



Pen & Ink: Notes from the NDSU Department of English

The Buzz

Linda Helstern, Associate Professor of English, presented her paper on the work of contemporary Blackfeet novelist Stephen Graham Jones at the 46th Annual Conference of the Western Literature Association, which met in Missoula, MT, Oct. 5-8. Helstern's paper, entitled "Not the Same Elk: The Return of Native Agency in Stephen Graham Jones' *Ledfeather*," considers how this highly experimental text, a rewriting of the history of the Blackfeet starvation winter of 1883-84, reinforces key principles of Native thought through the play of language and story. It is part of an ongoing research project on historiography and Native American literature.



English department members Rebecca Hayes, Heather Steinmann, Kelly Cameron, Kelly Sassi, and Amy Rupiper Taggart presented at the national Feminism(s) and Rhetoric(s) conference, in Mankato, MN from October 12-15. The theme of the conference was Feminist Challenges or Feminist Rhetorics? Locations, Scholarship, and Discourse. Cameron, Hayes, Rupiper Taggart, and Sassi formed a panel titled "Four Women Who Wrote for the Sake of Social Change," which emphasized feminist historiography, recovering important women writers and highlighting their distinctive rhetorical responses to challenging socio-political conditions of their times.

Congratulations to English Department Chair, Dr. Kevin Brooks, as recipient of The Distinguished Alumni Award from the English Department of Iowa State University, Ames, IA. Dr. Brooks received one of 17 Iowa State University Distinguished Alumni Awards at the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences award banquet on Thursday, October 20, 2011. His research on computers, writing, and literacy; his work building a non-profit to shelter, feed and educate girls in South Sudan; and his grant-funded project with Fargo Public School children were all cited as reasons for this honor. On Friday, October 21, 2011 Brooks spoke about Sugar Labs at NDSU to faculty and students at a luncheon sponsored by the ISU Department of English.



Dr. Robert O'Connor's article, "Beauty or Truth?: Ayesha's Faustian Dilemma in H. Rider Haggard's *She*," will appear in a forthcoming issue *The Lamar Journal of Humanities*. His book review,

"Review of Romantic Interactions: Social Being and the Turns of Literary Action, by Susan J. Wolfson," was published in the *Keats-Shelley Journal* in Fall 2011, Issue 60.

Bruce Maylath, Professor of English, delivered the paper "Responding to Field Convergence: Updating Curricula and Programs as the Roles of Technical Communicators and Technical Translators Merge" at the 2011 meeting of the Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication (CPTSC). The conference was hosted by James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Va., Oct. 6-8. As past president of CPTSC, Maylath moderated the program administrators' roundtable and chaired the CPTSC Distinguished Service Award Committee.



Gary Totten's essay, "Geographies of Race and Mobility in Carl Rowan's *South of Freedom*," was published in the new anthology, *Riding/Writing Across Borders in North American Travelogues and Fiction*, edited by Waldemar Zacharasiewicz and published by the Austrian Academy of Sciences Press. In the essay, Totten examines Rowan's travel narrative, *South of Freedom*, an account of his trip through the US South in 1951 as an African American journalist for the Minneapolis *Morning Tribune*, and discusses how US attitudes about race affected both his travel experiences and the resulting travel narrative.



Graduate student, David Lemke, presented his paper "Through The Looking Glass: Examining Utopian Dialogue in *Oryx and Crake*" at the 36th Annual Society for Utopian

Studies Conference held from October 20th to 23rd at Penn State University. Lemke's paper used the utopian frame of argument and counterargument put forth by Fredric Jameson and other utopian critics to examine *Oryx and Crake*. He specifically analyzed the role of the Crakers, a post-human tribal culture, in opposition with the dystopian scientific compounds. This reading allows for a more positive view of Atwood's message rather than focusing on the outwardly negative aspect of the novel.

