GRADUATION CELEBRATION!

The English Department congratulates its 2012-2013 graduates and wishes them well in their future endeavors!

Undergraduate Program

This spring 40 English majors, English with Writing Emphasis majors, and English with Secondary Education majors, along with 12 English minors, will graduate from St. Thomas. They join the ranks of 10 English major alumni who graduated last December.

Approximately one-third of our graduating students are double-majors, combining their English-related major with other disciplines such as Communication and Journalism, Justice and Peace Studies, Philosophy, Psychology, Political Science, and Catholic Studies.

Additional kudos are extended to those students who earned Latin honors during 2012-2013. Fourteen students graduated cum laude, nine graduated magna cum laude, and four graduated summa cum laude.

As our majors walk through the St. Thomas arches one last time, they begin new journeys that run the gamut from graduate school to volunteer and service positions to professional careers. Following are a few highlights of what’s next for some of our seniors:

Kathleen Dempsey will be working in a communications position in the Equipment Care division at Ecolab Inc.

Rachel Friske plans on using her elementary education and English degree to teach and has already had interviews with two metro area schools.

Kelsey Gantzer will be turning her internship with the communications team at Jones Lang LaSalle, a corporate real estate company, into a permanent facilities coordinator position on their United Healthcare Group account.
Sean Kern has been accepted into Teach for America and has committed to teaching high school English for two years in either Hartford or New Haven, Connecticut.

Katherine LaSee will be turning her marketing internship into a full-time position working in the marketing department with Travel Tags, a company that prints plastic goods, with heavy emphasis on gift cards for large corporations.

Jewel Matsch has been accepted into Teach for America and will be teaching at a Twin Cities high school while also studying for the LSAT exam.

Katherine Matejka will join Pearson Education as a production intern for its Technology Group division, located at its headquarters in Indianapolis, IN. She has also been accepted to the Master of Professional Studies in Publishing program at George Washington University.

Amanda McNaughton was accepted into the M.A. program in Counseling Psychology at St. Thomas and will begin classes in the fall. She hopes to pursue career counseling, but academic counseling is equally appealing to her.

Korrine O’Connor will be attending William Mitchell College of Law in the fall.

Alexandra Post will take a year to serve in the Twin Cities with MN Reading Corps as an elementary literacy tutor. She plans on pursuing a Master of Arts in English graduate program the following year.

Graduate Program

Eleven students graduated from the master’s program between summer 2012 and spring 2013. Following is a list of those students and the title of their respective master’s essay:

Marie Campbell, “‘No freedom to fight for at home’: Sydney Owenson’s Disillusionment With Union Between The Wild Irish Girl and Woman; or, Ida of Athens”

Bethany Fletcher, “Female Genius and Female Friendship in Landon’s Ethel Churchill and Jewsbury’s The History of an Enthusiast”

Lindsay Tuttle Levang, “Breaking the Conventions to Keep the Commandments: Reinventing Marriage in G. K. Chesterton’s Manalive”

Rachel MacDonald, “(Re)Reading for Departure: Mary Karr, Trauma, and Textual Memory”

Melissa Pistillo, “Real Women, Real Friends: An Examination of Female Friendship in Béroul’s The Romance of Tristran”

Kathryn Pulley, “A Dissident Loose End: Corbitant and Native Representation in Lydia Maria Child’s Hobomok”

Vadim Rubinchik, “Solve this problem, dear Emily, if you possibly can: Audience-Centered Mathematics of Emily Dickinson.”

Lucy Saliger, “Tracing Radical Yearnings in the Ascension Narrative: ‘Knowing’ Ourselves in Jimenez’s Trilogy and Upward-Through-Education Stories”

Nicole Smith, “‘Delight to move men to take that goodness in hand’: An Analysis of Morality in Sarah Kane’s Blasted”

Jennifer Waldenberger, “Latimer’s Mental Illness Defined?: George Eliot’s The Lifted Veil and the Pre-History of Schizophrenia”

Nouchie Xiong, “Exploring the Bicultural Experiences and Feminist Voices of Hmong Women in Mayli Vang’s ‘We Women of the Hmong Culture’”

