



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2016-2017

Michelle Martin and Robb Telfer named Distinguished Alumni

By John Moody

In a ceremony held during Homecoming Week, the Department of English at Illinois State University honored two of its alumni with the Distinguished Alumni Award. Honored were Michelle Martin, Ph.D. '97, the Beverly Cleary Professor of Children and Youth Services at the Information School at the University of Washington; and Robb Telfer '03, M.A. '06, Calumet outreach coordinator for The Field Museum. This is the third year for the ceremony, which was held October 9.

Professor Christopher De Santis, department chair, described Martin and Telfer as examples of the excellent students who come to Illinois State to pursue undergraduate or graduate degrees in the Department of English.

"They are smart, dedicated citizens of the world for whom English Studies provides not only a means to successful careers, but a way of making a positive impact on the many people whose lives they influence through their talents," De Santis said.

Michelle Martin

Martin is a children's literature scholar at the University of Washington in Seattle. She began her position as the Beverly Cleary Professor of Children and Youth Services at the university's Information School on September 1, 2016.

In her academic career, she's held positions at Stephen F. Austin State University, Clemson University, and she was the inaugural Augusta Baker Endowed Chair in Childhood Literacy at the University of South Carolina in her hometown of Columbia, South Carolina.



Trites, Martin, and Susina

Seelinger Trites and the other faculty who would become my mentors reached out to me when I was considering coming to ISU really sold me on the program."

It was a decision that helped shape her future with the support of what she described as a "top-notch" faculty.

"The faculty care deeply about their students," Martin said. "That made a huge difference in my quality of grad school life at the time and has made my professional life go much more smoothly than it would have had I not been sure I could reach back for that support and mentoring when I needed it."

Among her career highlights are holding not one but now two endowed chairs. She's

Message from the chair

*By Christopher De Santis, chair,
Department of English*

It is a true pleasure to share with alumni and other friends of the Department of English at Illinois State University some of the accomplishments of our students,



Department Chair
Chris De Santis

faculty, and alumni over the past year. Readers of this year's newsletter can't help but be struck by the multi-faceted approach to the discipline we practice at Illinois State, the social justice implications of so much of our

work, and the ways in which the department's commitment to diversity—of languages and literatures, of modes of writing, of peoples and cultures—resonates in our teaching, learning, and communication of new knowledge to constituencies well beyond Stevenson Hall.

This was a wonderful year for the Department of English but a very difficult year for our nation, and more broadly, our world. Among the many conflicts and tragedies this year, gun violence ended too many lives too soon, and we all witnessed the rise of a president-elect who seems to bring out the very worst in many people and glibly dismisses complex issues of race as a simple matter of law and order.

In *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), a powerful scholarly and creative meditation on the first four decades of freedom for African-Americans, W. E. B. Du Bois

declared that “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line” (vii), a statement that holds true in many ways for the first decades of the 21st century. Du Bois wrote in *Souls* of the peculiar, childhood experience of discovering not only the concept of race, but the liabilities of racial difference in a nation in which the gold standard for power and privilege was an often unremarked but always pervasive whiteness. Though he wrote on several occasions about a relatively happy, peaceful boyhood, Great Barrington, Massachusetts, a place of abundant natural beauty, racial tolerance, and a distinguished history of anti-slavery activism, could not protect the boy from what the adult would later describe as both a revelation and a shadow that swept across him, “all in a day, as it were” (2). A black boy offers a white girl a “gorgeous visiting-card,” in Du Bois’ words; in our contemporary milieu, it could be a Valentine’s Day card, or a May Day card, or perhaps a simple love note. The white girl refuses it, haughtily, with a mere roll of the eyes, perhaps. And the revelation and the shadow conflate into a singular metaphor: “Then it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness,” Du Bois writes, “that I was different from the others; or like, mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil” (2).

With the choice of that simple word, Du Bois launched a metaphor that would reappear again and again in African-American literature. The veil is blackness, signifying all that is denied because of skin color. The veil is whiteness, invisible, unspoken, powerful, an all-pervasive ideology. The veil is a gift, affording one, in Du Bois’ words, “second sight in this

Continued on page 3

Department of English Newsletter

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Christopher C. De Santis, chair

Libby Lind, office manager

Wesley Jacques, editorial assistant

Jonah Mixon-Webster, editorial assistant

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been president of the Children’s Literature Association, the major organization in her field (even co-hosting the 2014 conference and 350 children’s literature scholars). And, she’s most proud of Read-a-Rama, a themed literacy immersion program she created in South Carolina.

“It’s a 501(c)(3) outreach program that I started in 2001 at Clemson University and built into a camp in 2009 that uses children’s books as the springboard for all programming activities,” she said. “We have held six summers of Camp Read-a-Rama, and in my new position as the Cleary Professor, I hope to make Read-a-Rama a national model for full-immersion literacy outreach.”

The Distinguished Alumni Award, she said, means that her “work as a children’s literature scholar is being recognized as important and that what I have accomplished since graduating from ISU’s English Department has made a difference both within the profession of English studies and in the lives of hundreds of children through my children’s literature outreach programs.”

Robb Telfer

Telfer came to Illinois State in 1999. He had spent a year attending Columbia College in Chicago when he decided he wanted to be part of the Illinois State National Champion speech team while studying to become an English teacher.

These days Telfer finds himself working in a pretty interesting place, one of the world’s largest and best known museums of natural history, Chicago’s Field Museum. As the Calumet outreach coordinator, the focus of his work is on Chicagoland ecological conservation.

“I organize community engagement with nature often through habitat restoration,” he said in describing his work.

Telfer earned his master’s in English at Illinois State in 2006 and then taught English composition and creative writing at the College of Lake County for a year. He was then hired as performances director of Young Chicago Authors (YCA), a creative writing teaching nonprofit.

For six years, he organized the group’s “Louder Than a Bomb” program, the largest youth poetry festival in the world. For a year he worked as a freelance writer, performer, and teaching artist. And, he spent seven months as a copywriter for one of the largest advertising firms in the world, Leo Burnett, also in Chicago. He’s been at the Field Museum since 2015.

Telfer, a Joliet native who grew up in Elwood and Homewood, keeps his schedule pretty full as he pursues a dual career path.

“I have two careers that aren’t as dissimilar as they sound,” he said.

In addition to his work at The Field Museum, he also teaches and performs poetry with a performance poetry teaching artist collective called Project VOICE. The group has five members who teach and perform poetry in schools all around the world.

His work over the years has been recognized with several awards. He received the Wallace W. Douglas Teaching Award for his work at YCA, and he is an inductee of the National Forensics Association Hall of Fame after competing on Illinois State’s speech team. In addition, he received an Orgie Theatre Award for best curation for a live literature show called *The Encyclopedia Show*, which ran for six years in Chicago and has been staged in about 30 cities around the world; the show still runs in Minneapolis and Tempe, Arizona. *The Encyclopedia Show* was a joint effort by Telfer and his Illinois State English, speech team, and Normal Poetry Slam fellow alum Shannon Maney ’12.

Telfer said receiving the Distinguished Alumni Award was “unexpected and pretty cool.”

He said he feels lucky and grateful for the work he does and for the friends he made during his time at Illinois State. Poetry performance has allowed him to travel extensively, including nine overseas trips.

“The two communities I was a part of—speech team and the literary community—helped me develop my concept of what a community could be and how it can enhance your life,” Telfer said. “Both communities yielded lifelong friendships and set the ground work for my community organizing today.”



DeSantis and Telfer

Retiring faculty

Diane Smith

Diane Smith, graduate program administrative aide, retired on April 30, 2016. She was an indispensable member of the English Department to students and faculty alike for 17 years.



Smith's performance as administrative aide has been truly exceptional. In her 17 years serving the department, Smith built a reputation for reliability, institutional knowledge, resourcefulness, and kindness. In addition to her day-to-day duties, she frequently offered to drive new international students to the local Social Security office, arranged snacks and lunches for Graduate Student Forums and Graduate Committee meetings, helped set up technology for various department meetings, and helped students process good and bad news, personal accomplishments, and problems, with a great deal of human compassion.

