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You’re bound to approach your job with a good dose of humility when its acronym is “WAC.”

Three years ago, when I began directing the new Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) initiative at St. Thomas, I was especially sensitive not only to the acronym, but also to the fact that I, a long-time professor in the Department of English, was now charged with creating a “culture of writing” across campus. Even though the WAC program was created by an interdisciplinary committee, would people in other departments think that we in English were pushing our values—and our responsibilities—onto them?

I need not have worried. As I’ve gotten to know deans, chairs, and faculty members from disciplines as diverse as accounting, art history, biology, social work, and engineering, I have learned that the value of writing is the glue that binds us all together.

Whether that writing is mathematical proofs, business plans, or historical analysis, everyone agrees that it is important for students to learn to write effectively. As a geology professor remarked casually at one of our meetings, “After all, a degree in geology is a degree in writing.”

My dream is that once WAC becomes firmly rooted at UST, a degree from St. Thomas will be a degree in writing. What will that take?

The “culture of writing” created by WAC includes a common language (“writing to learn,” “scaffolding,” “revision”), common practices (peer review, grading rubrics, response to student writing), and common understandings (writing as a process, writing as a tool for critical thinking, writing as a product of discourse communities).

As about 40 faculty members each year participate in the WAC seminar led by Dr. Chris Anson (already 11 are from English) and as more participate in our hour-long workshops each semester, this culture of writing is growing.

Within this common culture, though, lies room for diversity, and therein lies the beauty. Unlike other WAC programs, we have three types of courses (see inset), allowing individual faculty as well as departments to meet the needs of their courses and curricula.

Where does the Department of English stand in relation to WAC? We have decided to make our new core courses all Writing Intensive, providing a solid foundation for students as they continue to grow as writers.

Just as “it takes a village to raise a child,” it takes a whole university to sustain a writer. Through WAC, we in English stand next to every other discipline, creating a culture of writing to support students throughout their years at UST.

In a few years, WAC will be a graduation requirement:

- Two Writing Intensive courses, usually in the core curriculum, that focus on writing as both a process and as a final product. Through both high- and low-stakes writing, students learn foundational concepts relevant to writing effectively in an academic context. Only one of the two courses may be in the English department.

- One Writing to Learn course focuses on the deep connection between the processes of writing and thinking. Students use informal writing as a means to learning course content.

- One Writing in the Discipline course offers students focused and frequent practice in the conventions of writing specific to their major fields of study.
Good Morning, Vietnam:
Teaching English Abroad

By a 2007 English Major Alumnus

Note: The author has requested that this piece be published anonymously, in order to preserve his professional and personal security.

I’m sitting barefoot on the floor of a modern, well-equipped classroom, in a circle among seventeen lively five- and six-year-old Vietnamese children. Understandably fidgety, they snap to attention at the sound of my voice.

“Where are you from?” I ask.

“I’m from Vung Tau!” they shout in unison, using the thumb and index fingers on one hand to indicate a small location.

“Where’s Vung Tau?” I ask.

“Vung Tau’s in Vietnam!” they reply, this time using two hands to symbolize a larger place.

“Where’s Vietnam?” I continue.

“Vietnam’s in Asia!” comes the gleeful response, hands moving further apart.

The routine continues, and the distance between their hands gets wider as we progress to our favorite part, “The galaxy is in the Universe!” which is, naturally, our key to jump up, stretch our arms out as far as we can, holler, and spin around in giggling circles.

Teaching this lesson, I am reminded of reading Joyce’s A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man in my 20th-Century British Literature course at St. Thomas, a story in which the schoolboy Dedalus ponders his cosmic address in nearly identical fashion in one of his composition books. If someone in that class had suggested that years later I could find myself connecting Joyce to teaching English language in Vietnam, to six-year-olds no less, I would have been both incredulous and intrigued.

We are all familiar with the standard question put to English majors: “What are you going to do after you graduate?” Putting Garrison Keillor’s Professional Organization of English Majors (POEM) jibes aside, it is a valid question that some of us are not prepared to answer. A novelist? An editor? Publishing? Grad school? Who knows? I put myself in the latter category, preferring to place my faith in the vague but proven idea that a good liberal arts degree would prepare one for a diverse range of opportunities across many fields. However, teaching hadn’t even crossed my mind in my list of possible future paths. Honestly, back in 2004, my reply to someone suggesting teaching as a career would have been a curt “No way.”