Latin Honors

Cum laude: a cumulative GPA between 3.500 and 3.699

Magna cum laude: a cumulative GPA between 3.700 and 3.899

Summa cum laude: a cumulative GPA of 3.900 or higher
Since its January 1968 inaugural issue, Victorian Periodicals Review (VPR) has made its home at the University of Massachusetts, the University of Toronto, Texas State University, and most recently, our own St. Paul campus of the University of St. Thomas. In 2012, Dr. Alexis Easley took over as the journal’s editor and established an editorial assistantship for students in the Master of Arts in English program. This assistantship provides graduate students with an introduction to the field of scholarly publishing and gives them hands-on experience with editorial duties such as copyediting, design, and marketing. In addition to these day-to-day tasks, the assistantship also gives graduate students the opportunity to make connections with scholars working in the field of Victorian periodical studies and to gain an understanding of the inner workings of a peer-reviewed journal.

VPR is published by the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals (RSVP), a scholarly organization established in 1968. According to founding RSVP member Chris Kent of the University of Saskatchewan, VPR was “a pioneering – the pioneering – journal in an area which now has a number of journals. VPR holds its place as the leading journal in a field that it has largely created. Before VPR, the study of Victorian journalism was a small backwater; now it’s mainstream in literary and historical work.” In its formative years, RSVP was comprised of a small group of researchers working in a handful of universities. Today, RSVP is a well-established professional organization with hundreds of members from a variety of academic disciplines and universities around the world.

According to periodicals expert Rosemary VanArsdel, many scholars once viewed Victorian magazines and
newspapers as “peripheral, questionable, and unnecessary, although later research would identify over 125,000 titles published during the Victorian era.” The increased scholarly interest in periodicals led Michael Wolff of the University of Massachusetts to establish Victorian Periodicals Newsletter, which would later be re-titled Victorian Periodicals Review. Wolff credits VPR with “having brought what is, after all, the first of mass media to the attention of the profession. Now with the recognition of the importance of this material, the involvement of publishing companies, and the development of digitization, this material is available to everyone. What was then a private impossibility is now a collective possibility.”

Today, through its digital presence on Project Muse, VPR now reaches scholars in Britain, America, Canada, France, and Australia as well as in Croatia, Ghana, Mexico, Indonesia, Kuwait, and many other countries. Under Easley’s editorship, VPR recently completed its forty-fifth year of uninterrupted publication. Easley explains VPR’s success by stating that it is the “only scholarly journal focused on Victorian journalism for its own sake. Many journals include articles that ‘mine’ Victorian periodical texts for their content, but VPR focuses on the field of Victorian journalism as a distinct and important realm of inquiry.” In addition, she’s attained through her editorial work a “new appreciation for the ‘economy of generosity’ that forms the foundation of our scholarly life. Peer reviewers generously dedicate time to mentoring fellow writers by providing detailed feedback, and editors work intensively and collaboratively with writers as they revise and polish their contributions.” VPR’s presence at UST extends this same “economy of generosity” to our graduate English editorial assistants by giving them opportunities to facilitate an ongoing interdisciplinary dialectic on the Victorian periodical press while also supporting a professional network of scholars from around the globe and contributing directly to VPR’s ongoing legacy.

VPR’s future is indeed bright. As eminent periodicals scholar Louis James notes, “The journal’s two central strengths make it largely immune from predictable models for academic journals. Its interdisciplinary approach leaves it open to innovation, wherever it occurs, right across the field of humanities studies.” The interdisciplinary field of Victorian periodical studies continues to expand, in part due to ongoing digitization efforts and the increased number of periodical texts available via subscription databases such as British Periodicals I & II and open-access digital projects such as Dickens’ Journals Online (www.djo.org.uk), the Hathi Trust Digital Library (www.hathitrust.org), and the Nineteenth-Century Serials Edition (www.ncse.ac.uk). Recognizing that the online accessibility of periodical texts has provided a catalyst for scholarly activity worldwide, Easley remains committed to cultivating VPR as a “flexible, creative vehicle for publishing the very best of this innovative new research.” As long-forgotten periodicals and newspapers are brought to light through new digital platforms, VPR – and the UST English Department’s connection to it – will remain at the epicenter of global research in Victorian media studies.

