking place. I'm grateful to the department for letting me focus on what, twenty years ago, was a pretty unusual topic. The ideas that Bruce and I developed were the basis of much of my subsequent professional work.

•James Karpen <jkarpen@mum.edu>, a 1984 graduate, is an associate professor at the Maharishi University of Management in Fairfield, Iowa.

#### Alumni Update from Dennis Quinn

I left BG in 1981 for a position in the Developmental Studies Program at Gardner-Webb College, a small North Carolina school where I taught basic writing, literature, and honors composition--a program I later directed. My BGSU experience as an administrative intern under General Studies Writing Director Kathy Hart prepared me well for that position and for what followed.

In 1991 my wife, Wanda Hamilton (alumni from the early 1980s probably know her) and I left North Carolina for Miami where I took a difficult administrative and teaching position in the School of Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) at Barry University. I served as division head for all ACE courses around the state, courses in oral and written communication, humanities, and the arts. ACE has grown tremendously recently, and when I was elected Chair of the Barry College Faculty Senate a couple years ago, my dean kindly relieved me of those administrative duties--spreading them out among four different faculty members!

Some years ago, I developed a basic writing course to prepare our multilingual, international student body for the difficult, required writing course. I also developed a system-wide English placement test, the administration of which is currently my only administrative obligation.

What a trip it's been from Bowling Green to North Carolina to Florida. BG made it all possible, and I'm thankful to the department's faculty and staff for the preparation, guidance, and inspiration they gave me. Parenthetically, Miami is as flat as Wood County, but the clouds are spectacular, like mountains.

•Dennis Quinn <dquinn@mail.barry.edu> is a 1984 graduate who serves as an associate professor of English at Barry University in Florida

#### Two Bowling Green Faculty on CCCC Panel

Two members of the Rhetoric & Writing faculty worked together in a session at the Conference on College Composition and Communication meeting in Denver this March. Sue Carter organized a panel on "Teaching the History of Writing Instruction" and chaired the session. And Deborah Alvarez spoke on how historical knowledge of rhetoric and writing instruction can inform a writing pedagogy course for pre-service secondary school English teachers.

The other speakers in the session were Jean Ferauson Carr (University of Pittsburgh) and Lucille Schultz (University of Cincinnati).

### **New Job, Book Reviews, Grant: Avis Rupert**

Recently I was appointed to serve a three-year term as the Undergraduate Coordinator of my department. This part-time administrative role involves scheduling, undergraduate curriculum assessment and development, Texas ExCET activities, and serving as the liaison person between the Core and English Graduate Coordinator.

I'm looking forward to seeing two of my book reviews--on *Comp Tales: An Introduction to College Composition Through Its Stories* and *Writing in the Real World: Making the Transition from School to Work*--published in *English Journal*.

Finally, this past December I was co-awarded a \$10,000 Academy Grant. This is a Texas A&M University System initiative to support collaboration between universities and public schools.

•Avis Rupert <arupert@falcon.tamucc.edu>, a 1999 graduate is an assistant professor of English at Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi.

### **Active Spring Semester: Lynnette Porter**

In April, I participated in the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association annual conference in Philadelphia by giving a presentation called "Shamanic Voices: Shamanic Characters on U.S. Television."

In March, I was the speaker for the SpaceTech chapter of the Society for Technical Communication; my topic was "Building Online Communities" in the context of distance education. A month earlier, I spoke to the Orlando STC chapter about "Building an Online Community in Technical Communication Courses."

In January, on behalf of STC chapters in Florida, I went to Clearwater to announce award winners for the Florida technical and scientific publications. (Earlier, I had helped select winners at the competition at judging sessions in Tampa.)

•Lynnette Porter completed her PhD in 1989 with a dissertation on *Technical Writing with Computers*. She is an associate professor at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Florida.

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### **Focus on the Rhetoric & Writing Program**

•Program Goal: "The Rhetoric & Writing PhD Program seeks to prepare women and men to be scholar-teachers who understand the professional synergy of mastering knowledge, advancing it through their own inquiry, and sharing knowledge and habits of inquiry with students in the courses they teach and administer."

•Required Courses: Teaching of Writing (or Advanced Writing Pedagogy), History of Rhetoric & Written Discourse, Rhetoric & Written Discourse, Research in Rhetoric & Writing, Computer Mediated Writing, Publication in Rhetoric & Writing, Special-Topic Seminar in Rhetoric (at least one). Also required: Either a cognate field or several additional R&W courses.

### **Alumni Update from Keith Duffy**

I am at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth, going on my second year. I was the first composition specialist here the first year, and by the second year, I weasled my way onto a hiring committee and got another composition specialist hired--Mary Hallet, a graduate from the University of New Hampshire who worked with Lad Tobin at Boston College and with Thomas Newkirk and Bob Connors at University of New Hampshire.

Although we are the minority here, the two of us are proposing a pilot first year program that will radically reshape the modes-of-discourse-based program presently used here. We are, not surprisingly, meeting with a great deal of resistance, but we have high hopes that by carefully implementing the year-long pilot--and liberally advertising our successes to the department--we'll actually see change begin to take effect. The pilot includes a first-semester course that utilizes creative non-fiction as a vehicle for writing practice (an approach that seemed to have generated a great deal of buzz at this past CCCC), and the second semester course focuses primarily on academic writing (not so much as a distinct genre--because we are looking at writing through a multi-genre lens--but as a way of bringing library- and non-library-based research into the writing classroom). We are also implementing a portfolio assessment system as part of the pilot. We'll see what happens.

Also, a CD of my original music was released nationally in March. One of the tracks is being considered for a national commercial. I'll have to see if I can work this "text" into my dossier in such a way that it can be considered as a publication.

Last winter, a colleague (John Metz of University of Toledo) and I submitted a textbook proposal to several publishers. We received offers from three companies and recently signed an agreement with Harcourt College Publishers.

The Composition of Everyday Life is undergoing drafting/revision processes and is due for publication in late 2003. My coauthor and I expect to learn a great deal about rhetoric and writing through the process of proposing and writing a book.

Early ideas for the book emerged from some inquiries I made in my dissertation (A Story of Geography and Composition Pedagogy) and from a good deal of everyday pedagogical stumbling.

•John Mauk <jmauk@owens.cc.oh.us> is a 2000 graduate and English faculty member at Owens Community College in Perrysburg, Ohio.

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