Dr. Kelly Sassi, Assistant Professor of English and English Education, NDSU, presented at the 2011 NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) Annual Convention, held November 17-22, 2011 in Chicago, IL. Sassi presented during the panel session, "Common Core Standards and the Dilemma of Writing District-Wide Curriculum," which drew on one year of curriculum work by an English Language Arts Committee comprised of a dozen 6-12th grade English teachers as they analyzed the affordances and limitations of adopting common core standards. Each year, the NCTE Annual Convention draws thousands of K-12 teachers, college faculty, administrators, and other educational professionals from around the world.



Dr. Dale Sullivan presented his research, "Must We Exterminate the Veusians? An Analysis of J.B.S. Haldand's, Olaf Stapledon's and C.S. Lewis' Views on the Issue," at the Religious Communication Conference on November 16, 2011 in New Orleans. Sullivan also chaired the session, "C.S. Lewis and Alien Voices: Using Reason and Imagination in the Search for Serenity." The RCA conference was a preconference to the National Communication Association Convention held November 17-20.



their outstanding teaching.

With so many students coming in and out of the department's programs, it is more important than ever that we find ways to hold onto these relationships, and for alumni to share their good news and accomplishments with the department. I was particularly pleased with the success of our advising event this fall, and am thrilled to be reporting on two alumni accomplishments in this newsletter. Please make it a New Year's resolution to update us on your accomplishments, and we will pass that good news on in Volume Two of Pen and Ink: Notes from the NDSU Department of English.

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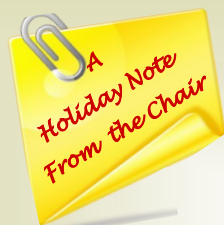
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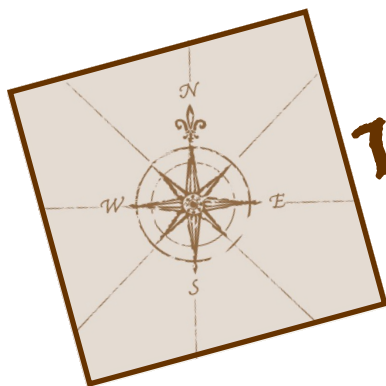
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Greetings from the Chair—

2011 was a very good year! We promised and are now delivering on our 4th newsletter, all thanks to the wonderful work of Tina Young. We have more undergraduate majors than ever (approximately 200), we have a vibrant graduate program with 33 students seeking either their MA or PhD, and we have active faculty members presenting and publishing their scholarship, which in turn fuels



Where is ... ? Tom Matchie

In the hunt for Dr. Tom Matchie, the important question isn't so much, "Where have you been?" but is better asked, "Where haven't you been?" He's the epitome of the proverbial "I've been everywhere, man." Since retiring, he and his wife, Michelle, divide their time by the seasons, spending warm months at a cabin in Detroit Lakes, MN and wintering near family in Rogers, MN.

Don't let the seasons fool you. Although Matchie avers, "The lake environment has been our haven since the 90s. I used to teach Thoreau, but now I'm in love with the grass, the trees, the water, the shrubs, the plants." They've been on the move for thirty years, and they haven't stopped.

Michelle's job in the 80s prepared them for retirement. As a consultant for nursing homes, she was hired to update and review facilities in 22 states west of the Mississippi and in Alaska. So during the summer months, they traveled (or tented) in all points west, allowing them to "see a lot of territory and meet scores of people." Matchie exclaims, "Her job gave us the urge to travel, and if retirement travel is contagious — we got the bug."



Since retiring in 2004, they've been abroad, visiting his mother's ancestral home of Ireland and Michelle's French heritage in France. They toured Greece and Italy while monitoring 26 college students. Another adventure was spent with their nephew who chauffeured them through Thailand. Matchie's cousin and former NDSU dean, Jane Lillestol, organized a trip to Machu Picchu in Peru. They headed to Salt Spring Island in British Columbia to catch up with a college classmate, and along with 40 members of Michelle's extended family, they toured the western coast of Mexico.