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2. I would like to acknowledge the scholars who agreed to be interviewed for this article: Alexis Easley, Louis James, Chris Kent, Joel Wiener, and Michael Wolff.
In Peter Geye’s captivating novel, *Safe from the Sea*, Olaf Torr faces his own mortality in the guise of cancer. Thirty-five years earlier, Olaf had confronted death, surviving the wreck of the Great Lakes ore carrier, *Ragnarøk*. The ship’s name is significant, for at Ragnarøk, Norse mythology holds, the earth will sink into the sea before being reborn, rich and fertile. In many ways, the symbolism of Ragnarøk defines this novel, for out of disaster and tragedy comes rebirth. *Safe from the Sea* is the story of Olaf and his son, Noah, who voyage from estrangement toward reconciliation. Called home to tend to his father, Noah, a map merchant, does more than simply cross the physical landscape in his journey from the east coast to a roughhewn cabin near Lake Superior; rather, he cautiously navigates the emotional landscape as he reconnects with his father. For those who know and enjoy northern Minnesota, the wilderness and Lake Superior with all its natural drama will ensnare and captivate the reader.

—Martin Warren
Associate Professor of English

Chad Harbach
*The Art of Fielding*
September 2011, Little, Brown and Company

St. Thomas-types will certainly recognize Westish College, home of the Harpooners and fictional site of Chad Harbach’s *The Art of Fielding*. Like UST, Westish enjoys a respected position among liberal arts institutions, holds its own in a competitive Division III conference, and overlooks a scenic body of water, albeit Lake Michigan rather than the Mississippi. Westish, however, owes its academic and athletic celebrity to two prodigious discoveries: an unknown campus speech made by Herman Melville and an undervalued shortstop named Henry Skrimshander. The plot turns on the various imperfections of Skrimshander rather than the incongruity of Melville in Wisconsin, and although sports direct much of the book’s conflict, *The Art of Fielding* provides the reader, in the words of my students, with more “bromance” than baseball. The complications of competitive friendships, uneasy brotherhoods, and an ill-fated May-December relationship drive the novel and facilitate Harbach’s return to nineteenth-century fraternities to untangle the knotty complexities of male relationships in the twenty-first.

—Anne Roth-Reinhardt
Instructor of English

Tom Piazza
*City of Refuge*
August 2008, Harper

Three years after producing *Why New Orleans Matters*, an impassioned response to those who questioned the vitality of Katrina-ravaged New Orleans, musicologist and longtime Crescent City advocate Tom Piazza published *City of Refuge*. The novel traces two New Orleans families, one white and one black, as they confront the social, spatial, and racial inequities that define post-Katrina New Orleans. SJ Williams and Craig Donaldson serve as dual protagonists in *Refuge*. Williams, a widowed African American carpenter, hails from the Lower Ninth Ward. Donaldson, a newspaper editor, moved from the Midwest to New Orleans after becoming enamored with the city in his youth. Both men’s adoration for the city is palpable, but whereas the unfettered Donaldson eventually moves his family to Chicago, where better professional opportunities await, Williams reaffirms his family’s deep-rooted attachment to New Orleans. Ultimately, in this rich text, and through these dissimilar, heavily nuanced characters, Piazza urges his reader to mourn Katrina’s victims, absorb the storm’s lessons, and celebrate the country’s most eclectic city.

—Brian Greening
Instructor of English

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**We’re Looking for Some Great Books!**

Are you interested in recommending a great book to all of our other alumni readers? If so, we encourage you to submit a short review for the next issue of *Writing in the Margins*, which will be published in December.

Guidelines for the mini book review are as follows: 1) review length is 160-175 words; 2) positive reviews of recommended books will be accepted; 3) a review of a book written by the reviewer will not be accepted; 4) reviews of books related to the discipline of English—broadly conceived—are preferred.

Book review submissions can be sent to english@stthomas.edu and will be accepted through Monday, September 30, 2013. We look forward to seeing your recommendations!
In October 2012, Valancourt Press released *Terrifying Transformations: An Anthology of Victorian Werewolf Fiction, 1838-1896*, edited by Dr. Alexis Easley, and M.A. in English alumna, Shannon Scott ’10. Curious about the origins and research process related to this unique book project, we queried Easley and Scott for more information.