After graduation, with my degree in hand and a job hunt during economic times that weren’t too friendly, I ultimately found myself working in a cubicle in the legal department of a financial services firm for a few years. This stint taught me an important thing: it’s no fun doing the work of an attorney without being paid like one! I had begun to grow restless, but didn’t have much else on my radar. Luckily, opportunity soon came from a friend.

I’d always envied a long-time friend and fellow St. Thomas English alumnus for his extensive world travels, both for pleasure and for English teaching jobs. Just as I was beginning to reach the end of my rope with the desk job, he and I had a rare chance to catch up via email. He had been teaching English in South America, and by this time, in Vietnam, for about two years. Without much real thought, I asked him how I could do the same thing, and no less than one week and a handful of emails later, the decision to change careers and country of residence was made!

My friend provided a wealth of information, and I was very lucky to have it. He was able to give me a good reference with his school in Vietnam, and was able to provide me with all sorts of details about certifications, immigration concerns, living conditions, and even airfare deals. Mind you, all of this information is readily available online with a bit of research, but I was extremely grateful to take advantage of his experience.

I soon learned that Vietnam, like many countries nowadays, requires both a four-year degree in any major, plus a well-recognized English language teaching certification. A degree in Education and/or a teaching license issued by a U.S. state is also very helpful, but not essential. The best-regarded entry certification is CELTA (Certificate of English Language Teaching
to Adults), which is one of the few certifications that is accredited and administered by a well-known university, in this case the University of Cambridge, through their Local Exams Syndicate (LES) program.

I took the CELTA course while in Vietnam. It was quite challenging, involving seven hours a day, five days a week throughout a calendar month of intensive methodology lectures and teaching practice. You are trained and assessed by both tutors at the facility and by an external assessor from Cambridge LES. If successful, you receive the CELTA certificate, which is accepted worldwide as a starting credential for teaching English as a Second Language (ESL). The CELTA course is offered all over the world, and many recommend taking it abroad as the cost of living can be much less in various places outside the States. It is typically offered at an established ESL school, as the course requires quite a bit of authentic teaching to English language learners.

I was quite fortunate that I had a reference and was hired to teach at a reputable school immediately after earning my CELTA. As economic times in the world remain uncertain, one contemplating this career move now would want to have enough funds to be able to get by until finding a suitable school. And yes, in this industry, there are loads of “unsuitable” schools, places that break promises, offer terrible working conditions, and care more for short-term profits than quality teaching and learning. For this reason, it is highly recommended that people entering this position travel to the country of their choice before settling on a school. Take some time to meet teachers in the country. Take some time to visit many schools. Take some time to be sure that you can get by in the country of your choice.

Take some time to be sure you’re in a situation you can endure, if not enjoy. There are lots of horror stories of people showing up in remote locales, only to find their living arrangements, wages, or facilities are nothing like previously discussed. For me, showing up with an open mind and a friend already established in-country was key.

I had little trepidation about relocating to Vietnam, a country that still raises American eyebrows for obvious reasons. My friend living there had assured me that there was a good, relatively unrestricted quality of life to be had here as an expatriate teacher. I discovered that the country is overwhelmingly young, with a populace much more interested in the future and educational and financial success than on the hurt stemming from decades of war, a people much more eager to learn from, share with, and befriend the international community, than to shun or castigate it. These young people, however, are still many years away from becoming the leaders of the country, and sadly, there seems to be little desire on their part to attempt to influence the direction of their nation in those areas where it remains lacking.

Inspired by the former Soviet Union’s perestroika movement, the Vietnamese government has been for over two decades attempting a policy called doi moi, or renewal, which is more or less an opening of its doors to international commerce and free enterprise. Coupled with its entry into the World Trade Organization, the overt face of totalitarianism and draconian control is fading. But, it has been replaced by a mad and sometimes exploitative hunger for money. Perhaps this is to be expected after so many years of poverty.