Smith went above and beyond her job duties in consistently demonstrating innovative ideas, as well as exceptional problem-solving skills. With over 100 graduate students in our program, she designed an effective system by which to track student progress through required coursework, comprehensive exams, thesis and dissertation proposal defenses, and the final defense of theses and dissertations. She maintained an impressive database of graduates of our doctoral program that goes back at least 20 years, an invaluable resource to us in determining the number of graduates who are able to attain tenure-track positions in higher education.

Smith has also been a wonderful advocate for the Department of English in her engagement with constituencies throughout Illinois State's campus. She knew someone in all the right places, and her ability to solve problems and get things done was legendary.

Carol Lind

Carol Lind, Ph.D., instructional assistant professor, began teaching in the English Department in August 2007. She retired August 1, 2016.

Winner of the Outstanding University Teacher Award in 2010 and the English Department Exceptional Teacher of the Year Award—Instructional Assistant Professor rank in 2016, Lind has positively impacted scores of students over the course of her teaching career at Illinois State. Lind writes in her teaching philosophy that “the most important lesson that I can teach my students is to think, to examine the underlying causality of their own opinions and theories as well as those that they encounter throughout the course of their education . . . Just as there are many approaches to a given text, there are also many paths toward any given truth. In my philosophy, literature and life have a lot in common. When the semester is over, I want my students to walk away with more than just the course material; I want them to leave the classroom as thoughtful, curious human beings who take delight in the world around them. I want them to know that, although knowledge is indeed power, it is also a joy to be shared through the symbiotic act of learning and teaching. In the end, I want them, and me, to leave the class better people for having spent the semester together.”



Undergraduate spotlight

Monica Soulsby: English education senior and first-time novelist

My name is Monica Soulsby, and I am a senior English education major at Illinois State with a minor in music. I am excited to become an alumna next spring. I am from the small town of Grand Ridge. It has been a privilege to be so involved with the University, both inside and out of the English Department, these past years. I am a member of the Honors Program, a charter member of the Personal Essay Society, vice president of the Swingin' Redbirds swing dance club, a member of the Trap and Skeet shooting club, a flute player in Symphonic

Continued on page 4

American world” (3). But it's a world that allows the veiled one to see him or herself only through the eyes of the other, an other whose gaze more often than not judges, cuts, belittles, destroys. The veil might be lifted—an act of revelation—or lowered more firmly in place—“a more efficient blinding” (36), as Ralph Ellison puts it in *Invisible Man*, his protagonist puzzling over the meaning of a statue of Booker T. Washington at the entrance of Tuskegee Institute, the inscription on the statue stating a widely accepted truth—“He lifted the veil of ignorance from his people”—while the figure of the slave kneeling before Washington complicates any notion of truth.

Among its myriad meanings, Du Bois' veil is a *thing*, a mask that both hides identity and allows identity to be performed. The veil is also an *ideology*, as well as the initial, intimate discovery of a process, namely, the process by which the concept of race and its implications in the world come into one's consciousness—“all in a day, as it were,” in Du Bois' words; for others, perhaps more gradually, dependent on a number of factors, not the least of which is *privilege*. Unlike Du Bois' boyhood recollection of being shut out from the white world “by a vast veil” that “yields him no true self-consciousness,” a veil that allowed him to see himself only “through the revelation of the other world,” so many of us in this country come to understand the implications of race far more slowly—and so many never do come to this understanding—solely because of the enormous privilege that whiteness affords in a nation that is far from being post-racial, a nation in which the color line continues to be asserted, often by politicians who won't take the time to learn the power of language, of texts, and of the cultural understanding, appreciation, and transformations that the careful study of language, literature, and writing can enact.

English studies matter, now more so than ever.

Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1903.
Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man*. 1952. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.

A note from retiring instructional assistant Professor Kathryn Kerr

Kathryn Kerr, M.F.A., instructional assistant professor, began teaching in the English Department in August 2000. She retired August 15, 2016.

I came to Illinois State in August 2000 after getting an M.F.A. in poetry at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. I had returned to school at midlife after working for years as a natural areas ecologist, a scientific editor, and a technical writer. Because of my varied background, I have always enjoyed teaching Writing in the Academic Disciplines, Foundations of Inquiry, and Texts and Contexts. Of course, my first love was teaching Poetry and creative writing courses. It was also my joy to work with the Illinois State Writing Project for 10 years.

During my 16 years, and many summers, I guess I have taught about 2,400 students. Maybe in my retirement, I will figure out the exact number. During my time at Illinois State, I have published a chapbook of poetry, many poems, a few essays, and a few academic articles. I hope to write and publish more when I don't have the demands of teaching. I love teaching, but I need a break. All teachers should have sabbaticals.

Illinois State has changed. I've served four presidents, five chairs, and I don't know how many deans. I've seen a lot of faculty and staff changes. Student ACT scores have risen. Nontenure track faculty and civil service staff unionized. Campus and the town look different. The English Department offices were traumatically moved to Williams Hall, and I taught classes there and in the College of Business building, and then we moved back to Stevenson. And WGLT doesn't play jazz and blues all the time.

During my first semester, the indecisive presidential election stirred us. And in the next fall was 9/11. Illinois politics have changed. American politics have changed. And school shootings have affected all of us. Perhaps the most interesting times lie ahead, but I will be watching from the sidelines.

Band and in the ISU flute studio, an ISU Recycling Ambassador, and a community assistant at Cardinal Court. I was also honored as the English Department's 2016 Robert G. Bone Scholarship nominee. At the 2016 ISU English Studies at Large Conference, I gave a presentation on "Music in the General Education Classroom." I am extremely grateful for the many opportunities that I have been able to pursue throughout my college career and the future possibilities that it has prepared me for.



With all that I have been able to learn, grow through, and accomplish during my time so far at Illinois State, my greatest achievement is the recent publication of my debut novel, *No Matter What*. It was a thrilling journey to publication, especially balancing the process, which was unlike anything I had ever experienced, with getting the most out of my college education. I have been blessed to work alongside many amazing faculty members in the English Department, who were able to

help me with the publishing process, as well as my studies. As I signed the final release form to the publisher, Nancy McKinney encouraged me to take the leap to becoming the author I had dreamed of being and co-signed with me. This began my work with Tate Publishing.

When *No Matter What* had become a reality, it was still only the beginning. The next step was publicizing the novel, and I had no idea where to start. Luckily, I was in a creative writing class with Professor Ricardo Cruz. Not only did his class get me thinking about my writing more analytically and get me started on my next writing project, but Professor Cruz was also an incredible mentor. He helped me set up a reading at Illinois State and answered all my questions about publishing, publicizing, and anything else I needed. I truly could not have gotten started with setting up events and publicizing without his patient and caring assistance. Since then, I have been able to plan more events and work toward sharing my first novel with as many people as I can.

The faculty and my classmates in the English Department have been more than supportive, creating a home for me here at Illinois State that I know will welcome me long after I graduate. Professor Amy Robillard, Professor Robert McLaughlin, Graduate Assistant Kristen Strom, and my English 296 (Teaching of Literature) class especially helped to push me to be my very best and offered me a wonderful support system as I learned about and started working toward my future careers as both a high school English teacher and an author. I am excited to see what the future holds and know that I will be a Redbird for life!

Faith Overall: You want to be a teacher? And you want to teach in Chicago? Why?

If you are or have been a preservice teacher from the suburbs, chances are you've been asked all three of these questions. By these questions you may have felt belittled, savior-like, or considerably annoyed. Family and friends alike are concerned for your safety; veteran teachers question your true intentions; and peers may not be as confident in your future success. It's tough—I know. But remembering your answer to question No. 3 can and will be your saving grace. You are here with and for a purpose. Let your passion for change drive you toward a more holistic approach to both learning and teaching.



