

# Pen & Ink: Notes from the NDSU Department of English

Greetings from the Chair.

Our first newsletter was well received—we heard from numerous readers and collected a few great stories about how individuals have used their English or English Education degrees. Please keep the stories coming, and let us know if we can post your story to our Alumni Page ([http://english.ndsu.edu/english\\_department\\_alumni/](http://english.ndsu.edu/english_department_alumni/)) or reprint your story in our fall newsletter.

I'd be particularly interested in hearing from former scholarship and award winners: what impact did a certain scholarship or award have on your education?

I offer that writing prompt because spring semester is awards season. Individuals and groups in the department have received many campus awards in the past 3 years: College Outstanding Educator Award (Birmingham, Brown, Sullivan), College

Research Award (Totten, Brooks), College Teaching Award (Miriam Mara), College Service Award (Birmingham), NDSU Bison Impact Award (Dakota Initiative Team), Graduate Teaching Award (Jennie Enger, Natalie Smith Carlson), Multicultural Students Faculty of the Year Award (Sassi), Residence Life Faculty of the Year Award (Andy and Miriam Mara).

Spring 2011 was no exception. The de-

partment awarded scholarships to 14 students (twelve undergrads, two graduate students), and individuals, from undergrads to faculty, were recognized for their outstanding activities on campus. Our first newsletter featured the great work of English Club and their Conversational English Circles (CEC)—I am particularly pleased to announce that CEC founders Josh Anderson and Michael Bashford were inducted into NDSU's Tapestry of Diverse Talents.

Summer will be quieter, and our fall newsletter thinner, but we will catch you up with another faculty profile, "Where is . . . ?" and tell you more about the school year ahead.

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## Introducing — Dr. Bruce Maylath

Dr. Bruce Maylath was lured to NDSU in 2007 to be the department's international technical communication specialist and linguist. Formerly, he was founder and director of the Technical Communication Program for University of Wisconsin Stout in Menomonie. Prior to W-Stout, Dr. Maylath spent four years teaching at the University of Memphis, but he originally hails from Michigan.

Dr. Maylath says the clincher for his transition was "NDSU's status as an up-an-coming university." He was one of the outside reviewers for the English Department's proposed PhD program, and Dr. Maylath liked what he learned about the program, the department and the university. He continues to be awed at how the "university has managed to maintain the value it has placed on teaching, while striving for a position as a top research-driven university." NDSU is now recognized as one of the Carnegie Foundation's top 108 Research Institutions, and although Carnegie has lists for both top Research and Teaching Institutions, no univer-

sity can be on both. Dr. Maylath notes that when a university focuses on the aspect of research, often the value placed on educating the students is lessened, but "I don't see that happening at NDSU."

Having focused on English Education at the college-level, Dr. Maylath would be happy at a university that places a valued emphasis on student-learning, but "it's the people" who have made his move to NDSU enjoyable and satisfying. He



feels that because everyone seems well-grounded, they offer newcomers a feeling of community. Dr. Maylath proudly admits, "This is a tremendous department, one that truly puts the humane in humanities."

Dr. Maylath is currently co-organizing the upcoming LCMND: Languages & Cultures Circle of Manitoba and North Dakota Conference at NDSU, Sept. 23-24, 2011. He is proud to have co-edited, with NDSU's Dale Sullivan, the recently-published book, *Revisiting the Past Through Rhetorics of Memory & Amnesia: Selected Pages from the 50th Meeting of Linguistic Circle of Manitoba and North Dakota*. Dr. Maylath is also the recipient of the 2011 Vogel Teaching Award.

Technical communication and linguistics are the core of Dr. Maylath's curriculum and he sprinkles these courses with international flavor. Through much communication, coordination and cooperation, in his Trans-Atlantic Project, students can learn how to write instructions for a North American audience, then prepare the text in English for translation. Via email,

students studying translation in Austria, Denmark, Belgium, France, or Italy then translate these American student's instructions. As questions arise, necessary clarifications are passed back and forth between the American and European students. One such project culminated with a lengthy video-conference and a "Trans-Atlantic high-five" between students from four international locales.