The move to the free market has combined with Vietnamese ideals of status symbols to create a strange and surreal scene of $100,000 sedans blasting rickety pedi-cabs
and ratty motorbikes from their paths. Prada boutiques have been opening around the corner from $2.00 lunch stands, and the desire of many students is material wealth. Connected to this is rampant corruption. Things like visas and work permits can be a nightmare to arrange, but an artfully directed bribe can get amazing things done.

Vietnam remains a controversial and misunderstood country. While I was preparing to move there, my mother proudly told a supermarket cashier and a cell phone salesman that her son was moving to Vietnam. They both replied by congratulating her for having a son in the Armed Forces! The country remains a socialist republic, communist, and the visage of Bac Ho (Uncle Ho, Ho Chi Minh) smiles upon you at every turn. Government controls are strong in many areas related to the press and political debate; dissidents are jailed from time to time, and poverty, disease, social inequality, and corruption continue to be major problems. To be sure, the American concept of freedom of speech has no place here, and there are several topics one must not discuss. Criticism of the government is a fool’s errand, and much of the populace refuses to engage in any debate or dialogue, either out of fear or out of apathy.

I can see how such conditions can be frustrating to a person from the West, but it is a simple fact that as a teacher working abroad, I’ve chosen to be a guest in this country, and it is not my place to instigate rebellion. Many of the countries that are in need of ESL teachers, namely here, China, and the Middle East, have laws, politics, and social systems that are much different from back home. If you can’t safely and respectfully live and work in such countries, teaching abroad is not the job for you.

While I do recognize a variety of issues and the challenges of living here, I find that my career offers a far brighter, simpler, and more positive view. I am in the business of helping people improve themselves, of unlocking potential, and sharing cultures. In my own way, I believe I am contributing something tangible to help the Vietnamese people overcome their challenges. I find that far more rewarding than brooding over political debate and the wounds of the past.

It’s 2011 and I’m teaching in a coastal city situated on a peninsula of the South China Sea (which the Vietnamese call the East Sea, in one of many efforts to shed the shadow of their surprisingly-disliked Big Brother to the North). Each day, I am happy to go to work, excited to develop as a teacher, and further my understanding of methodologies, theories of second language acquisition, and learner training. I’ve met countless kind, generous Vietnamese, and count many as close friends. I’ve traveled this beautiful country from Can Tho to Hanoi, and all points between. I’ve “mastered” the language well enough to say such profound things as “Hello, my name is Martin. I love monkeys and cats.” (Xin chào! Tôi tên là Martin. Tôi yêu con khỉ và con mèo.) I’ve eaten hu tuí, banh bao, mi quang and countless other offerings, some too controversial to mention here!

My education in literature as an English major at St. Thomas has been invaluable, in that it has nurtured a nuanced appreciation for the mechanics and meanings of language, an appreciation essential for this career. And, as I progress in my teaching career, I face continuing questions that motivate constant study. I love the idea that in the field of educating, I am also always being educated.

In Vietnam, they take seriously a holiday called Teacher’s Day. Last Teacher’s Day, I counted among my spoils a new tie, four handmade cards, a song sung just for me, a bottle of Johnny Walker Black, and three bouquets of flowers, which is a socially acceptable gift to give to a male on certain occasions here in Vietnam. As I unloaded my gifts on my kitchen table, I reflected on my journey from St. Thomas to Vietnam. I’m so fortunate to be where I am, though the path to this point was both unexpected and surprising.
Alfred Hitchcock Presents ... Morality?

This fall semester, Dr. Craft-Fairchild taught a Literature and Film senior seminar for English majors that paired John Buchan’s thriller, *The 39 Steps*, with Hitchcock’s film *Vertigo*. What follows is an essay about the possible influence that Catholicism played in Hitchcock’s films.

By Dr. Catherine Craft-Fairchild

The elegant grey and white apartment contains two characters: a young, French journalist and an aging, prestigious film director. They are in the midst of what is clearly a sustained set of interviews, speaking right now about the topic of “suspense” in films. The younger man is also an aspiring filmmaker, clearly paying homage to the prestigious older man. The characters are named Alain Duple and Henry Lockwood, but anyone in the know immediately realizes that these are stand-ins for film critic and director, François Truffaut, and Alfred Hitchcock. The play is *Panic* and it filled the auditorium of Park Square Theatre in downtown St. Paul night after night this past summer.

