

# **Suffolk University English Department Newsletter**

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The day shall not get up so soon as I / To try the fair adventure of tomorrow

It was 9:45 A.M. and we were just returning from class to the department office, to be met with unbelievable rumors. Several telephones were ringing and someone had turned on a radio. Then the pictures on a small television showed the events which transformed that ordinary morning into a time of horror. As on November 22, 1963, the shock spread an unnatural quiet across Boston. Suffolk shut down, Boston shut down, and we rode the T home, worrying about the victims and pondering the likelihood of a further attack. May such a day never happen again.

## **A Return to a Normal Year at Suffolk**

By January, life had returned to normal and the faculty were ready to vote on candidates for English Department awards and prizes. Recent graduates know of these awards, but perhaps earlier graduates might be interested to learn that we offer the following yearly awards, with sums of money attached. Our oldest award (1970 to the present) is the Ella Murphy Scholarship (amount varies yearly), followed by the Stanley Vogel Scholarship (1986, amount varies yearly). Since then, we have added the Rosalie Warren Award (\$100 check), the English Achievement Award (\$100), and the English Scholarship (\$600, to cover the costs of graduate school applications). Recently, Fred Marchant's Creative Writing division added the Creative Writing Award for Prose (\$100) and the Robert Johnson Poetry Award (\$100). Finally, just this past semester, Peter Caputo secured an important new source of funds: the Writing Center Scholars Program. Five awards of \$4000 each will be given annually to English majors and minors for their work as tutors in the Writing Center. These awards, of course, are in addition to the usual financial aid packages.

## **Special Events**

Two series deserve special notice. Gail Coffler reinvigorated the English Department Lecture Series, gathering talks by Lisa Celovsky, Kathleen Grathwol, and Quentin Miller, and hosting Prof. Alfred Habegger of the Univ. of Kansas to speak on "My Wars Are Laid Away in Books," based on his new biography of Emily Dickinson. Kathleen Grathwol's title ensured a big audience: "Scandalous Memoirs in the 18th Century." Lisa Celovsky used Spenser and Shakespeare to explain "How a Man Became a Man in Early Modern England." Then, to highlight Suffolk's new campus in Dakar, Senegal, Gail presented a discussion of experiences in Dakar by students and faculty (including Nina Allen, Diane Harper, and Kathleen Grathwol). Fred Marchant's Creative Writers Residency Series annually sponsors a three- or four-day residency by a nationally known poet. Last year the poet was Barbara Sonneborn and this year's guest was Andrea

Hollander Budy. Other events included the department's Venture Magazine poetry reading with guest poet Edmund Berrigan, a visit by poet and novelist John F. Deane, and a joint sponsorship of Prof. Goy-Blanquet's talk on "Shakespeare in France Today." A popular annual event was the open house for majors and minors arranged by Marlene McKinley. But the absolutely, positively, hands down, most popular event, for English faculty, was a session, led by Gerry Richman and Rich Miller, on how to catch Internet cheaters: When faculty receive papers on literary topics as part of course requirements, they now have to put on their Sherlock Holmes deerstalker caps and spend (read: waste) a few hours locating the sources from which paragraphs and entire papers were pilfered by some students. Marlene McKinley and her student officers inducted into the honor society poet and playwright Doris Chu, whose talk on the problems of translation generated a panel discussion to be held this fall. Finally, Marlene has received funding for the Sigma Tau Delta Lecture Series, inviting prominent writers to speak at Suffolk. The inaugural speaker is scheduled for October 3, 2002.

### **Faculty Activities and News**

Blair Bigelow, after dreaming of the joys of retirement, decided he had "promises to keep" and will remain on active duty. His entry on Theodore Dreiser's newspaper journalism will appear in the Theodore Dreiser Encyclopedia.

Gail Coffler, continuing her work on Melville, delivered a paper, "Subversive Homosexuality..." at Hofstra for the 150th anniversary of the publication of Moby-Dick. Her paper, "Greeks and Romans in White Jacket," was published in Melville Among the Nations. She and her husband, Melville scholar Walter Bezanson, were interviewed by BBC Radio for a segment on Moby-Dick. (Uh-oh, does that make her a media celebrity?)