Dr. Maylath loves his work, and linguistics is fun for him, but what doesn't he like? When asked what he would change about living here, he calmly declares, "the length of winter, and possibly the landscape—it's very flat." Despite how cold the winters have been, Dr. Maylath emphasizes, "The people keep it warm."

### Inside this Issue:

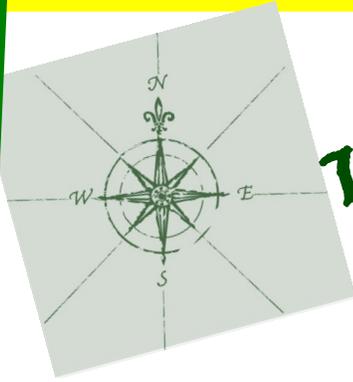
Where is...? Steve Ward *pg 2*

Awards & Recognitions *pg 3*

Madeline S Gittings Scholarship:  
A Gift of Giving and Receiving *pg 4*

Advice from the Advisory Board  
*pg 5*

Honors & Updates *pg 6*



# Where is ... ? Steve Ward

For 37 years Steve Ward could be found in the classrooms and corridors of Minard Hall, but in 2003, Steve Ward retired from the department. He decided that if retirement was a magic number, “65” was his. He says openly, “it was time,” reasoning that he felt he was losing a step in the classroom and that his hearing and memory weren’t what they once were. He recalls while being older favored him with more respect, older was still older, and it was time to make room for younger teachers.

Since retiring, Steve’s lifestyle hasn’t changed all that much, “Now, I don’t get paid for reading books, but I don’t have papers to grade.” He resides with his wife, Loretta, in Fargo, and his goal for retirement was to “have time for the important things in life – reading, writing, playing golf and listening to public radio.” However, Loretta adamantly refused to comment on how, or if, she is enjoying her husband’s retirement.

Steve has discovered, “the process of living *is* the dream; we all wanted to write the Great American Novel, but it’s been done. It’s titled *Moby Dick*.” Instead, Steve

wrote a series of columns for the *Benson County Press* about growing up in Minnewaukan, and for him, it was a kind of biography. Steve always thought of himself “as a farm kid, but I’m not,” and the 53 columns, which focused on various aspects of seasons, water, snakes, barns, and tractors, gave him a chance to reflect on that “farm kid” heritage.

***“Don’t get discouraged if life doesn’t change. Keep pushing your rock.”***

When Steve began his college education at Stanford University it was with the desire to become a civil engineer. In fact, he admits, “I was offered a full-ride athletic scholarship to Rutgers University. In track. I turned it down because they wouldn’t let me into the school of engineering. Who knew?” Leaving Stanford and his engineering studies was both the high point and low point in his life, but it ultimately led him down the path to become an English Professor. After he returned to the farm, John Hove, Chair of English at NDSU from 1959-1982, recommended that Steve continue his education, he candidly points out, “I wasn’t a good student. My past work proved I wasn’t a good writer. Why would I choose to teach?” He didn’t. Teaching chose him. Steve feels his negative college experience made him more sympathetic and encouraging to those students who struggle academically. “Who knew?” Indeed.

Steve’s education hasn’t stopped since retiring. He’s learned “all the clichés about old age are true.” He identifies the three dimensions of human life as intellectual, physical, and social, and he’s discovered that as he ages, it’s extremely critical to stimulate all three areas of his life. He reads books to kindle his mental health. Golfing helps retain his flexibility, but

since he’s had a hip replacement, it’s a little more challenging than before. Yet Steve struggles most with the social aspect in his retired life. He declares, “This is macabre, but my friends are sick or dying – when we’re together, we talk about our ailments.” On the flip side, Steve notes that retirement offers “plenty of good things, including finally being left alone to pursue your own interests.”

Steve observes, “Growing older is fascinating, it’s the same as loving somebody – you have to take the good with the bad.” This may explain his mantra for getting through life, which stems from Albert Camus and *The Myth of Sisyphus*, “One must imagine him happy.” As you push up the hill of life, sometimes you’ll roll back down (repeatedly), and he notes philosophically, “Don’t get discouraged if life doesn’t change. Keep pushing your rock.”