The playwright, Joseph Goodrich, attests to the fact that the life and films of Alfred Hitchcock remain very much a living influence on the creative productions of current filmmakers, visual artists, and writers. Goodrich explained, “*Panic* is the result of years of watching the films of Alfred Hitchcock and thinking a great deal about Hitchcock himself….I believe he’s one of the seminal artists of the 20th century” (interview with Matt DiCintio). Still, Hitchcock’s status as a cinematic *auteur* is always up for debate. Because he styled himself “the Master of Suspense,” cared very deeply about box-office receipts, and delighted in tweaking interviewers and mocking their questions, Hitchcock has often been viewed as a director who was successful, but professedly non-intellectual, more interested in manipulating the audience’s emotions through cinematic technique rather than introducing profound content. During his lifetime, Hitchcock’s commercial popularity often meant that his films went underrated in relation to art-house products, for several critics assumed that “concessions to the box office,” the genre of “the suspense thriller,” and the “gags” and ‘comic relief’…effectively undermine[d] any pretensions to sustained seriousness of tone” (Robin Wood, *Hitchcock’s Films Revisited* [1989], 57).

I can easily compare Hitchcock’s approach and body of work to that of another crowd-pleaser, however. William Shakespeare, as a partner-owner of the acting company he wrote for, paid very close attention to box office receipts. Like Hitchcock, who created amazing films from dime-store detective novels, Shakespeare wrote masterpieces adapted from roughshod histories and less-skillful earlier plays. Neither British artist was able to resist a good joke, whether it was Shakespeare’s punning or Hitchcock’s sight gags and MacGuffins (imagistic and plot red herrings); both introduced comic relief into tragedy and tragic elements into comedy. Both centered their works on complex, multidimensional human beings caught up in extraordinary events, and it is the quality of the human relationships within each piece that determines whether they resolve happily or horribly. And, as *Panic* attests, Hitchcock mirrors Shakespeare in producing grimmer, more somber works as he aged. Donald Spoto, the well-known Hitchcock biographer, traces Hitchcock’s increasing nihilism in both his life and his movie-making; thus, it is fitting that Spoto titled his page-turner of a biography *The Dark Side of Genius* (1983).

While Shakespeare’s education in classics and rhetoric enabled him to present the complex ambiguities of life in his plays, Hitchcock’s equally stringent Jesuit education gave his fifty-three feature films a conspicuous pre-occupation with personal morality, even as their ostensible subjects are criminality, murder, and espionage. In one of his interviews with François Truffaut, Sir Alfred noted, “I come from a Catholic family and I had a strict, religious upbringing….I don’t think I can be labeled a Catholic artist, but it may be that one’s early upbringing influences a man’s life and guides his instinct” (*Hitchcock*, revised edition [1983], 316). Hitchcock demurs from labeling himself a Catholic artist, but other writers readily speak of him as such. In *Soul in Suspense: Hitchcock’s Fright and Delight* (1993), Reverend Neil Hurley, a Jesuit priest,
compares Hitchcockian cinematic trajectories to ideas and patterns found in the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius Loyola; Hurley writes, “Hitchcock was an entertainer, yes, but underneath the humor, the suspense, the romance, was a theology of sin, guilt, and redemption” (7).

Hitchcock’s preoccupation with sin and guilt are particularly apparent in the later films that are considered his masterworks. In these, Hitchcock’s cinema interrogates not just the unsavory desires and actions of its protagonists, but also the audience’s. The moral purpose of his films embraces us as well, making us ask ourselves why we are quick to discount sinful or criminal behavior when it happens to be practiced by beautiful or intriguing persons. Truffaut, noticing Hitchcock’s ability to involve his audience in moral ambiguity, writes of spectators’ responses to Psycho (1960), “The viewer’s emotions are not exactly wholesome….in Psycho one begins by being scared for a girl who’s a thief, and later on one is scared for a killer, and, finally, when one learns that this killer has a secret, one hopes he will be caught just in order to get the full story!” (Hitchcock 272).