While the highlights of touring abroad are the history and architecture, especially in Greece and Macchu Picchu, the Matchies love traveling the US and appreciate getting to know the country and her people. Stateside they've visited the awe-inspiring Ground Zero in New York; seen the historic Liberty Bell in Philadelphia; traveled North Carolina's Blue Ridge Parkway; ventured south to St. Augustine, Florida; trekked the River Walk in San Antonio, Texas; viewed the breathtaking Old Stone Mountain in Georgia; strolled down Bourbon Street in New Orleans; hiked the Diamond Head overlooking Waikiki Beach in Hawaii; and tasted their way through Northern California's wine country.

*"If retirement travel is contagious —
we got the bug."*

While traveling has been the highlight of their retirement, Matchie hasn't given up writing. He continues to study his literary heroes, Flannery O'Connor and Louise Erdrich, and because he's always had an affinity for short stories, he continues to "pick up books by noted authors, like Alice Munro, for their intriguing stories. Matchie's research and publications on Midwestern literature can be found online at tom-matchie.com. He has nearly finished his "Life Review," in hopes "that generations down the line will find this manuscript interesting and maybe even educational." The Review includes vignettes from his high school teaching career

including the aftermath of two young girls' suicides, an angry high school student who slashed his tires, and parents who disagreed with the poetry being taught in class.



Throughout his 33 years as a professor of American Literature, Matchie has observed, "Humanity is about not having to agree." Yet he believes the daily stresses stemming from such conflict were a major contributor to his needing a 5-bypass heart surgery. Hence his "Life Review" also discusses key conflicts of his career and the difficulties in keeping professional situations unemotional, despite their always being so.

*"I don't think I have to accomplish
anything more."*

Because of his past conflicts, and while it may seem they've been constantly on the go, his retirement has drifted toward the notion of letting go and letting life live itself. Matchie says his philosophy on retirement stems from the Beatles', "let it be, let it be, let it be, let it be, let it be. You will find an answer, let it be." Matchie says this "transition from doing to being has been more than fulfilling." He now believes in "letting life happen. My wife and I, we are a team and our focus is now on family. I don't think I have to accomplish anything more."

No matter the season or his locale, you can become reacquainted with Tom Matchie via email at: tom.matchie@ndsu.edu.

Introducing — Dr. Verena Theile



Most people keep their demons private. For Dr. Verena Theile, her demon is public, and he practically sits upon her shoulder. Meet Assistant Professor Theile and Mephistopheles or, Mephisto for short. Having been born and raised in Germany, Dr. Theile (pronounced: Tie-la) is well-acquainted with Mephisto. He is Faustus' puppet master and one of the chief demons of German literary tradition. He is also a physical rendering of her passion for literary superstitions.

Though hailing from abroad, Theile earned her undergraduate BA and her MA from Minnesota State University in Mankato. She then moved to the Pacific Northwest in Washington State where she earned her PhD. When Theile joined the NDSU Department of English in 2008, she said, "I loved Minnesota. I lived there for seven years, and I'm glad to be back in the neighborhood."

"We can practice and discuss totally geeky things and understand and

Her official title is Assistant Professor of English for Early Modern Literature, and Dr. Theile's area of research is early modern superstitions in Europe and on English stages. Hence, she truly enjoys teaching Shakespeare, but even the more generic English 358: Writing in the Humanities and Social Sciences takes on new meaning when subtitled, "Death, Grief, and Decay." Theile taught a 16th-century British literature course, listed as Topics in British Literature and captioned it, "Faith and Superstitions in Post-Reformation Europe."

Combining her teaching with her research interests hasn't always been easy. She admits: "My biggest hurdle is adjusting how to blend my research agenda with my teaching style." It was during a conference in Prague where she revitalized her research, declaring, "Finally technique and content came together." Theile finds that connecting her research requires merging new historicist research both in technique and content, and applying it to pedagogy. She discovered that "as I research, I learn why I teach, and how I

teach." To her, they're interminably intertwined.