***“English is like rum— not so good on its own, but it goes great with everything.”***

As a teacher, Steve gave great advice, and some may recall his sage observation: a degree in “English is a lot like rum — not so good on its own, but it goes great with everything.” Although teaching wasn’t his first dream, he always treated it as more than a job, and he sometimes misses that social base. Steve jokingly says his life has become a bit like a scene from *Our Town*, where the old people are all sitting on chairs and waiting; “I wait for the mail and the next meal.” Yeah, right!

For those who would like to catch up with Steve, his preferred method of communication is email. You may contact him at [steve4ward@aol.com](mailto:steve4ward@aol.com), and he admits, “I miss the students, and I miss the classroom.” Hey, Steve! What about the grading?



# 2011 Awards & Recognitions

The 2011 Department of English Awards Luncheon was held on May 5, 2011 honoring and congratulating the 2011 scholarship and award recipients.

Undergraduate Ian Leith received the William Cosgrove Scholarship.

For the second year, Kelly Hannah earned the Hal and Alice Dickey Scholarship.

Kendra Aasheim was the recipient of the Professor Ralph Engel Scholarship.

The English Faculty Scholarships went to Jaime Jarmin, Jennie Johnson, and Erin Stegman.

The Madeline S. Gittings Endowment was received by graduate student, Rebecca Mellem, and undergraduates, Abby Hammes, Linnea Nelson, and Alyda Hultstrand.



Front: Dr. Bruce Maylath, Linnea Nelson, Sarah Rude, Karen Sorensen, Abby Hammes, Erin Stegman  
Back: Rebecca Mellem, Craig Rood, Angela Lorenz, Ian Leith, Alyda Hultstrand

PhD graduate student, Karen Sorensen was awarded the Rooney Scholarship.

Craig Rood received the Graduate Teaching Awards from both the English Department and the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. In addition, part of Rood's master's thesis was published in *Compendium 2: Writing, Teaching, and Learning in the University*.

Angela Lorenz earned the Marjory Archer Haggart Memorial Scholarship.

The Gerald Wilson Hunter and Phyllis Krantz Hunter Scholarship went to Jesse Wagner.

Alyssa Miller won the Pamela O'Connor Memorial Scholarship.

The Mart and Lois Vogel Awards for Excellence were given to Melissa Brown and Misti Hofeldt.

The Outstanding Graduate Paper Award went to Sarah Rude.

Dr. Bruce Maylath earned the 2011 Vogel Teaching Award.

Dr. Amy Rupiper-Taggart was honored with the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Outstanding Service Award.



## The Madeline S. Gittings Scholarship: The Gift of Giving and Receiving

Each year the NDSU Department of English offers nearly \$11,000 in scholarships to deserving undergraduate and graduate scholars. The Madeline S. Gittings Scholarship is the largest endowment fund within the department. It is also the largest continuous fund available for the recipient, as it is available to incoming freshman and can recur each year as long as the requirements for qualification are met. Applicants are reviewed based on academic merit and financial need. It is offered to three undergraduates and one graduate student each year.

was the key to her acceptance into the PhD program at Baylor University in Texas for Fall 2011. Rude spent \$700 on the GRE and application fees for PhD programs this past academic year, and without those scholarship dollars "half of what I did this past year wouldn't have happened. I just couldn't afford to do it all, especially attend those conferences."

Incoming freshman are eligible for \$500 their first year, and then \$1000 per academic year, totaling up to \$3,500. Jade Sandbulte, an NDSU English Department graduate as of December 2010, was a recurring

apply and Sandbulte is adamant "that every little bit helps."

*"The small amounts matter just as much." Jade Sandbulte*

For those considering donating to a scholarship program Sandbulte observes, "It's always nice to think of that 'Hallmark' moment where you help that one deserving person earn a degree, but the small amounts matter just as much," and to more people.

Alyda Hultstrand, one 2011 undergraduate winner who is planning to spend part of the fall semester in Europe, acknowledges, "this award will help so much with paying for the trip!" But for her, the award isn't only about the cash. Hultstrand reveals the award "means a lot to me even beyond the monetary means," since many other qualified students exist, and because competition is tough "to be considered deserving of this award was a huge honor...I felt like this award signified that the English Department must see a lot of potential in me and I feel more inspired than ever to be sure that I live up to it!"