Similar readings of audience complicity have been offered of Hitchcock’s Vertigo (1958), where viewers are asked to identify with L.B. Jeffries’ back-window voyeurism, a voyeurism that at first seems puerile and repugnant until it results in arresting a murderer, a train of events that renders the voyeurism that at first seems puerile and repugnant outright. In Vertigo (1958), voyeurism becomes outright stalking, and viewers’ desire for the union of the couple becomes increasingly vexed as the film progresses. Scottie Ferguson is obsessed with an image of femininity that he sadistically forces upon a yielding, self-abnegating Judy, herself rendered morally impure by the revelation that she has been an accessory to murder. To desire their union is to wish that all you know, I may murder a woman a week,” Pamela insists that she is not afraid and snaps, “you big bully.” Hannay admits, “I like your pluck.” Of course, Hannay’s own ferocity is tamed by the fact that, before he speaks of murder, he takes a hairpin from Pamela’s diadem and plucks it out. Hannay’s own ferocity is tamed by the fact that, before he speaks of murder, he takes a hairpin from Pamela’s diadem and plucks it out. Hannay’s own ferocity is tamed by the fact that, before he speaks of murder, he takes a hairpin from Pamela’s diadem and plucks it out.

If you don’t yet know your Hitchcock, begin with these films:

- The Lodger (1926)
- The Man Who Knew Too Much (1934)
- The 39 Steps (1935)
- The Lady Vanishes (1938)
- Shadow of a Doubt (1943)
- Notorious (1946)
- Rear Window (1954)
- The Trouble with Harry (1956)
- The Man Who Knew Too Much (1956)
- a very different film from the first version
- Vertigo (1958)
- North by Northwest (1959)
- Psycho (1960)
- The Birds (1963)
- Marnie (1964)

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While Hitchcock’s major films are often revived and are well-known, lesser gems like The 39 Steps are coming into their own. The Guthrie Theater, under the director Joel Sass, performed a highly amusing adaptation of the work by Patrick Barlow that cast only four talented actors in all of the roles; running from October through December 2010, the play was a laugh-out-loud romp. I paired The 39 Steps, its original novel by John Buchan, with its dark counterpart Vertigo in my fall 2011 “Literature and Film” senior seminar. It is always profoundly satisfying to introduce students to the seminal visual artist whose life and works span the history of cinema; we are guaranteed great classroom discussions as we ensure that the achievements of Sir Alfred live on to influence yet another generation.
What inspired you to become a writer?

When I was a kid, I never, not once, thought about becoming a writer. I was an obsessive reader – always with a book in hand – but grew up in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by woods, ranches, and so writing never seemed like a possibility, like something that people really did. I had no models. To be a writer was as otherworldly as being an astronaut. Fast-forward to college: I spent the summer between my freshman and sophomore years working (as a gardener) at Glacier National Park. When there, I met my then girlfriend, now wife. I wrote her many lascivious love poems and letters during this time, and she said to me, “You should be a writer.” So I said, “Okay.” It’s all been an attempt to impress a pretty girl. Sometimes, students should realize, it just takes that one person – a teacher, a friend, a lover – that one person who believes in you, and from there, with a push, you find your way.

Which authors have most influenced your writing? What is it about these authors that attracts you?

I could go on all day talking about the writers I love. Flannery O’Connor, Rick Bass, Denis Johnson, Daniel Woodrell, Peter Straub, Barry Hannah, Dan Simmons, Margaret Atwood, Tim O’Brien, Cormac McCarthy. I’ve learned so much from each of them – reading their books strenuously, adding grammatical/rhetorical weapons to my arsenal.

With two published short story collections under your belt, you published your first novel, The Wilding, in late 2010. In what way was the process of writing a novel different from that of writing a short story?

This is the subject of a semester-long course I’ve taught, so it’s very difficult to crystallize the differences into a soundbite. It has to do with language, with structure, with pacing, with causality, with suspense and momentum, with weaving together many different threads, with employing and reinventing archetypes in the genre you’ve chosen, and on and on. Writing a novel is like building a cathedral, a long, patient, complicated, painstaking, maddening, but ultimately holy process.