In the fall of 2007, Scott wrote a paper on Clemence Housman’s “The Were-Wolf” for Easley’s graduate Gothic novel course and then later turned that paper into her master’s essay. She had long been fascinated with werewolf stories, particularly “the transformative nature of their bodies, the shift to an animal mind, to instinct and physical power.” Easley, who knew that Scott had discovered many other examples of Victorian werewolf fiction and had even presented papers on the subject at various conferences, suggested that Scott create a proposal for an anthology of Victorian werewolf fiction and pitch it to a publisher. Scott was excited by this prospect, but as she had never undertaken a book project before, Easley agreed to work with her as a co-editor. Their proposal was eventually picked up Valancourt Books, whose editor is a well-known Gothic literature enthusiast.

Some of the werewolf stories were written by familiar writers such as Arthur Conan Doyle, Bram Stoker, and Rudyard Kipling and were easy to locate in anthologies of Gothic fiction. Others were accessible only through archival research at the University of Minnesota’s Wilson Library and the British Library in London. Because some were written by obscure authors whose work had not been republished since the nineteenth century, Easley and Scott also undertook a significant amount of research in order to write biographical introductions to each story. As Easley notes, what they discovered often proved to be quite intriguing:

Most current scholars assumed that “Sutherland Menzies,” the named author of one of our stories, was actually the pseudonym for a woman writer, Elizabeth Stone. However, my research in the archives at the British Library revealed Menzies’s true identity – an Oxford graduate who struggled with poverty and ill health throughout his writing life. It was gratifying to recover his forgotten (though sad!) life story. I was fascinated by many of the other authors we researched, such as Sir Gilbert Campbell, who was a prolific writer of pulp fiction but also operated a bogus literary agency that was notorious for fleecing amateur writers. Then there was Count Eric Stenbock, who occupied aesthetic chambers in London complete with peacock blue walls, a statue of Eros, and a menagerie of exotic animals. Indeed, behind each obscure writer was a biography just as fascinating as the werewolf stories we had collected.

The entire book publication process – from signing a publishing contract, to co-writing an introductory essay, author biographies, bibliographies, and explanatory footnotes – took about one year, with several months required after that to correct proofs. When it was released last autumn, the final product was a thrill to see.

Now that the book has been published, Scott and Easley have moved on to new projects. Easley has done further research on Gilbert Campbell and is working on other topics related to Victorian periodicals. Scott is working with a group of women in Manchester who share her predilection for werewolves and has contributed a werewolf essay to a book collection scheduled to be published by Manchester University Press in the near future.
In the northwest corner of Dakota, I saw a room someone had left, a plush sofa returning its button-eyed stare to the glance she gave it over her shoulder, the dog, too, turning. In the next room, the mattress with the mattress stories one after another tumbling out of each spring, the window she opened first thing, its vista of mile after mile, and the windmill hauling its load.

I saw that, and nothing alive—

green oil-figured linoleum laid on counters, nails of bad craft, the ripped blackening edge that scared her more than the bed and the sound of the windmill winning its will from the aquifer night after night, the whack of her blade on the block

There are houses with too many knives sometimes she said but when June ferned its way in she’d relent, take on its restraint, heave again on the stained sheets her burden of child, herself a torn girl again, combing her hair through fingers bruised by corn shocks, sweet juice in the cuts of her life.

She began to think of the border and mustangs without brand. At night they’d bend over the bed and nuzzle. One ride was enough.

She had sufficient magic to cling to a mane and fare over the windowsill. I see where the curtain fell and nobody mended the tear, I see where bare feet marked like fossils her pass in the rain.

When he uncovers fiddleheads by the spring, why does he always think of that first sight of her thigh in the peach-colored dress, of his hand’s searching moss with its red-gold stamens, the spring in that arid landscape like something from Canaan under his tongue? Even in old age he’d ponder the moment, lying under the moon forgiving himself, her, the world that bred their conundrum, washed in that rain.