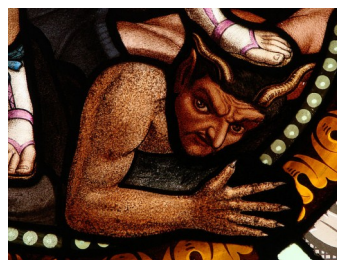
Teaching students is just one aspect of what she enjoys as a professor. Theile laughs, "I love the variety. I teach, I do research, and I'm part of a scholarly community." She believes the variety makes her a better professor: "I have three sounding boards: my students, the colleagues in the department, and the scholars in my specialty fields." She talks to her students about how and why she teaches. The Department's peer review system grants her a review by one colleague every semester. During each review, she converses about how and why she teaches, and each time she becomes more aware of her pedagogical practices. She insists that collaborating with colleagues in the field and talking about pedagogy helps her research, attesting, "We can practice and discuss totally geeky things and understand and appreciate each other."

Understanding how research and teaching style meld has been a learning process. Though Theile's true demon is her own uncertainty. This is not to say, she lacks self-confidence, but believes she is "not as certain about things — teaching, research, pedagogy, service, etc., as others seem to be. And because I'm uncertain about what I want and how I want it, I feel the need to keep doors open, both forward and behind me." It's in understanding this aspect of uncertainty

where she finds working with graduate students most fascinating — "helping students find their niches — what will help them understand their dreams" has helped her understand her own hesitations.

Opening the door to the future, Theile's ultimate goal is to publish a monograph on early modern superstitions. She's worked on several compilations and collaborative projects, but desires one all her own. She spent three years finishing the collaborative translation project *Performance and Medicine in the Writings of Three Early Modern Physicians: the Brothers Felix and Thomas Platter and Hippolytus Guarinonius* by M A Katritzky (The Open Univ), for which Theile and Katritzky translated middle high German travel literature by the brothers Platter and Guarinonius into English.

Other projects include Theile editing, together with Marie Drews (Augusta State Univ.), the collection, *Reclaiming Home, Remembering Motherhood, Rewriting History: African American and Afro-Caribbean Women's Literature in the 20th Century*. Her edited collection *New Formalisms and Literary Theory*, with Linda Tredennick (Gonzaga Univ), is under contract and forthcoming with Palgrave Macmillan. With Andrew McCarthy (Univ of Tennessee, Chattanooga), Theile has also edited the essay collection, *Staging the Superstitions of Early Modern Europe*, which is due from Ashgate Publishing yet this month (Dec. 2011). Appropriately, the front cover work features a bright, bold, vibrant, demon.



St. Michael and the Demon
The Church of St. Martin, Florac, France

Theile has discovered the vibrancy of the university environment which is unique to its system. Conversations help guide uncertainty and promote self-discovery, and NDSU offers opportunity and has great potential. As a department, Theile feels, "We are not competing — we are collaborating. The Department is supportive. We like each other. Our differences complement and complete us, and this helps us give our students the best advice."

Introduce yourself to Dr. Verena Theile. Her office is located in Morrill 209C and the door is always open (or slightly ajar). Don't let the demon scare you!

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Harveland Publishes First Fiction Novel



What started as a night terror—a recurring nightmare—has transformed into a near fairytale. Following a two-year process of writing, gathering reader feedback and peddling to potential agents and publishers,

2005 MA graduate, MariLou Harveland, published her first fiction novel, *The Seventh Soul*. The eerie novel features Lenora Kelley and her father, Tom, who have recently moved to Cambridge, England following the unexpected death of her mother. While anticipating a fresh start, they are greeted instead with a host of creepy occurrences.

When Harveland, driven from sleep by a night terror repeated 50 or 100 times, found it cathartic to write it all down, her husband, Dan, read it and said, "Get it published." After much disbelief and two more opinions encouraging publication, she took that giant leap into the world of feedback and rejection. Being a freelance editor, Harveland anonymously organized weekly and monthly reader response groups covering an age demographic of 13 to 50 years. Interestingly, the 13-year-old described it as, "suspenseful, but not scary," whereas the mid-thirties reader

deemed it too scary to read alone after dark. Scary? Perhaps, but Harveland shockingly notes, "there was no negative feedback." But rejection? Oh yes, there was a lot of rejection. "I sent the manuscript to 100 agents. Three gave really good feedback and leads. Another agent really liked it, but stated it wasn't their genre."