Your biography indicates that you were raised in Oregon. What is it about Oregon that inspires you to use it as your setting in so many of your stories? Is it simply writing of what you know, or is there something more about that place?

Childhood is the time when your imagination is most active. So when I sit down at the keyboard and begin to dream, that’s the stage that emerges from the mist. Part of it has to do with that—and part of it is that it’s such a dramatic, complicated (cultural and geographical) landscape.

In the world of publishing, books are often subclassified within the fiction category as thrillers, horror, romance, etc. If you could move beyond these simple one-word classifiers, how would you classify or describe your writing?

Hopefully I’m going to grab readers by the throat and whisper some secret in their ear that will leave them trembling.

When you write, do you have a very specific plan for where that story is going, or does the story sometimes take on a life of its own and lead you in a different direction?

Different writers, different processes. Dan Chaon says writing is an act of discovery and never knows where he’s going when he begins a story. This works for a lot of people, but not for me. I’m a planner. I like to blueprint my stories before I begin hammering.

I don’t know every little detail, but I know quite a lot—and I always know the ending when I begin—so that every sentence, every paragraph, every page will be crashing toward that moment.

Your new novel, Red Moon, is scheduled to be published by Grand Central/Hachette in Fall 2012. Can you give us a mini-preview of what that novel is about?

(Literary) supernatural thriller with a political allegory at its heart.

What advice would you offer to prospective creative writers?

Read your brains out, write your brains out.
Poetry by Tom Redshaw

As Tom Redshaw noted in his self-reflection that appeared in our spring issue of *Writing in the Margins*, he has returned to writing poetry after a long hiatus. Below are a few of his more recent poems.

Empty Beach

The yellow bus had stopped on the north shoulder of the coast road where it curved inland & west. Black block letters under empty windows bore the forgotten Puritan names of suburban townships. From those doors the driver had left folded open,

I could see the path across then down the berm, under the feathery leafage of the sumac wood, to the heaped stones, then shelly sand of the wide & empty beach stretching flat away, then darkening in neap tide, glistening just at a far-off blue horizon.

That one sight, then, was why I had been brought in my sleep here and left to stand bare-headed like someone’s child.

A Letter from Peter

Waking took a moment, and in that interval he read so clearly that the burden in the voice became the scene it sounded. They stood around in the robes of daily life straight out of the child’s book of Bible stories.

The edge of morning &

I knew first light rose cold behind the blind.
In their brown and blue robes, all stood listening to what I heard read out to the letter. A woman stepped through into what he said, arm out maroon sleeve turned back, white palm turned up & open.

What he said fell into a gap between her hand and him. Not he, no not he could place there what she asked.

A Cup by Kit Cornell

I did not buy the real thing at the market on hospital hill that last summer morning, but took away the perfect postcard of it—a bookmark, a memento—as if the glaze gave a scene we will travel into but not return from—a gray & sandy foreshore, darker where the tide laps back—and where we will remain gazing at the blue gleam lightly turning across darker waters to the lip of the cup lit up like a line of low cloud lying easterly on a horizon.

Out there, the cup waits empty & ever ready to fill, raise, and pass hand-to-hand.
“HUNGER” COMMON CONTEXT PROGRAM, including a visit to the UST stewardship garden, a geography presentation on Twin Cities food deserts, and a faculty and student panel on issues related to food, hunger, and justice. In addition, four films were shown during the fall semester, including Erwin Wagenhofer’s We Feed the World, Mahamat Saleh Haroun’s A Screaming Man (Une Homme qui crie), Nikolaus Geyrhalter’s Our Daily Bread, and Steve McQueen’s Hunger. We thank UST Libraries and the American Culture and Difference program for co-sponsoring these films.