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Alyssa Adkins  
(American Literature)  
“A Beautiful Ancient Meal: The Role of Food in *The Middle of Everywhere*”  
My work on Mary Pipher’s *The Middle of Everywhere* is a cultural exploration of her experiences working with refugees in Nebraska as a “cultural broker.” Following the thread of food throughout the text, I found that Pipher uses encounters with food to show how inseparable food and culture are. At times she uses it to indict American culture, and at others she shows it as a tool to learn about a culture. However, in what I claim is Pipher’s most powerful illustration of food, the human rituals that surround food have the power to transcend culture and unite us all in the “beautiful, ancient meal.”

Andrew Carr  
(British Literature)  
“The Fear of Invocation”  
John Milton seems afraid, particularly of being torn apart and of falling down. And while both of these fears seem reasonable enough on their own, we ought to recognize that his fear has a specific literary quality; for some reason dismemberment and plummeting hold especially terrifying places in the writer’s mind. So, in expressing his particular relationship to these fears – through the invocations of *Paradise Lost* – Milton allows us a passage into the personal struggles of his writing process and provides us with a broader commentary on what it means to create.

Alexandra Post  
(Creative Writing—Short Fiction)  
*Blackout*  
*Blackout* is a short story about Piper, a girl forced to move home during college so her mother can care for her while she recovers from a severe concussion. Readers follow Piper’s daily struggle to accept how her mom must bathe her and walk her to classes. Piper’s consciousness reveals her fight against reverting back to this helpless, childlike state in response to her mother’s loving care. The narrative escalates from Piper’s irritation with her mom, lashing out at a stranger in the elevator, to an anxiety attack in class. Then, Piper, imagining what it would be like to leave the building without her mother, realizes her need and helplessness as she falls down the stairs.

Samantha Schwab  
(Film/Theory/New Media)  
“The Sacrificed Truth: Media Culture and Attempted Objectivity in *Native Son* and *Twilight Los Angeles, 1992*”  
In the media’s drive to sell their stories to the public, the truth often gets fragmented in favor of a more interesting “truth.” The media is particularly inept where race is concerned, calling on tried-and-true racial stereotypes to create a believable story. Both *Native Son* and *Twilight* openly acknowledge the media’s bias within modern society, pointing out its inability to report events as they actually happened. While *Native Son* shines a spotlight on the glaring racial bias of the media, *Twilight* attempts to rewrite that bias, giving voice to as many viewpoints as possible in search of some objective truth.

Carolyn Wilson  
(Multicultural/World Literature)  
“Carrie and Sally: Women Defined by Men in Theodore Dreiser’s *Sister Carrie* and Sandra Cisneros’ *The House on Mango Street*”  
In both Theodore Dreiser’s *Sister Carrie* and Sandra Cisneros’ *The House on Mango Street*, young female characters mature into womanhood and find themselves relating to men in new ways. For the women in both of these novels, their sexual appeal becomes a major part of their self-definition. Dreiser’s protagonist Carrie escapes her working-class status by involving herself with wealthy men, while Cisneros’ character Sally seeks happiness in male attention and in her young marriage to a controlling husband. Though each woman’s story includes elements of fairy tale narratives, neither Sally nor Carrie truly lives “happily ever after.” This is because each of these women depends upon her sexual appeal in order to gain a sense of self-worth. Through these characters, Dreiser and Cisneros show that when women submit to sexual objectification, they resign themselves to emptiness rather than fulfillment.
DEPARTMENT NEWS

At a colloquium event in late February, our new creative writing professor Nathan Hill read a chapter from his novel-in-progress, A Body For Each of Us, and discussed his creative process. The novel, a story about a mother who abandons her family and, many years later, reunites with her estranged son, investigates the ways people are cut off, detached, and disconnected from one another. Professor Hill’s short stories have appeared in AGNI, The Denver Quarterly, Fugue, The Sycamore Review, and several other journals. He was the winner of the annual Short Story Prize from the journal Fiction for his story “The Bottle,” and The Iowa Review recently nominated his story “SuperAngel” for a Pushcart Prize.

Six professionals participated in an English major career panel event and spoke to students about their current job, how they got there, and offered advice about how English majors could best leverage their skills when applying for jobs. Panelists included Ralph Bernstein (Senior Vice President of the Emerging Strategies & Innovation group for U.S. Banks Corporate Payment Systems), Nathan Hill, Sarah Parr, and Miriam Queensen.