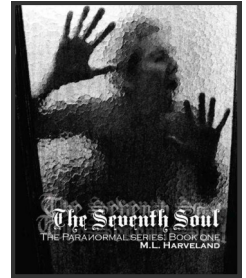
Harveland believes that with the rise of the digital age and electronic formats, the publishing climate has become more discerning and publishers are much more critical about who and what will be published. For new authors, she notes, "the logical options are to self-publish or find a small publishing house." So Harveland opted to go it alone. She found that Amazon and Barnes and Noble both had self-publication tools, but they weren't necessarily easy-to-use; luckily Dan is a computer programmer. Still, the biggest expense was the cover art, for which she hired artist, Mark Sogaard.

Though the process wasn't easy, Harveland says the revisions were the most difficult, and the "best part was the free writing, where it all started." She recalls with surprise how Lenora

became lifelike with her individual identity and personality; "Lenora is more girly than I imagined, and she makes things happen that I didn't plan. There is a scene where Lenora is going on a double date and I have to describe her dress. (I don't do dresses.) And there is a kissing scene," at which Harveland nearly shudders.

Where is Lenora leading her? *The Seventh Soul* is book one of the Paranormal Series for which she has already begun the sequel, the third book is outlined and the ideas for the fourth novel are in the works. Within the first week of digital publication, Lenora and cast were sitting at #5 on Amazon's Hot 100 New Releases. How many have sold? Harveland doesn't know: "Dan looks every day, but I don't let him tell me."

Harveland's advice to those interested in publishing is, "Do it! Seek all possible feedback, and DON'T discount self-publication." Her novel is the pinnacle of that advice, as she proudly declares, "It's the purest form of my own work—I have autonomy here (and I keep the majority of the profits)." *The Seventh Soul* is available digitally from Amazon and Barnes and Noble.



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Alumni in Action

Delzer Creates New American Theatre Project

Thanks to a two-year grant from the Bush Foundation of St. Paul, Minnesota, in February 2012, Brad Delzer will be starting the New American Theatre Project. The endeavor is a collaboration of teenagers and young adults using theatre to collect and tell the stories of the New American experience in the Fargo/Moorhead area.

The New American Theatre Project will be an invigorating atmosphere for young New Americans to create and explore through the creative tools of theatre. Delzer is implementing Anne Bogart's *Viewpoints* technique which he says, "takes language out of initial development, focusing instead on movements and gestures."

For the New American youth population that has been rapidly increasing in the Fargo/Moorhead area, access to and encouragement in personal and cultural expression is often unavailable or overlooked. This project is one way to fill that void and it offers another channel for these New Americans to learn, grow and succeed.

The first session includes about a half-dozen students who will form a theatrical ensemble exploring ideas, stories, and subjects of most interest to them. Though Delzer will supply theatrical supervision, the process will be mostly self-directed, with the students deciding how to present their work. Decisions on whether to use an intimate setting, a big space, to use

lights, sets, and costumes, will be theirs to make.

Though his project is starting with only a handful of students from the south

Fargo schools, Delzer's aim is to "start small and then expand." This first round of students was "suggested" to him from various ESL instructors, and he admits there wasn't a formal registration or tryout process. The location for the project is yet to be determined, and Delzer is hoping for a space in one of the south Fargo schools, but he has to cut through some red tape. He admits that his space at Theatre B would be functional, but the students would then run into

transportation issues.

Using his skills as a theatrical artist, Delzer hopes to support these kids in exploring and expressing their story and the stories of their community, to give them a marked advantage for success as well as to aid Fargo/Moorhead on its challenging journey to becoming a more global city.

Delzer graduated from NDSU in 2004 with a BFA in Theatre Arts and a minor in English.