Thanks to connections that adjunct instructor MARY ELIZABETH FRANDSON has, the English Department was able to host a panel presentation on *A New Literary History of America* (Harvard UP, 2009) with editors GREIL MARCUS and WERNER SOLLORS. Comprised of more than two hundred original essays, *A New Literary History of America* brings together the nation’s many varicolored voices by examining the adaptation of American literacies through the visual arts, collage and photomontage, letters, cartoons, social networks, hip-hop ballads, film, and the language of campaign speeches and inaugural addresses. In addition to Marcus and Sollors, Lindsay Waters (Executive Editor for the Humanities at Harvard University Press), and contributors James Dawes (Macalester College), Paul Gaudio (University of Minnesota) and Paula Rabinowitz (University of Minnesota) also joined this panel. The department thanks the Department of History, the American Culture and Difference Program, Faculty Development, and the College of Arts and Sciences Dean’s office for co-sponsoring this amazing event that was held before a packed crowd in the Owens Science Hall 3M Auditorium.

Faculty

ALEXIS EASLEY has been appointed editor of *Victorian Periodicals Review;* effective with the Spring 2012 issue. *VPR,* founded in 1968, is one of only a handful of first-tier journals in the interdisciplinary field of Victorian studies and focuses on the historical, critical, and bibliographical importance of periodicals in the history and culture of Victorian Britain, Ireland, and the Empire. *VPR* is published quarterly by Johns Hopkins University Press and is indexed on the JSTOR and Project Muse databases. She plans to hire two graduate assistants to work with her on this journal beginning in July 2012.

RAY MACKENZIE’S new translation of Emile Zola’s *Germinal* was released by Hackett Publishing this fall. As Stephen Kern, Humanities Distinguished Professor, Department of History at Ohio State University notes: “Raymond Mackenzie’s elegant new translation of Emile Zola’s *Germinal* captures the dictions of the novel’s colorful characters and the restrained voice of a naturalist narrator.” MacKenzie also contributed entries on Charles Baudelaire, François Mauriac, and Jean Racine to the recently published *New Catholic Encyclopedia – 2011 Supplement* (Gale/Catholic University of America Press), which focuses on Catholic literature, music and art.


This fall, LON OTTO published a short story, “A Small, Dark, Roaring Moon,” in *Blink Again: Sudden Fiction from the Upper Midwest,* Spout Press.

BRENDA POWELL presented “What is the whole of our existence, but the sound of an appalling love?’ Pathways to Wisdom Through Two Mythic Realist Novels” at the 2011 Baylor Symposium on Faith and Culture, in Waco, Texas. She also presented “Using Low and Mid-Stakes Writing to Teach the Discourse of English Studies” at SAML (South Atlantic Modern Language Association), Nov. 4-6, in Atlanta, Ga.

ANDY SCHEIBER presented “A Deceit of Tones: Blues and Body Politic[s] in J. J.
Phillips’ *Mojo Hand,*” at the “Celebrating African American Literature” conference at Penn State University in late September.

**MARTY WARREN** contributed entries on *Bewolff,* the Middle English poem, *The Pearl,* and *Mysticism in Literature* to the recently published *New Catholic Encyclopedia – 2011 Supplement* (Gale/Catholic University of America Press), which focuses on Catholic literature, music and art. Warren has also been named to the Executive Committee for the Center of Medieval Studies at the University of Minnesota.

**LIZ WILKINSON** contributed to a round table discussion at the Society of American Indians Centennial Symposium at Ohio State University held Oct. 7-9. The symposium was a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the first meeting of, at that time, the only all-Native political rights group.

## Current Students

**UNDERGRADUATE**

The English Department congratulates its three scholarship/award winners for the 2011-2012 academic year: EMILY KUENIG (Hague Award for Excellence), MICHAEL MCSHERRY (Joseph B. Connors Scholarship), and THEODORE WEIERS (Herbert Slusser Scholarship). We offer a special thank you to those donors who generously provided funding for these department awards!

**GRADUATE**

MARI CAMPBELL, KARA MEYERS, and MELISSA MURPHY presented papers at the annual conference of the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism in.

L to R: Marie Campbell, Kara Meyers, Melissa Murphy, and Amy Muse at the NASSR Conference.


**JYHENE KEBSI** presented “Illegal Immigration in the New Global Economy: A Case Study of *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* by Laila Lalami” at the Michigan State University Africanist Graduate Student Research Conference held on Oct. 7-8.