Having said that, you, dear reader, deserve some sort of context and explanation for this article. If you are not a preservice teacher, chances are you have no idea what I'm talking about or where this is going.

As an English education major, I have completed a number of clinical hours both locally, and in my suburban hometown of Chicago Heights. However, in the fall of 2015, I decided to go beyond what was familiar to me and participated in a Chicago Public Schools field experience through the Chicago Teacher Education Pipeline (CTEP). During this trip to Benito Juarez Community Academy, I was introduced to the surrounding community that is Pilsen. This is where my initial interest in urban education began. The following semester I visited the Little Village community and became fully committed to teaching urban youth.

From those two experiences, I gained knowledge of the Summer Teacher Education Partnership for Urban Preparation (STEP-UP), a full immersion internship offered by CTEP. After my application to the program was accepted in April, I couldn't wait to see what the



Faith's students

four-week fellowship had in store. In early July, I was waking up in the home of a host family, living on the South Side of Chicago and doing what I had been dreaming of—teaching.

I was placed as a teaching intern at Westcott Elementary School in Chicago's Auburn Gresham neighborhood. Although I am studying to become a Secondary English Language Arts teacher, my placement in primary grade levels afforded me knowledge about the development of literacy and its importance. I learned how to present information differently and how to find alternate solutions that would better help my students. My commute on the 79th Street bus to class every morning allowed me to become a part of the community, to learn who my students were outside of school, to see beyond the media portrayals of this South Side neighborhood.

Prior to this internship opportunity, I was fully unaware that the Auburn Gresham neighborhood was the city's Bungalow Historic District. I knew nothing of the historic church and community pillar that is St. Sabina. I couldn't tell you a thing about the 79th Street Renaissance Festival that draws thousands to the city's South Side. I had no idea about the Neighborhood Housing Services that advocates for fair housing in the neighborhood, or that the Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation (GAGDC) has gone door-to-door installing smoke detectors in to these 100-year-old homes.

I guess what I'm trying to say is: being fully immersed in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood has been an experience I will remember forever. There is a strong sense of community that is topped off with the hustle and bustle of city life. Every Monday to Thursday morning I spent teaching and engaging with some of the brightest, hardest-working, and most resilient students I have ever encountered. The men and women I worked with at the GAGDC are unmatched in kindness and knowledge. My host-mom has a heart of gold. I have grown and matured and have been challenged in so many ways since completing this teacher-preparation internship. Since I am studying to become a high school English teacher, working with second- and third-graders at the AG Gold Mini-Camp forced me to step outside of my comfort zone and allowed me to learn from students that are hardly a third of my age.

Those four weeks of teaching literacy at the AG Gold Camp, working as an education intern at the GAGDC, and taking professional development classes was as rigorous as the STEP-UP website claimed and prepared me to believe—there was no mistruth there. But in every way it was worth it.

During the work week I was able to explore Auburn Gresham, I spent time downtown, in Little Village, Albany Park, as well as East Garfield Park. I have attended concerts in Millennium Park, seen documentaries on the history of a certain neighborhood, and I have been exposed to pertinent social justice issues I would have no knowledge of by being a suburbanite.

I chose to become a teacher because as a student I felt unprepared in so many ways. **I chose** to become a teacher because I never want my students to feel unprepared in any way. **I chose** Chicago because it is a great city with so much to offer. **I chose** Chicago because the students here have the drive, the reasoning, the resources, the talent, and the potential that will lead them to their own success.

Chicago **chose me** because I willingly **believe, accept, and support** the reasoning, resources, talent, and potential that will lead its students to success.

Faculty research

Culture and resistance against the neoliberal agenda: Professor Paul Ugor on the reorientation of the gaze on African youth

The Illinois State University scholar who is baffling many postcolonial and postmodern paradigms with his research and scholarship on youth culture,

women, and film production in Africa is the Department of English's own Professor Paul Ugor. An assistant professor of African literatures and postcolonial studies, Ugor was



born in Nigeria and earned his Ph.D. in English and film studies at the University of Alberta, Canada. A Sciences and Humanities Research Council Fellow and a Newton International Fellow, Ugor has devoted his scholarship to redefining the ways in which scholars approach the culture and context of Africa and its people. Having experienced a host of traumatic and inexplicable events in his own life as an adolescent, Ugor uses his research to give new agency and attention to the growing and stable resistance of Africa's youth.

In his new, co-edited book *African Youth Cultures in the Age of Globalization: Challenges, Agency and Resistance*, Ugor and Lord Mawuko-Yevugah present a collection of essays primed to give a nuanced perspective and appraisal of the state of African youth as the global socio-economic climate drains their resources in a deceptive measure of austerity and disenfranchisement. In the introduction to the collection of essays, Ugor asks the reader to think through the current mode of wealth accumulation that is part of a neoliberal endeavor to dominate the world's resources. The effects of this, as Ugor deftly and vigorously explains, are registered emphatically by Africa's youth.

Though Ugor engages in the necessary truth telling of the globally geopolitical implications and ramifications of

Continued on page 6

such disavowal, he does not recommit the victimization of Africa's youth through his scholarly prose. Instead, Ugor shows how Africa's youth are not helpless dejects of a late-modernist plot of globalization and imperialism, but rather autonomous agents who are courageous enough to revel in the challenges of an economic positioning that would have them remain the victims of the perpetual threat and doom that is the neoliberal attack on the Third World's economic infrastructure. Ugor does an exemplary job of giving examples of the ways in which African youth are responding to the political and economic challenges of a global project, which would rob them of not only their economic dignity but the very essence of their existence as well.

New administrative aide

Sherrie Howe joins the Department of English this year after spending 28 years at Mitsubishi Motors. She lives in Bloom-



ington with her husband, Andrew, and two dogs, Lacey and Archer. She has two adult children, Heidi and Jeff, both of whom she sees often and loves to hang out with. She

is looking forward to learning, growing, and working with everyone in the English Department.



A 2nd look at tamburlaine

Professor Tara Lyons on serialization in the Renaissance theater

Fresh from receiving a grant from the Folger Shakespeare Library and Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to take a summer course on paleography (the study of early handwriting) in Washington, D.C., Assistant Professor of Literature Tara Lyons is well into her research, which takes a concerted look at the nature of sequentiality in Renaissance theater in relation to the development of new text and performance media. Taking a profound look at the function of serialization in creating the habits of theater goers, her article "Tamburlaine in Parts: The Success of Serials in Print and Performance" looks at how the beginnings of theater culture prompted certain practices such as the creation of serial works and patterned marketing techniques.

As Lyons expressed in an interview: "When new media are appearing or when new media are emerging, it is often concomitant with or attendant with serial forms, or sequels, or offshoots. When one of the first professional theaters opens in London and people go there as an event, very soon after we start to see serial marketing. People want more. People want more of the same and a new form of performance is just emerging at the moment." Of particular interest in Lyons' work is how through its look at Christopher Marlowe's "Tamburlaine" and "Tamburlaine 2" and the way the iterative performances have oriented people's relationship to the theater, we begin to see how serialization orients one's desire for certain objects or certain objects of performance in the material world altogether.

What remains wholly intriguing about Lyons' approach to the development of sequels in the Renaissance era is the attention paid to how the reproduction and repackaging of stage plays train the habits of consumers, making them desire more of the same through the effects of serialization and the subsequent marketing strategies which essentially help the theater remain in existence. What Lyons makes explicit is that at this moment in time people aren't necessary used to going to the theater, so initiating the public's need to return is quite likely the reason for the serialization of certain dramas. This work begs the question: "Could this turn in theater production be of cause to our constant return to remediated materials and popularized consumer experiences?" Lyons' research would most likely point to yes.