From left to right, Linda White, Ralph Bernstein, Luke Taylor, Nathan Hill, Sara Parr, and Miriam Queensen.

FACULTY

CATHY CRAFT-FAIRCHILD presented “The ‘American Edgeworth’: Catharine Maria Sedgwick’s Clarence as a Revisionist Belinda” on the panel “Revising Sources” at the Southeastern American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies annual meeting in Charleston, SC, March 2.

CARMELA GARRITANO’S book, African Video Movies and Global Desires: A Ghanaian History, was published in February by Ohio University Press. She also recently received a Fulbright Fellowship to study and teach in Ghana in 2013-2014.


On May 1, department faculty hosted a special CELEBRATION FOR OUR SENIOR ENGLISH MAJORS. In addition to great food and conversation, short inspirational texts related to literature and creative writing were read and WilkinsonJames (Andy Scheiber and Liz Wilkinson) sang a few great tunes. Each senior was also given a special gift commemorating this event.

Several graduate English students presented papers at the annual GRADUATE CONFERENCE, which was held in late April and focused on the theme “Shifting Emphases and Changes in the Discipline,” in honor of the 20th anniversary this fall of the M.A. in English program. Reflecting on one of the more recent trends, plenary speaker Laura Vorachek, a widely published professor at the University of Dayton, presented work in gender studies in her talk “Playing Italian: Cross-Cultural Dress and Investigative Journalism at the Fin de Siècle.” For a list of student paper titles, check out the English Department website: www.stthomas.edu/english/events/201320GradConference.
CURRENT STUDENTS

Four first-year students from ENGL 210 "The Irish Memoir" presented papers for "The Irish Family at Home and Abroad" symposium in March. The presenters were SHANNON KELLY, "Authors vs. Fathers: A Showdown in Irish Memoir"; SAMANTHA HANOWSKI, "Irish Motherhood: Reality and Fantasy"; MEGHAN MEINTS, "Images of Motherhood in Irish Memoirs"; and KILEE PERTL, "Secrets and Silence in the Irish Family." The symposium was sponsored by the Center for Irish Studies, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Department of Sociology, and the Family Studies program.

ALYSSA ADKINS presented "A Beautiful, Ancient Meal: The Role of Food in The Middle of Everywhere" at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Literati Conference of Language and Literature. MEGAN STUMPF presented "A Close Reading of the Wife of Bath's Prologue" at the same conference.

GRADUATE

BRIGITTE BUDAHN presented "The Nation as a Saving Grace" at the Oklahoma State Annual Humanities Conference in Stillwater, OK on March 1.

TIM DECELLE presented "Donald Hayne's 'Batter My Heart': On the Edges of Vocation" at "The Irish Family at Home and Abroad" symposium held on campus on March 9.

BETHANY FLETCHER presented "Female Genius and Female Friendship: Confronting Customs in Landon's Ethel Churchill and Jewsbury's The History of an Enthusiast" at the 18th- & 19th-Century British Women Writers Association (BWAA) Conference in Albuquerque, NM on April 5.


LINDY HENSLEY participated in a panel presentation titled ‘Christopher Columbus: ‘Exploring’ the Explorer and His Journey through Biographical Writings and Utopianism’ at the University of Oklahoma Student Association of Graduate English Studies (SAGES) Conference on January 29.

AMANDA MAREK presented "The Bilingual Blessing or the Cultural Curse: Perceptions of Spanish in American Schools" at the Oklahoma State Annual Humanities Conference in Stillwater, OK on March 1.

RACHEL MACDONALD presented "(Re) Reading for Departure: Mary Karr, Trauma, and ‘Textual Memory’" at the Midwestern Conference on Literature, Language, & Media at Northern Illinois University in Dekalb, IL.

VADIM RUBINCHIK presented "Emily Dickinson’s Varied Uses of Mathematical References and Metaphors" at the North Dakota State University’s Red River Graduate Student Conference in Fargo, ND on March 6.

NOUCHIE XIONG presented "Exploring Hmong Women Power and Feminism" at the Hmong National Development Conference in Fresno, CA, on April 6.
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