Tom Connolly, whose specialty is theater history, had a remarkable year. His book on George Jean Nathan was a finalist for the prestigious George Freedley Memorial Award. He directed at Suffolk the American premiere of his play, Two Women Off Color, and published many articles on theater history for the Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre, the Encyclopedia of New England Culture, and the Companion to Twentieth Century Theatre. Also, we musn't forget to note the first birthday of Trevor!

Marilyn Jurich traveled to Florida to present a paper on the trickster in science, literature and history at a meeting of the International Association of Fantasy. The paper was later published in the on-line journal of Trinity University (Texas). Her poem, "Even Death Is Uncertain..." appeared in the journal Jemspec. She also notes that her daughter Joscelyn is the host of a radio show and a television program in Croatia.

Bette Mandl went on a Neil Simon kick: her interview with the playwright and an article, "Neil Simon and Popular Culture," were published in The Playwright's Muse. She continues to convene Writing Across the Curriculum workshops for faculty of all disciplines. Because her children (and grandchildren) live on two different continents, she recently arranged a family get-together in Paris!

Fred Marchant, poet, teacher, and Director of the Creative Writing program, has dozens of publications, readings and other activities. A sample would include a new course (“the Vietnam War in History, Literature and Film”), a new book of poetry (House on Water, House in Air), and an award that resulted in a month-long residency in the Heinrich Boll cottage in Ireland.

Quentin Miller sends greetings from his family, including his 5-year-old and 2-year-old sons. Having published his book on Updike, Quentin turned to Baldwin and Kerouac, writing a reference article on Baldwin, publishing reviews of articles on both authors, and chairing a conference session on Kerouac. He is collecting essays for a book on U.S. prison literature, following his highly successful course on that topic

Rich Miller, Director of Freshman Composition, once again organized workshops to improve the teaching of composition. His article, “The Horizon of Martin Buber in Composition Studies,” was accepted for publication in *Judaism and Composition*. Because his wife bought him a great synthesizer/ keyboard for his birthday, watch out, Jerry Lee Lewis!

Da Zheng enjoyed a trip to China with his family as he continued his work on a Chinese author who styled himself the Silent Traveler. His article, “Chang Yee’s Travel Writing...,” was published in *Prospects* and he presented a paper on Chang Yee at a Toronto meeting of the Popular Culture Association.

### **Adjunct Faculty Activities**

Nina Allen is another faculty member tapped by the media gods (goddesses?). She appeared on New England Cable News to talk with a reporter about “Touring Steinbeck Country.” Her lecture on “Tortilla Flat and the Death of Tradition,” delivered at the John Steinbeck Centennial Conference, was filmed by C-Span for broadcast last April. Carol Dine won both first- and second-place prizes and received the Frances Locke Memorial Award for her poem based on a Van Gogh painting. As a result, Suffolk honored her by sending her to Amsterdam for two weeks to study Van Gogh’s paintings (which inspired her to write more poems on his paintings). Ingrid Strange welcomed Samuel, her second child, to join three-year-old Sarah. She also appeared in the Suffolk production of *The Vagina Monologues*, and garnered great applause!

### **Alumni/ae News**

Prof. Coffler informs us that Allan Caggiano, ’00, is completing his third year at B.C. Law School. Attorney Kerri Quintal, ’96, writes from North Attleboro that she is teaching a course at Fisher College and writing a legal column in a local paper. Julie Woods, ’82, dropped in to say hello on her way to the State House. Elizabeth Larkin, ’96, graduated from the Univ. of Minnesota Law School and is now a law clerk for a Court of Appeals judge in Saint Paul. Cathy (Rossi) Cecere, ’83, notes that after an MA in English (UMass), law school, and a couple of kids, she now operates her own publishing company. Ralph Ferragamo, ’64, asked about our former chair, Dr. Vogel (who resides in

Connecticut and although not in the best of health, is still interested in news about Suffolk). Speaking of health, our good wishes go out to Philip Hughes, who suffered two serious illnesses as he was in the midst of retiring from Suffolk. He, Emerita Prof. Ann Hughes and their daughter Alex had been enjoying their new life in Portland before the illnesses and Ann had almost finished her book on local merchant vessels. We wish the family a speedy return to the good life of Maine!

Last entry: The English faculty surprised Tony Merzlak with a birthday party at a local Thai restaurant because he turned [age deleted]; you know, one of those “crossing the barrier” birthdays. So we saluted him by waving our senior citizen cards. He was happy.