**AMY MONSON**’s poem, “A Continuous Writer,” (reprinted on back cover) was published this past spring in *Poetic Strokes: A Regional Anthology of Poetry from Southeastern Minnesota.*

**NATHAN WUNROW** and his wife Jane welcomed their second daughter, Audrey Evelyn Wunrow, on June 9.

## Alumni

**UNDERGRADUATE**

**STACI HAMILTON ’08** recently joined the Admission Possible Milwaukee Leadership Team as the site’s first ever college program coordinator. In this role, Staci supports eight AmeriCorps coaches responsible for helping more than 1,200 former Admission Possible high school program participants persist in college and earn degrees.

**KELLY KRAEMER ’10** was recently quoted in *On Wisconsin Magazine,* which is the alumni publication for the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Kraemer is currently enrolled in a graduate School of Library and Information Studies class titled Tribal Libraries, Archives, and Museums, and her quote appeared in a story about the work students in that class were doing to further develop Native American library services.

**PETER STENSON ’08** will have his novel *Shadows and Aphrodisiacs* published by Random House in 2013. Peter is currently finishing his MFA in creative writing at Colorado State University.

**KATE TSCHIDA ’08** entered the M.A. in English Literature program at St. Louis University this fall. She was awarded a full assistantship, which covers tuition, provides a generous stipend, and health care.

**GRADUATE**

**BRETT KOLLES ’07** presented “This is Only a Test: Reaching and Teaching with Levity and Irreverence” at the MMLA (Midwest Modern Language Association)

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**Alumni: Are You Willing to Share Your Time with Current English Majors?**

The department is currently looking for English alumni in the Twin Cities area to volunteer for the Alumni Association Take a Tommie to Lunch program. Take a Tommie to Lunch offers alumni the opportunity to share their experience and wisdom with current students. Typical topics of discussion include networking, interviewing, job searching and balancing life and work. The time commitment is a one-time lunch meeting at a restaurant of your choosing during the spring semester. Register by Friday, Feb. 17 on “The Quad” UST alumni website to participate.

In addition, Sigma Tau Delta will host its annual “What You Can Do with an English Major!” alumni panel on Friday, April 13 from 3:15-4:45p.m. If you are willing to talk about your post-UST career path and offer advice to current students about the job opportunities that are out there for English majors, please email english@stthomasi.edu to volunteer!

Finally, we’d like to extend a hearty “thank you” to those 17 alumni who volunteered for the 2011-2012 Student-Alumni Mentoring (SAM) program, sponsored by the Alumni Association. Their support of our English students is greatly appreciated!
Conference in St. Louis on November 5th. Brett is a full-time faculty member at Dakota County Technical College and teaches Business English and Written Business Communications.

Andy Leet '02 contributed an entry on J. F. Powers to the recently published *New Catholic Encyclopedia – 2011 Supplement* (Gale/Catholic University of America Press).

Jim Rogers '94 contributed an entry on John Hassler to the recently published *New Catholic Encyclopedia – 2011 Supplement* (Gale/Catholic University of America Press), which focuses on Catholic literature. In addition, his “Rutabagas: A Love Poem” was featured on Garrison Keillor’s “The Writer’s Almanac” on November 22.

**A Continuous Writer**

By Amy Monson

I used to know the cadence
Of my fingers on the keys,
Tapping out confident rhythms,
Beating metaphors into submission
With a hammer that chiseled images from marble.

Since the last monumental orchestration,
My ring finger sits long on the oooooooooo,
Drawing out a flat note that’s metered like a collective swish of wave over the sand
That no one can hear,
That I cannot articulate.

So many bubbles
moving simultaneously
down and across the page
that the conducting current confuses itself,
Moves backward into the tide of thoughts,
Feeling deeper yet extending across the surface,
Receding at my feet in foam.

So I’m stuck wading between the castle erected as a Monument here on shore
and slopping in a
Huge Ooooooocean of energy that continuously builds this imaginary palace.

I sit filtering loooooooong thoughts before moving my fingers to pick up a different tool.

A shovel or rake, perhaps?
No, a paddle, for sure.