The annual Dead Authors Halloween Haunt was a howling success with an array of illustrious ghostly guests. Apparitions of Flannery O'Connor, Ken Kesey, Angela Carter, Aldous Huxley, Marianne Moore, Alan Ginsberg, and Stephen Crane were on display. There was an unlikely, yet lively (or dead!) dual between Marshall

McLuhan and James Joyce. Recently released jailbird, Henry David Thoreau, en route to Walden, made his entrance

touting a rousing *Civil Disobedience* discourse. Charles Bukowski attended complete with bloody knuckles, but thankfully did not threaten the audience with any weaponry. Jane Austen made her deathly debut reading a short poem by Lord Byron, and shockingly, Edith



What's Your Story?

We want to know where your English Degree has taken you.

For your story, please consider and include:

- * Your graduation year and emphasis
- * Whether you continued for an MA, PhD, or JD
 - * Your career choices
- * How your degree created opportunities
- * What you (or we) might do differently
- * Current position and locale

We really want to know what you've been up to. Plus, knowing your story can improve the curriculum for future students.

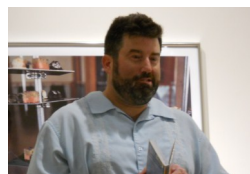
Send your post-collegiate story to either:
Tina.Young@ndsu.edu
or
Kevin.Brooks@ndsu.edu

Wharton arrived looking remarkably similar to the Department's very own Gary Totten. It was phenomenal to see all of them this past Halloween. Who will join next year's spectral scene?

The Cosgrove Seminars Series featured a poetry reading by Hillol Ray on November 3rd. Ray's personal story is the remarkable rise of a poverty

stricken rakhal balok (cattle keeper) from West Bengal, India, who arrived in the USA with only three dollars and a half-full mini suitcase, into the renowned *Earth Day* poet. Ray earned his M.S. in Environmental Engineering from NDSU in 1977 and has served private industries and the Environmental Protection Agency for more than 34 years. Ray is now an established poet, engineer, and advocate for the environment and all humanity. During his stay, Ray also presented the seminar, *Brief Overview of the EPA Region 6 Drinking Water Enforcement Program* for the Civil Engineering Department, which covered up-to-date knowledge and challenges on the drinking water enforcement programs at the federal government level.

September 27th marked the first annual "Let's Hear it for Homecoming" NDSU Department of English book reading event. Author Tommy Zurhellen gave an animated reading of his first novel, *Nazareth, North Dako-*



ta. Zurhellen is currently travelling and researching the sequel, *The Apostle Islands*. The books are the re-telling of the Messiah story in a modern-day setting. Zurhellen is Associate Professor of English at Marist College in upstate New York.

In honor of National Day on Writing, National Day, October 20th, NDSU invited students to participate in an "exquisite corpse." Using the University's Facebook page, every hour between 8am and 5pm, an introductory sentence to an ongoing story was offered. Students, faculty, and staff were asked to continue the sagas following the last line in the comment threads. Scenarios included walking home from the library; neighbors throwing a loud party when suddenly all is silent; curling up in front of the fireplace on a stormy evening. You can read all nine stories on the Department of English Facebook page.

The NDSU Library and Center for Writers offered a variety of presentations and were on location giving students an opportunity to draft 6-word short stories. Creativity abounds.

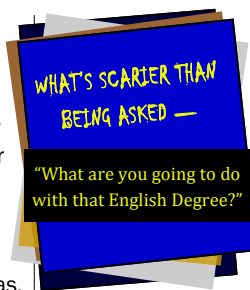


**I asked,
she answered;
wedding
tomorrow!**

**Food. Control.
No control. Ahh!
Chaos!**

On October 31st, the English Department hosted an event we called "What's scarier than being asked—what are you going to do with that English major?" Five members of our advisory board (Kendra Faiman-O'Brien, Martin Fredericks, Josh Swanson, Bill Thomas, and Stephen Wilson) were able to meet with twenty of our majors and give them clear, realistic advice about going to law school or graduate school, working in the non-profit and for profit sectors, working in media, even starting their own businesses. A student said to de-

partment chair Kevin Brooks afterwards, "That was legit!" which he took to mean that she and others got the kind of career advising that is very hard to deliver: not idealized or generalized advice, but concrete and specific. Board members also generously invited students to call or email with follow-up questions as needed. The department will hold a similar event in February, prior to summer and fall registration, but it too will include advisory board members or alumni in the area who are able to come to campus for 90 minutes and share their life and work experiences.