This observation of Renaissance theater and subsequent details of the observation have a palpable sociocultural implication for our contemporary moment, where we see a complete inundation of serialized materials and media (re)creations. This implication in the contemporary moment shores up in Lyons' classroom as she helps students make such grand connections between past modes of drama and literary production and present modes of literary and media consumption. Lyons' research shows that the same things that happen with Renaissance theater happen with movie and book series like *Twilight*, *The Avengers*, *Harry Potter*, etc.

Lyons' research is slated to appear in an upcoming anthology to be published by Cambridge University Press.

The prodigal poet

Tim Hunt on his new collection

Poems, Poems, & Other Poems

Though University Professor Tim Hunt stopped writing for approximately 20 plus years, he came back to writing after realizing he needed to think through writing as it operates in relation to speech ... and come back he did. After the release of his recent collection *The Tao of Tiwang* (CW Books 2014), Hunt returns again with his new collection, *Poems, Poems, & Other Poems*, which is a set of personae poems situated around the character Poem. In the collection, Poem is seen through a concatenation of what Hunt characterizes as a series of burlesques. Through the burlesque, Poem has various contacts with cultural icons



and demarcations. Harkening back to the music of blues/jazz musician Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson, Poem riffs off of Vinson’s piece “Cleanhead Blues.” In “Cleanhead Blues” Vinson renders an idealized version of himself through the function of dream in which he has a car and other markers of status and exaltation. Poem has a similar dream in which he has rock-hard, six-pack abs and leather pants. The idealized function here is that Poem is a rock star full of glam and notoriety.

Another moment of interest in the world of Poem occurs when Poem attempts a fan dance. As Hunt describes, the fan dance is always and already illusory. Playing off the history of fan dances where women would perform a type of tease in the hidden reveal of the body, Hunt’s depiction of Poem’s fan dance suggests a similar theme. Poem’s charm is in its inherent mystery—it is in the revelation that is not revealed. It is no errant happening that Hunt’s personification of Poem is largely rendered in the humorous or the absurd. It becomes obvious here that the personification of Poem acts (sometimes) as a metonymy for the world of poetry as it incorporates the poets themselves. Through his personifying voices, Hunt makes very potent commentaries on the current trends and problems that arise in the rhetoric of contemporary poetry and poetics.

Hunt states that one of his critical interests in poetry arises from the way writers in the late 19th to 20th centuries were interested in trying to use writing as a way of storing and deploying speech. As Hunt describes, poetic discourse gets under attack and in crisis in the 19th century and has to contend with the development of new media and textualities—the recording and film industries in particular. Thinking of the work of German theorist Fredrik Kittler, Hunt echoes that once we start having mechanical media (that related to temporality and duration) that this phenomena changes our relationship to writing and it is a shock that registers in both the modernistic and post-modernistic modes of poetry making. Hunt suggests that what has to be solved is a new understanding of writing and poetry in relation to these developments in temporal media. Though he says he doesn’t have a necessary solution himself, his new collection does open up the honest appraisal of the craft in its attempts to be what it was, what it is, and what it can be.

Hunt was named a College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Lecturer in spring 2016.

Cipher of the ineffable

Professor Katherine Ellison on mathematics and cryptography

In a recent issue of the *Journal of the Northern Renaissance*, Professor and Associate Chair Katherine Ellison explores the trend of mathematics and ciphering as a popularized method of literacy in the article “‘114400072777607680000 wayes’: Early Modern Cryptography as Fashionable Reading.” Ciphering and cryptography have long been a method of linguistic exchange that reinvents the utility of language to aid in the expression of that which cannot be expressed. The article, whose numerical section of the title is not actually meant to be verbalized, explores the notion of mathematics stepping in to communicate that which verbal language cannot—gigantesque volumes, extreme distances, and as Ellison explains, the enormity of trauma. As this article shows the emergence of mathematics as a valid type of reading capable of capturing the very thing that resists capture or comprehension, what we see is that in 17th century cryptography—thought of as secretive and exciting—functions as a mathematical discipline which was then promoted as a fashionable or cool presence.

Focused on the work of cryptographers John Wilkins and Samuel Moorland, Ellison shows how these cryptographers had to rhetorically situate ciphering as the fun, hip, and sexy thing to do. Moorland would create little computing devices out of gold, silver, and platinum (that Ellison says seemed to be about the size of an iPhone) that people in the late 17th century would walk around with and use to compute profits and to (de)cipher various numerical systems. These devices literally became fashionable, much like how you see people pulling out cell phones and calculators to compute our modern day ciphers.

Though Ellison’s article shows the implication of mathematics in cryptography in the

Continued on page 8

Katie Wolf (BA, English education, 2013)

For the past two years, I have had the privilege of teaching at a Chinese private school in Zhengzhou, China. I taught English to students whose knowledge of and fluency in English varied but who all planned to move to the United States to attend universities.

I took the job in Zhengzhou knowing I would be teaching an American high school English class curriculum, including A.P. courses, to Chinese high school students who all spoke English as a second (or third or fourth or fifth) language. When I arrived I found out that I would also be teaching an American English curriculum to eighth-graders who spoke English at what was generously described as “remedial level.”

And even with an incredibly supportive administration and the kindest, smartest, most eager-to-learn students a teacher could hope for, few professional obstacles have ever been as difficult as teaching English to students who, on the first day of school, could not understand a word I said.



Katie Wolf and students

So, throughout the next two years I worked harder with these students than I probably ever have before, alongside some of the smartest and most enthusiastic teachers and administrators I have ever met (some of them also former Red-birds!). By the time I was ready to leave, I felt incredibly proud of the progress my eighth-graders had made.

On our last day of instruction, a small hand was raised in the air and a student asked, in a heavily-accented voice, “Miss

Continued on page 8

Wolf, what has been the best thing about your time in China?"

I had no idea how to answer her in a way she and her classmates would understand. They were too smart now for answers like, "the time I ate scorpion!" or "making new friends" (though, yes, those things were pretty awesome, too). No, I owed them something more truthful than that.

I'm back stateside now. I live with my fiancé (another Illinois State alum!) in St. Louis, and I teach at a public high school full of American students who all speak English as a first language. They understand most of what I say, and they get my (attempts at) jokes.

And every night at precisely 9 p.m., an alarm sounds from my phone. A single word, heavy with reminders of all that I've learned about myself as a teacher and as a traveler and as an adult human, and the word that became my eventual answer to that question posed by my eighth-graders all those months ago: "Adventure."

The interbeingness of our own animalia

Gabriel Gudding and *Literature for Nonhumans*

There can be no pastoral, as long as there is a slaughterhouse —Gabriel Gudding



Professor Gabriel Gudding, one of two department winners of the inaugural University Outstanding Creative Activity Award (Professor Duriel Harris was also honored with

this award) has just released a groundbreaking new collection of hybrid writing titled *Literature for Nonhumans* from Ahsahta Press housed at Boise State University. Gudding comes to his literature of nuance through a simple observation—as he puts it. If we look at the work of Plato, Aristotle, Longinus, Shelley, Wordsworth, and many others, we see that everyone up until now is saying that the purpose of literature is to benefit humans. What

17th century, her work is also concerned with the manner in which cryptography is thought of today. She states that modern cryptography is largely concerned with mathematics and sequentialized computation. Yet, by looking at the work of Wilkins, Moorland, and others, Ellison advances a similar multimodal approach to cryptography that recognizes ciphering as not just a play with numbers and symbols, but also a unique method of signification. Ultimately, Ellison sees these different modes of ciphering as being a support to one another.

In her new book, *A Cultural History of Early Modern Cryptography Manuals*, Ellison takes the opportunity to fully explore her concern with the pedagogical implications of ciphering. Taking a look at how there are an unprecedented amount of cryptography manuals published from the 1640s to the 1680s, Ellison shores up the implications of such instruction manuals in the establishment of who is deemed intelligent because of their ability to decipher. She makes the connection that ciphering manuals were used to select army recruits and that even the standardized tests that we see and take today were once part of the cryptography manuals of the 17th century. With such exciting discoveries as this, Ellison is poised to show us how ciphering is part of our everyday world and part of a system of knowing that mediates and dictates our symbolic and linguistic navigations.