*"I feel more inspired than ever to be sure that I live up to it!" Alyda Hultstrand*

Madeline S. Gittings had no known ties to NDSU. She was not an alumnus, her husband did not attend NDSU, nor did she have children who attended. Gittings' remote connection could have come through her relocation to Fargo in her retirement or through her history as a teacher.

Abby Hammes, another 2011

undergraduate scholarship winner, believes the mystery surrounding Gittings is what makes the scholarship truly remarkable. Despite the lack of affiliation with the English Department, Gittings "is responsible for four English students a year each receiving \$1,000 to help them continue their education."

The Gittings endowment, as Dr. Muriel Brown claims, "came like manna from heaven." While generosity of this nature is NOT unheard of, it is rare, and it is kind. Hammes feels, "receiving the Gittings scholarship is a great honor and undoubtedly is of much assistance in affording the education provided by North Dakota State University." The Gittings fund is a gift that keeps on giving, and for this we are thankful.

*"I see myself wanting to give back for the scholarships I've received." Sarah Rude*

Regardless of Gittings' motivations for donating, the results are the same — appreciation and gratitude. When awarded her scholarship, Rude exclaimed that "a huge financial burden was lifted," and says that in the future, "I see myself wanting to give back for the scholarships I've received." Sandbulte senses, especially in scholarship donations, that people give because they appreciate rewarding good students who are trying to become better students—"they like to see those successes."

Here's to another successful year of giving and receiving. Congratulations to the 2011 Madeline S. Gittings Scholarship recipients: Abby Hammes, Alyda Hultstrand, Rebecca Mellem, and Linnea Nelson. Let it be known, the recipients of the past, the present, and the future, are not only appreciative, they are deserving, and they continue to thank all of you who donate to their continuing educations.



Linnea Nelson, Rebecca Mellem, Alyda Hultstrand, Abby Hammes (left to right)

Sarah Rude, the 2010 Graduate Student recipient, was extremely grateful for the unexpected funding. As a graduate TA, she receives a stipend and tuition waiver, but has no external sources of income, therefore this scholarship gave her an additional \$500 per semester, which covered the cost of her fees, books, and allowed her to attend two academic conferences across the country, one in Iowa and another in South Carolina. Rude believes the financial ability to attend those conferences

recipient from 2008 to 2010. He was awarded the \$1000 scholarship beginning in his sophomore year. As an incoming freshman, Sandbulte was also awarded an NDSU Presidential Scholarship of \$2,500 per year, "a huge factor in his choosing NDSU for his college education." Sandbulte was also the recipient of some smaller scholarships offered through the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, and by the time of graduation in December of 2010, he had received nearly \$15,000 in scholarship funding. It never hurts to



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PAGE 6

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## Updates & Honors

In the February/March issue of *Pen & Ink*, there was an article on Cultural English Circles. The department is proud to announce the founders of CEC, Michael Bashford and Joshua Anderson, have been recognized for their work with the English Club founding this project. They were inducted into the Memorial Union's Tapestry of Diverse Talents on May 6, 2011.

Assistant Professor Kelly Sassi was nominated for and received a Green and Golden Globe Diversity Award at their second annual cere-

mony held on April 27, 2011 at Beckwith Recital Hall. Sassi received the Faculty Award from the Office of Multicultural Programs for the understanding and smile she offers in her work in the OMP's volunteer tutor program.

Senior Lecturer, Cindy Nichols, was inducted into the NDSU Quarter Century Club, at a dinner held on May 4, 2011. The event is sponsored by Human Resources and Payroll and honors NDSU employees who have been in the university's service for 25 years.

Gary Zaugg, PhD graduate student and lawyer for 3M, has been awarded an NDSU Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship for his proposal, "Rhetoric and Sentiment in the Legal Positivist Age: The 1787 Infanticide Trial of Alice Clifton." His research delves into the trial of a slave woman in post-revolutionary war Pennsylvania, and her pardon by Benjamin Franklin. For Zaugg, the case is a study of Early-American women's issues as they relate to law, and looks at the rhetoric of sentiment Franklin used as the basis for Clifton's pardon.

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