Barrio Bushido — A Reading with Benjamin Bac Sierra

The Department of English in conjunction with the Red River Writing Project is pleased to bring professor and author Benjamin Bac Sierra for a reading from his new novel, *Barrio Bushido*. A public reading will be held from 7 to 9 pm on Saturday, January 14, 2012 in the Arikara Room of the NDSU Memorial Union.



In addition to being a talented writer and gifted professor, Benjamin Bac Sierra, J.D., is a survivor to be admired. He overcame the trauma of a destitute childhood in San Francisco's Mission District, and later, as a U.S. Marine, scraped through front-line combat during the first Gulf War. In *Barrio Bushido*, the author explores timeless pressing issues such as machismo, violence, purpose, and the metaphysical.

Barrio Bushido has generated intense enthusiasm all over the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond and is destined to become a landmark in Latino-American literature. *The San Francisco Bay Guardian* has awarded Ben a coveted "Best of the Bay" title, and New York Journal of Books' reviewer Paula Schuck states: "this story is an important social statement on a time and place in history that demands attention and should be read. *Barrio Bushido* is a groundbreaking novel that transforms the cliché Latino criminal into a vato loco philosopher. *Barrio Bushido* is a book that will be studied for generations to come."



Northern Eclecta — the Art of Words

Each spring, students enrolled in NDSU's English Literary Publication class produce a volume of the literary journal, *Northern Eclecta*. The publication features original works by NDSU and secondary school students in the form of fiction, non-fiction, art, photography and poetry.

Students from all academic backgrounds are encouraged to contribute creative works. Past contributors range from communication, journalism and English majors to food science, accounting, mechanical engineering and veterinary technology majors. The section, "The Next Generation," features the works of area secondary school students.

Submissions can include up to 2 works of fiction, up to 2 works of nonfiction, up to 4 poems, up to six pieces of short fiction, up to

3 photographs, and up to 3 pieces of art per person. Pieces are selected during blind readings, meaning the author/artist is undisclosed.

The deadline to submit to *Northern Eclecta*, Volume 6 is Monday, March 19, 2012. All the excerpts are from *Northern Eclecta* 5, whose theme was "imagination."

The theme for Volume 6 has yet to be determined. Submitting is free, and students included in the journal will receive a complimentary copy. For more information on the journal and how to submit electronically, visit www.northerne.com.

The English Literary Publication course is taught by Senior Lecturer and Advisor, Eunice Johnston. Questions regarding *Northern Eclecta* can be directed to her via email at: Eunice.Johnston@ndsu.edu.

Without Beauty by Houda Abdelrahman

She cannot see,
What she possesses,
Without beauty,
She still impresses.

Snow Angel by Caitlin Deal

She stood about three feet high,
Almost as wide, bundled the way she was.
Two emeralds
peeked between
soft eyelashes catching softer snow.

Her arms couldn't quite make it to her sides,
a flurry of giggles as she spun in circles
finally collapsing
with a tornado of stars above her.

Tiny boots pointed towards the sky,
mouth opened wide,
tasting Heaven.

Beautiful

by Erin Stegman

She paraded around the house dressed in her mother's clothes, her shoes too big, lipstick too bright. "Don't I look beautiful?" she would ask her mother. And she always told her daughter "yes."

She entered high school, still dressed in clothes too mature. "Don't I look beautiful?" she would ask her boyfriend. And he would always say, "yes."

She graduated college and never used her degree. After birthing her first son at age 23, she looked up at her husband and said, "Don't I look beautiful?" He smiled at his son and said, "yes."

Forty years later she looks into her bathroom mirror. Her kids are gone, husband married to someone else. This time, her clothes fit and the lipstick is gone. "Don't I look beautiful?" she whispered into the mirror. No one answered back.



Issues of *Northern Eclecta* 5 are available for \$5 in Morrill 219 from the NDSU Department of English and at the Bookstore at NDSU.