The effects and rhetoric of the sonogram

New research from Professor Lee Brasseur

Professor Lee Brasseur, a specialist in technical writing and communication, is currently working on new avenues of research on the fetal sonogram exam. Currently, she is working on a revision of an article on the technical information that sonographers use to assess safety during fetal sonograms, including the health of the fetus. Combining previous research that she conducted in this area wherein she observed fetal sonograms and interviewed fetal sonographers, Brasseur is now examining her previous findings and comparing them with new research that will hopefully shed new light on the complexity of this medical exam.



Overall, Brasseur is interested in how medical rhetoric plays a crucial role as sonographers explain information on a sonogram to the patient at the same time as new studies show possible changes in fetal development after sonograms. Although it has already been proven that fetuses that are examined in the fetal sonogram have a tendency toward left-handedness, newer studies point to other possible biological effects on fetuses who are scanned. As Brasseur continues her writing of this article, she will use both the older and more recent research to argue that the longstanding positive impression of fetal ultrasounds may require more careful study, especially as it concerns exposure to the fetus through sonogram waves. In addition, her results may also mean that both the sonographer's oral communication of his or her information to the patient and the forms she is given should be closely examined through rhetorical analysis of the communication of safety.

Remapping the senses that bind us:

Lisa Phillips on sensory information modules and social schemas

After being part of the team that was awarded a significant grant in 2013 for the project "Mapping the Environment with Sensory Perception," Ph.D. candidate in English studies Lisa Phillips continues her work with the Project InTeGrate collaborative on developing and testing sensory modules to help train users' relationship to their own senses. Over the summer of 2015, Phillips was asked back to Carlton College in Northfield, Minnesota, to help Project InTeGrate in the development of webinars to figure out who these modules should target and who their audience is. Phillips is one of the scholars who helped Project InTeGrate develop open-source training modules for users in kindergarten through the university level. Though the audiences for the modules are primarily college instructors, Phillips' work shows the pragmatism and practicality these modules have in the larger social schema.

"The nature of these modules is to help people use their own body to understand themselves better by going into their community and using their senses of hearing and smell to

produce and reveal a more embodied knowledge,” Phillips said.

In her collaborative experience, Phillips participated in a “Rhetorics of Sensation” workshop with approximately 35 people from all over the country who were interested in sensory rhetorics/the rhetorics of sensation. During this week of thinking and training in the field, Phillips said there was a strong sense of community.

“(It) feels like I found my people,” she said.

With so many scholars participating in the field, Phillips noted the specialization of her role as an English studies scholar, which is that of a liaison between the humanities and other research disciplines that are exploring similar threads of inquiry. As a result, the field of sensory rhetorics also takes on the project of expanding the model of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education by adding an emphasis in the artfulness of the humanities, which in turn opens the grouping to STEM.

Phillips herself came to the study of sensory rhetorics from an immersion in art, visual culture, and reading the work of a poet who was collaborating with a printmaker and writing about everything except the smells of the printing process. Phillips pointed out that society does not value this type of “sense” work—that in our appraisal of the senses, smell is both feminized and animalized, and thus disregarded as negligible.

While bringing the research to her own classroom, Phillips reported that “the students helped make it (the research) better.” Phillips recently taught a course in multimodal composition, and the rhetorics of sensation was an integral part of the students’ educational training.

Students went around Uptown and other parts of Normal to map out the smells they found and used the map to infer the sensory rhetorics implied by regional socioeconomic. The students noticed that some of the lower status places in Normal smelled like the Midwest—fried food and grease. They noticed that places where more professors and business professionals lived didn’t smell the same. There were no fast food spots and the area had access to a farmers market. The students presented this work at a departmentwide conference supported by Illinois State Professors Elizabeth Hurley and Julie Jung. Phillips noted that the students’ work helped show how the field of sensory rhetorics exists beyond the classroom and gave more trajectory to the research.

“When our students have opportunities to take such info out into the public, it does everyone a great service,” Phillips said.

Phillips said it is imperative to encourage students that it’s OK to take risks and even fail, and when instructors share the risk of experimentation with them, it shows that they believe in them enough to be willing to do it.

The normalizing function of the online classroom:

Julie Jung and Marie Moeller on “sites of normalcy”

In their recent article “Sites of Normalcy: Understanding Online Education as Prosthetic Technology,” published in the *Disability Studies Quarterly*, Professor Julie Jung in collaboration with alumna Marie Moeller, M.A. ’02, Ph.D. ’09, explore the ways in which online classrooms are reifying and reinforcing marginalizing social norms in relation to differently abled students, or students who have a differentiated access to resources as opposed to their peers. In a rhetorical mode that is wholly interested in unpacking the complications of the concept of normalcy itself, Jung and Moeller offer a definition of normalcy very early on in the article. They prime the conversation by stating, “Normalcy is an ideology that persuades bodies to accommodate to dominant social systems in ways that allow such systems to sustain themselves efficiently—that is, without having to expend energy to resolve disruptions to the status quo.”

This article shifts the paradigm of thought attributed to online learning (more specifically distance learning) that reasons that online learning is a gateway to delivering information to students in new and more nuanced ways, to a critique of the ways online/distance learning actually keeps certain people out of other traditional means of learning. This is to say that

we see from Gudding is the necessary and urgent task of turning our literary efforts to the benefit of other animals as well. There are many facets to this argument and many supporting premises that should not be taken for granted, yet one stands out in its complex and comprehensive simplicity—we as humans depend on the safe and sane presence of animals. However, due to the literature of our culture and society (laws which dictate and protect the killing of animals and the stories/poems that deny the individual interiority of animals, opting rather to present us with a flat description of them as “pretty,” or in other words, “delectable” beings laid atop our ecological backdrop for the satiation of our visual/appetites), the attitudes of our culture have not shifted to recognizing what Gudding means when he says that animals have their own precious way of understanding the world fully and happily. To disregard that is to disregard the very nature of our own lives—lives that we have happily positioned within and against nature.

In the opening pages of Gudding’s *Literature for Nonhumans*, we get a sentence broken up into two clauses, each on its own page: “There can be no pastoral // as long as there is a slaughterhouse.” For *Literature for Nonhumans* to perform its duty as a work dedicated to benefiting nonhumans, it must renounce the literary tradition of pastoral figurations to show how the land is always and already bloody, how it was never beautiful, how the very nature of beauty itself (or a beautiful life even) is predicated on the unflinching murder of animals. Here, Gudding denies the frame of the pastoral similar to how the pastoral denies the subjectivity of individual animals. By implicating the slaughterhouse industry, the nature of hunting for sport, the inventing of certain killing apparatuses in the state of Illinois, Gudding deftly historicizes the attendant brutality of animals that enacts itself at the heart of our civilized state.

Continued on page 10

Lisya Seloni's commitment to language diversity in academic and social contexts

Lisya Seloni is an associate professor at Illinois State University. She holds a Ph.D. in foreign and second language studies



from The Ohio State University. Since joining Illinois State in 2010, Seloni has taught undergraduate and graduate courses on second language writing, intercultural rhetoric, cross cultural

issues in language teaching and TESOL methods and materials. In 2014, she was awarded with the College of Arts and Sciences' Excellence Award for Outstanding Teaching by a Pre-tenured Faculty Member.

Seloni's research focuses on the areas of second language writing, discourse analysis, and genre studies. More specifically, her scholarship is informed by the intersection of three strands of research associated with applied linguistics and composition studies: (i) discourse analysis and ethnography as means of understanding writing practices of transnational writers, (ii) preparing teachers to work with second language writers in public schools in second and foreign language contexts, and (iii) issues related to language ideologies and policies in Anglo and non-Anglo contexts. Seloni's work has appeared in *English for Specific Purposes*, *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *Language Policy*, *Journal of Excellence in College Teaching*, and in numerous edited collections. Her most recent research is concerned with multilingual graduate students' knowledge construction during the process of thesis writing in Anglophone contexts. For instance, in her recent article entitled "I'm an artist and a scholar who is trying to find a middle point": A textographic analysis of a Colombian art historian's thesis writing," published in *Journal of Second Language Writing*, she examines translingual writing practices of a visual artist's thesis writing.

while distance learning may reduce some of the complications "at-risk" students face, such as lack of transportation, supportive child care, or other ability related circumstances, it also gives permission to administrators to continually disregard those students by not attending to the types of changes to campus and curriculum that would be necessary to assist non-traditional students in their college careers. As Jung and Moeller state: "Simply put, online education can be said to 'help' in more ways than one, for although it can provide nontraditional students with access to higher education, it also 'benefits' educational institutions by keeping these same students out of sight and conveniently out of mind."

In this article, the mythologized narrative of college success by way of distance learning is taken to task through an analysis of pop cultural references that denounces the efficacy of an online education. By using examples from the TV musical comedy *Glee* and the motion picture film *The Other Guys*, Jung and Moeller expose how online/distance learning participates in a normalizing process of othering. Through these cultural narratives on the legitimacy of online courses it becomes clear that we as a society have already dismissed online education systems and their users as being *less-than* understudies of the more actualized forms of learning.

University awards

Elise Verzosa Hurley: Teaching

Assistant Professor Elise Verzosa Hurley was named the winner of the 2015-2016 University Teaching Initiative Award. An accomplished scholar of technical communication whose work has been published in venues such as *Technical Communication Quarterly* and *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*, Hurley is also an exceptional teacher, integrating her substantial intellectual talents into thoughtful, innovative pedagogies that enhance the educational experience of undergraduate and graduate students in English, as well as the many general education students fortunate enough to enroll in her classes. Since joining the faculty at Illinois State in 2013, she has enriched the academic community in countless ways, from her active participation in Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology teaching workshops and institutes, as well as the American Democracy Project; her leadership in organizing with other faculty in the department an end-of-semester event, "English Studies Goes Public," that provided a forum for graduate and undergraduate students to share and celebrate their research with others; her work directing doctoral dissertations and master's projects and mentoring doctoral students on the academic job market and students in our internship program; to her sheer versatility as an instructor.



Gabe Gudding and Duriel Harris: Creative Activity

Professor Gabe Gudding and Associate Professor Duriel Harris were selected as the recipients of the inaugural University Outstanding Creative Activity Award.

Gabriel Gudding, current coordinator of creative writing, was hired in 2002 to teach experimental poetry. He is the author of three books, most recently *Literature for Nonhumans* (Ahsahta, 2015), a work of historiographic prose poetry, creative nonfiction, and both expository and lyric essay. His essays, nonfiction, and poetry have appeared in *The Nation*, *Harper's*, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, and in anthologies such as *Great American Prose Poems*, *Best American Poetry*, and *Best American Experimental Writing*, among many others. His recent work spans interests in critical animal studies, zoopoetics, ethnoastronomy, philosophical pessimism, existential nihilism, cosmicism, and the positive uses of misanthropy.



Duriel Harris, who joined the faculty at Illinois State in 2009, is the editor of *Obsidian: Literature & Arts in the African Diaspora* and co-founder of the Black Took Collective and Call & Response Performance Ensemble. Harris is the author of three critically acclaimed poetry volumes including *No Dictionary of a Living Tongue*, winner of the 2015 Nightboat Poetry Prize (forthcoming, 2017). Current projects include the conceptual work "Blood Labyrinth," "Experiments in Joy

Poetics+” —launched with Harriet, The Poetry Foundation blog, and *Thingification*—a one-woman show. Recent performances include appearances at the Chicago Jazz Festival, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Corner Playhouse and MPAACT Signature Series at the Greenhouse Theater.

Meg Gregory: Teaching

Doctoral student Meg Gregory was selected as the recipient of the Outstanding University Graduate Student Teaching Award. Gregory’s outstanding work as a scholar and teacher has raised the standard for our graduate students in English specifically and in the University more generally. She has taught extensively in our writing program, covering courses in both first-year and more advanced composition. She has also excelled both as a graduate assistant and an instructor for Introduction to British Literature and The Grammatical Structure of English.



Taking a step back from visualization

Kristen Strom on student success in K-12 pedagogy

In the article “Creating Engaged Readers: Making Space for Literacy Instruction in All Content Areas” published March 2015 in the *Illinois Reading Council Journal*, Ph.D. candidate Kristen Strom makes the argument that primary and secondary educators must develop students through other learning portals before students can begin using visualization as a reading technique in class. Responding to the call that Cristina Bruns makes in her book *Why Literature?*, which encourages teachers to have students visualize their reading assignments, Strom insists on a bit of backwards engineering before having students jump right into the game of visualization. Strom insists that there are necessary steps teachers should take before asking students to visualize. One of the reasons Strom suggests this has everything to do with the varying degrees at which students are capable of visualization.



Thinking of the various learning types that enter the classroom, Strom posits that there are at least five things that teachers must do before visualization can occur for the majority, if not all students. To activate the process of visualization for both students that read well and for what Bruns calls “delayed readers,” Strom states that educators must establish a safe space; be reading role models; ask students to insert themselves in the imaginary world of the text by acting out or dramatizing; have them bring in certain artifacts that they can see relates to the theme of the text; and activate their prior learning and home culture. Strom explains that the reason why K-12 educators aren’t taking such approaches to student success is not due to some character or pedagogical flaw; it’s mainly because instructors haven’t been introduced to the research. Educators need to be brought up to date on the various ways to help students be successful because students now aren’t the same as they were when the teachers were students. With this very poignant statement, it becomes clear that Strom’s work continues to bridge the gap between educators and researchers. As she puts it herself in a recent interview, “This article is a way to help teachers make students more successful.”

At the IATE Conference held on October 16, 2015, Strom presented on strategies for reflective practice for teachers and mentors. As a faculty educator at Bradley University in the Department of Education, Strom works as a mentor for teacher candidates where she advises them on how to navigate certain academic mandates, gives feedback on teaching pedagogy and performance, and conducts workshops for teacher development. During her work at Bradley last year, Strom reflected on her mentoring and other exchanges with the teacher candidates to help her see various teaching elements and effects better. In doing so Strom says that she was able to see the pedagogical choices she was making herself, to question those choices, and to improve when and where necessary. Strom shared the reflections with her teacher candidates, and together they were equipped to question the hegemonic practices permeating the education system. Strom hopes that educators and administrators will be

Seloni’s sustained commitment to exploring the role of linguistic diversity in students’ academic success is evident in her co-edited book, *Ethnolinguistic Diversity and Literacy Education: Language, Literacy and Culture*. The book, which received wide acclaim, provides critical discussions about monolingual language ideologies in sociolinguistics research by exploring the impact of dialect differences and community languages on ethnolinguistically diverse students’ academic achievement.

Seloni’s academic interests go beyond second language writing and literacy education. Her emerging work on linguistic landscape looks at language policies and language ideologies in her home country Turkey. She explores the demise of Judeo-Spanish, the heritage language in Jewish-Turkish communities, by looking at the interaction of macro-level political ideologies in the country’s attitude toward minority communities and micro-level language practices within the family. Additionally, her ongoing work on language ideologies deals with graffiti as a form of transgressive writing. In this line of work, Seloni focuses on the material use of written language that appears on graffiti and the way this language creates counter-narratives in the public sphere. She argues that the innovative and mostly multilingual street language produced during social protests provides important counter-narratives to dominant discourses, and more importantly, makes those narratives visible to the local, national, and transnational publics.

During the 2016-2017 academic year, Seloni is on sabbatical leave in her home city of Istanbul, Turkey, where she will conduct a year-long research project on foreign language writing teacher preparation in Turkish universities. In this ethnographic study, she will investigate how the teaching of writing has been historically addressed in the Turkish context and how teachers’ first and second language genre knowledge impacts the way they conceptualize writing instruction in their local contexts.

Continued on page 12

Redefining communal culturalisms in academia: Ana Roncero-Bellido on testimonios

Ph.D. candidate Ana Roncero-Bellido recently presented her paper, “Latinas Anónimas: Articulating a Transnational Feminist Rhetorics of Solidarity Through Testimonio,” at Illinois State’s Latino



Studies Talk. In her paper, Roncero-Bellido discusses the importance of the genre of “testimonio” to the embodied experiences of Latina women. Through testimonio, the narratives of the

individual and the community become intertwined for the purpose of communal healing and cultural liberation. Roncero-Bellido describes the nature of such communal narratives as a conflation of the “I” and the “we” with an attention to the natures of both entities. Roncero-Bellido also underscores testimonios as the telling of events that have actually happened to an individual Latina, which equates to the telling of stories that could happen to any Latina. According to Roncero-Bellido, testimonios are stories of repression with an exigent aim of demarcating a space for the cultural import of Latina women.

In the classroom, Roncero-Bellido uses the genre of testimonio to introduce her students to a cultural encounter that they are not used to having. She has assigned both the reading and the writing of testimonios and has found that students (especially English majors and those already enthusiastic about writing) gravitate to the form and function of testimonios. From this project Roncero-Bellido has also shaped her pedagogy around a concept that comes out of the Latina Feminist Group (LFG), a group of scholars from various disciplines that published the 2001 anthology *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios*. Incorporating what one of the LFG scholar’s referred to as “theories of the flesh” (or the idea that experience can be and is theory), Roncero-Bellido is developing a pedagogy of the flesh in the classroom

more inclined to commit to a reflective practice in their work, although there are temporal limitations to the reflecting process itself.

Faculty and staff news and accomplishments

Joe Amato and Kass Fleisher published “Slivers and Speculation: Barry Lopez and Trauma Theory” in *Ragazine*. September 2015.

Christopher Breu’s article “The Insistence of the Material: Theorizing Materiality and Biopolitics in the Age of Globalization” has been republished in *Can You Feel It? Effectuating Tactility and Print in the Contemporary* (Eindhoven, Netherlands: Onomatopoe Press, 2016, 113-147).

Bob Broad published two articles, “This is Not Only a Test: Exploring Structured Ethical Blindness in the Standardized Testing Industry” and “Reflection on a Role for Qualitative Inquiry,” in the *Journal of Writing Assessment* 9.1 (April 2016).

Karen Coats and Lisa Rowe Fraustino edited the book *Mothers in Children’s and Young Adult Literature: From the Eighteenth Century to Postfeminism*. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2016).

Steve Halle published the poetry collection *The Collectors*. Villa Park: Mean Bee Chapbooks, 2015. He also read excerpts from this collection at the The Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture since 1900. February 18-20, 2016.

Cynthia Huff published “The ‘Galton Family Books’: Visual and Verbal Life Writing” in the *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 2 (2016, 189-202). Huff is now a member of the Senior Advisory Board for the Midwest Victorian Studies Association.

Julie Jung and Amanda K. Booher presented “Forging a Collective, Making a Thing: Accounting Methodologically for *Feminist Rhetorical Science Studies*” at the Elocutio Lecture Series, Purdue University, Krannert Hall, West Lafayette, Indiana. 28 April 2016.

Hyun-Sook Kang published an article on teacher candidates’ perceptions of non-native English-speaking teacher educations in a TESOL program (“Is there a language barrier compensation?”) in the *TESOL Journal*, 6(2), 223–251.

Kathryn Kerr read at a poetry reading at the annual international American Conference for Irish Studies at the University of Notre Dame, April 2, 2016.

William Thomas McBride led post-screening discussion of *Alphaville* (Godard 1965) as part of the Arts Tech Film Festival, Normal Theater, Normal, April 20, 2016.

Jan Neuleib participated in the Writing on Line Focus Group, presenting a paper entitled, “College Composition and Communication,” Houston, Texas, April 15, 2016.

Neuleib presented the paper “The Pre-Twenty Five Year Old Brain: Brain Games” at the University of Illinois English Articulation Conference, Allerton House, April 13, 2016.

Neuleib was also a featured reader at the Normal Public Library poetry reading, April 21, 2016.

Sally Parry presented “The Lady Has Plans: Spies and Saboteurs in World War II Theater,” Popular Culture Association Annual Conference, Seattle, Washington, March 22, 2016.

Amy E. Robillard’s article “Prototypical Reading: Volume, Desire, Anxiety” was published in the journal *College Composition and Communication* 67.2 (2015): 197–215.

Lisya Seloni presented the papers “Pedagogical possibilities of translingual writing and L2 writing in teacher preparation programs” and “Genre-based writing instruction in FYC contexts: The case of multilingual instructors” at the TESOL International Conference, Baltimore, Maryland, April 5- 8, 2016.

Graduate student news and accomplishments

Kate Browne presented “Jolly Happy Little Blimp Baby: The Pitch and the Autobiographical Pact in the Lives of Fat Sideshow Performers” at the PCA/ACA conference in Seattle, Washington, March 22–25, 2016.

Danielle Cochran published “Surface Race Resolution: Race Commodification in Marvel Premiere’s Series featuring Black Panther” in the *International Journal of Comic Art* (IJOCA) (Fall/Winter 2015 17.2 (2015): 457-77).

David Giovagnoli, Jeff Rients, Deb Riggert-Kiefer, and Michelle Wright-Dottore presented “Creating Writing Researchers, Not Essays, in FYC” at TYCA-Midwest Conference, Johnson County Community College, October 9, 2015.

Adriana Gradea co-edited the article “Romanian Values, Spirituality and the Global Challenge” for the *Journal of European Studies* along with Lenuta Giukin and Christene D’Anca. (November 2018).

Meg Gregory published “Exposing a Transcorporeal Landscape in the *Life of St. Margaret of Antioch*” in *Magistra: A Journal of Female Spirituality*, 21.2 (2015, 92-111).

Stephanie Guedet published “Feeling Human Again: Toward a Pedagogy of Radical Empathy” in *Assay: A Journal of Nonfiction Studies*; Spring 2.2 edition.
www.assayjournal.com/22-guedet.html

Robin E. Halsey presented “Reading, Writing, Arithmetic: Adding Mathematics to Adult ESL Literacy Curriculum” at the AMTESOL Conference in Orange Beach, Alabama, February 12–13, 2016.

Samuel Kamara published “Enduring Paths, Crossroads and Intersection: Path-Breaking Knowledges” in *Pede Hollist’s So the Path Does Not Die* in the journal *Research in Sierra Leone Studies* (RISLS) Weave 3.1 (2015).

Francesco Levato published “Priority 1 (threats to national security, border security, and public safety),” “Levels of Behavior/Resistance,” “from Hand-Held Stun Gun for Incapacitating a Human Target,” in *SunStruck Magazine*, October 2015.

Jonah Mixon-Webster presented “And I’m Not All Nigga” at the *Journal of Narrative Theory’s* Crossdisciplinary Conversations on Race and Racism Symposium, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Michigan, March 2016.

Laurel L. Perez presented the paper “How to Be a Working Class Hero in the Creative Writing Classroom: An Exploration of a Feminist Working Class Activist Pedagogy” at the Women, Gender Studies Symposium, Illinois State University, Normal, Friday, April 15, 2016.

Krista Roberts presented “A Pink, Public Auto/biographical Monument: Susan G. Komen’s Posthuman Life Writing” at the 10th biennial International Auto/Biography Association’s World Conference at the University of Cyprus in May 2016.

Erika Romero presented “Beware ‘Happily Ever After’: The Dragons of ‘True Love’ in ABC’s *Once Upon a Time*” at the International Conference for the Fantastic in the Arts in Orlando, Florida, March 16–19, 2016.

Kristen Strom presented “Strategies for Reflective Practice” at the Illinois Association of Teachers of English Fall Conference, October 17, 2015.

Irene Taylor published 8 poems—“The American Star,” “I Am Not a Barn,” “What We Can See,” “They (The Mother’s Quilt),” “Proud to Be,” “As Long as We Remember,” “Mothers 1,” and “Mothers 2”—as part of the Barn Quilt Heritage Trail of McLean County. The latter two poems were read at the opening ceremony, and Taylor has also recorded all of them for *Poetry Radio*, WGLT 89.1FM, August 2015.

Amish Trivedi’s “Three Poems by Amish Trivedi” has been published in the journal *Hyperallergic*. January 13 2016.

that teaches students to take more investment in their personal experiences, to think critically about them, and explicate them in such a way that a new theory can be born.

A Note about giving

Professor Janice Witherspoon Neuleib, M.A. '70

Janice Neuleib is professor emerita in the Department of English, director of the



Illinois State Writing Project, executive secretary of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English, and editor of the *Illinois English Bulletin*.

Please don't be shocked, but

I'm going to refer to my favorite literary collection (for reading and teaching): the *Bible*. I love that the *Old Testament* lists 613 commandments. Now that's a fascinating fact in itself, but I combine it with my favorite story in the *New Testament*. In the *Gospel of Mark*, Jesus meets a young rich ruler who asks what he needs to do to have eternal life. Jesus, who really does have a sense of humor, looks at the earnest fellow and responds that he needs to keep all the commandments. The brash youth replies, “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.” Jesus, I'm sure smiling (he knows that no one can keep even the Big 10 let alone the other 603), tells him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”

In this passage, I read “eternal life” as a meaningful and fulfilling life. One of the great tensions in all religious and ethical thinking lies in the dichotomy between being good for a reward versus living a meaningful life that brings intrinsic good to others. The parents who pay a child for good grades tell the child that she should be good (and learn), and she will be paid. The parents who explore and discover alongside the child teach the sheer joy of learning. We work at what we love and

Continued on page 14

then give what we earn for that work to causes we cherish.

I teach yoga. A maxim of yoga distinguishes grasping for what we can get and letting go of what we have. If I make a fist, my blood pressure rises; if I open my hands, my blood pressure drops. I take this metaphor farther. When I give for the joy of seeing what I value extended and expanded, I feel joyful. When I hang onto my money and possessions, I feel tense and afraid that I will lose what I have. Joy is better.

Thus I try to give as much as I can without being a burden to the state or my family. I choose to give to Illinois State and the English Department because I value students and their teachers. Students have given a part of their lives to learning and exploring. Faculty have centered their lives on helping others expand their intellectual horizons. In addition to expanding students' horizons, faculty contribute to the wider society by demonstrating curiosity about the world and investigating that world as a part of their professional and personal callings. The values of teaching and learning drive my life. I implement Jesus's advice for having a meaningful life through my giving, if not all that I have, as much as I can to helping others, especially those others who want to learn and teach.

In Memoriam

Rhonda Nicol, an instructional assistant professor in the Department of Eng-



lish, passed away on November 10 in Madrid, Spain. She was a beloved colleague and teacher who taught literature and writing courses in the Department of English and women's and gender studies

program at Illinois State University for over a decade. She enjoyed teaching and writing about various aspects of popular culture, particularly young adult fantasy fiction. A memorial service will be held in Old Main at the Bone Student Center on January 28, 2017, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Undergraduate scholarship recipients, 2016–2017

Ayana Guzman, The Glenn Grever English Education Scholarship
Alexa Leyba, The Class of 1939 Ruth Henline Scholarship in English Education
Sarah Greenberg, The Dorothy Bryan Schemske Scholarship
Delaney Thompson, The Anna Keaton English Scholarship
Holly Buescher, The William Morgan Poetry Award
Jesenia Kolimas, The Julia N. Visor Scholarship
Adam Brockman, The Maurice Scharton Scholarship in Composition/Rhetoric Studies
Zackery Jones, The Maurice Scharton Scholarship in Composition/Rhetoric Studies

Graduate scholarship recipients, 2016–2017

Katy Lewis, The Anna Keaton English Scholarship
Cristina Sanchez Martin, The Excellence in ESL Award
Taylor Williams, The Publications Unit Publishing Award
Evan Nave, The Tom Kuster Creative Writing Award
Eric Pitman, The Tom Kuster Creative Writing Award
Laurel Perez, The William Morgan Poetry Award
Adriana Gradea, The Diversity and Equity in Teaching Award
Shelby Ragan, The Taimi Maria Ranta Children's and Young Adult Literature Scholarship
Miike Soares, The Maurice Scharton Scholarship in Composition/Rhetoric Studies
Michelle Wright Dottore, The Maurice Scharton Scholarship in Composition/Rhetoric Studies
Taylor Williams, The George R. Canning Award for Outstanding Student in Literature
Jeff Rients, The Taimi Maria Ranta Award for Outstanding Teaching by a Ph.D. Candidate
Shelby Ragan, The Sigma Tau Delta Scholarship for Outstanding Service and Leadership in English Studies

Alumni news

1960s

James W. Bennett, M.A. '66, has carved out a successful career as a novelist since graduating from the Illinois State graduate program. Following the release of his debut young adult novel *I Can Hear the Mourning Dove*, which *Publisher's Weekly* dubbed "one of the ten best YA novels of the 90s," Bennett has received scores of critical acclaim and praise for his growing number of titles including, *Blue Star Rapture* and *Plunking Reggie Jackson*, which the latter earned him the accolade of being "the master of sports fiction for teenagers." His upcoming novel is currently being shopped around as he works on a new literary adventure, writing his first nonfiction book.

1970s

P. Wayne Stauffer '79, M.S. '85, is currently a full-time English instructor in the Houston Community College (HCC) System in Houston, Texas. He taught junior high and high school English for 14 years in rural Illinois and Houston. He also worked as a technical writer at the NASA Johnson Space Center for 15 years, documenting payload safety reviews of space shuttle and international space station experiment hardware. He was an adjunct instructor for 24 years before joining HCC full time in 2011.

2000s

Joseph Jeyaraj, Ph.D. '01, has earned a 2016 Conference on College Composition and Communication Technical and Scientific Communication Award for his article, "Engineering and Narrative: Literary Prerequisites as Indirect Communication for Technical Writing," in Volume 44 Issue 2 of the *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*. Jeyaraj won for the Best Article on Pedagogy or Curriculum in Technical or Scientific Communication. He is currently a professor of technical professional writing at New York City College of Technology.

Preeyaporn Chareonbutra, Ph.D. '08, has been appointed dean of faculty of liberal arts, Ubon Ratchathani University, for a four-year term.

2010s

Erin Frost, Ph.D. '13, co-edited a special issue of *Communication Design Quarterly*: "Charting an Emerging Field: The Rhetorics of Health and Medicine and Its Importance in Communication Design." August 2015.



For more information, visit
Homecoming.IllinoisState.edu

Upcoming events

English studies at large conference

**8 a.m.–4 p.m., Saturday,
February 11, 2017**

englishstudiesatlarge.wordpress.com

Illinois State University's English Honor Society Sigma Tau Delta and the Department of English are co-sponsoring the seventh-annual English Studies at Large Conference (ESAL) on Saturday, February 11, 2017.

In the past six years, ESAL has hosted more than 50 students from over 10 colleges and universities across the Midwest. This conference is an excellent opportunity for undergraduates to present critical work in all areas of English Studies, engage in conversation with other students across multiple universities in the region, and experience the intellectual excitement of a conference, all right here at Illinois State University.

Central Illinois interdisciplinary graduate conference

**Noon, Friday, March 24—
4 p.m. Saturday, March 25, 2017**

The Central Illinois Interdisciplinary Graduate Conference (formerly known as the Word's Worth Conference) is sponsored by the Society of English Graduate Scholars and provides a forum for graduate students throughout the region to present original interdisciplinary research.

