



Pen & Ink: Notes from the NDSU Department of English

The Buzz



Dr. Andrew Mara presented "Rhizomal Codes and Agricultural Iteration." IR13 (Internet Researchers Conference, version 13), Manchester, UK, October 2012. Using iteration as a

starting point for studying useful cultural forms, Mara analyzes how programming has weaved epistemic commonplaces particular to its culture in agriculture. Mara is particularly interested in seeing iteration as something that carries the values of programming culture, and which connects to extant cultural practices of cycles in other cultural domains. Specifically, this project compares the uses of cycles in programming/electrical engineering culture with agricultural notions of cycles.

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Dr. Verena Theile gave an invited guest lecture at St. Mary's University of Minnesota in Winona on October 25, 2012.



Theile presented "Something wicked this way comes: Fear and Superstitions on Shakespeare's Stage." Using the witches in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1605) as a case study, Theile discussed the concept of evil and the image of the devil in early modern Europe.

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Ryan Christensen attended both the Lake Region Writers Conference on Oct. 6, 2012, in Fergus Falls, MN and the Great Plains Alliance for Computers and Writing Conference Nov. 9, 2012, in Mankato, MN.



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On November 15, 2012 English lecturer Kelly Cameron successfully defended her dissertation, "Imperial Rhetorics: Frances Power Cobbe's Answering of the Irish Question



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in the Nineteenth-Century Periodical Press" at Texas Christian University, where she received her PhD in Rhetoric and Composition along with a graduate certificate in Women's Studies.

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Dr. Kelly Sassi's "If You Weren't Researching Me and a Friend...": The Mobius of Friendship and Mentorship as Methodological Approaches to Qualitative Research" was published in *Qualitative Inquiry*, Volume 18, Issue 10, Dec. 2012. Her article explores the affordances and risks of practicing friendship and mentorship as



methodological approaches in two qualitative studies. Sassi was also awarded a grant from the North Dakota Humanities Council for her proposal titled, "Reading Literature/Viewing Art: *Moby-Dick*, *Ahab's Wife*, and the paintings of T.L. Solien." The grant will make it possible to bring award-winning author Sena Jeter Naslund to Fargo to read from her best-selling novel *Ahab's Wife, or The Stargazer* during the Plains Art Museum's exhibit of paintings by T.L. Solien in fall 2013. The grant will also fund a panel presentation on art, history, and literature. Sassi will lead the Red River Valley Writing Project Open Institute for teachers on the use of art and writing in the classroom.

PhD student Steven Hammer presented his work, "Meatspace Glitch: Exploring Pre-digital Glitch Art in Human Bodies" at the Glitch Festival/Conference Dec 6-9, 2012 in Chicago



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Professor of English Dr. Bruce Maylath and English PhD graduate students, Steven Hammer and Karen Sorensen presented the panel, "Infusing International Collaborations throughout Technical Communication Programs" at the Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication conference September 27-29, 2012 in Houghton, MI. Their presentations discussed aspects of growing, collaborating in diverse disciplines, and editing translations in the Trans-Atlantic Project.

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Brady Bergeson, Heather Steinmann and Josh Webster presented at the North Dakota University System's Arts and Humanities Summit at Valley City State University on Oct. 11. For their panel they each read from new works of fiction and poetry that they wrote specifically for the summit, using the summit's theme of bridges as a prompt.

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Dr. Gary Totten presented, "Remembering Alta California in Frank Norris's *McTeague*" at the Western Literature Association Conference, Nov. 7-10, 2012 in Lubbock, TX.



The celebration of Dr. Muriel Brown's career is now one of the highlights of my career at NDSU. Hearing her long-time colleagues acknowledge her wisdom, her fairness, and

collegiality made it clear to all in attendance that the English department at NDSU has been graced with good people and a strong sense of camaraderie for the last 40 years. Speakers acknowledged that times have been tough, and Muriel herself embodied toughness when she challenged the administration and won for herself (with the support of faculty) a tenure-track line. But her friends and former colleagues focused on the strength of her character, the many roles she has played in the

department and university, and the role model she has been for all. And speaking of role models, our capstone course, featured on page 8, has been a model for many departments on campus. Not only does it give students a chance to synthesize all they have learned, research a topic in depth, and explore career options, but it asks students to collect their work in a portfolio that can be assessed by the whole faculty. The department can say with confidence that our students are excellent writers, researchers, and presenters, because we have the evidence. See for yourselves in our [Digital Repository](#).

Kevin Brooks
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Here's to You! Dr. Muriel Brown

Dr. Muriel Brown has been with the NDSU Department of English for 39 years, and it is with great sadness we announce her retirement. During her brief statement at the department holiday luncheon, Brown emphasized, "this will be a *long* retirement," as she will be done at the end of Spring 2013, "I guess I'll just coast."

The holiday luncheon brought together many faces and voices from the past. Retired professors, Richard Shaw, Tom Matchie, Bill Cosgrove, Jean Strandness, Chandice Johnson, and past Provost, Craig Schnell, gave voice to one unanimous detail: Dr. Muriel Brown was always calm, caring, and considerate. Her thoughtfulness and sense of fairness was at the forefront of every memory, along with her desire to remain in the background and shun the spotlight. Congratulations on a career worthy of celebration. "Here's to you, Dr. Brown!"



"Muriel was an early feminist — I always knew she had my back. Thank you for everything Muriel. With love —"

Jean Strandness

"It was my intention to say nice things about Muriel Brown, but I kept thinking about nice things she'd said about me. This is not about me, I thought, it's about her. And then it occurred to me, maybe that was the point: she deflected attention from herself to her faculty when she chaired the department. Unlike the pointy-haired boss in Dilbert who takes credit for everything, she thought if she could perk up the staff, things would work better. At least I worked better, trying to measure up to her opinion of me. You can get a lot of work out of somebody, even me, that way.

I suspect she did the same thing with her students, deflecting attention from herself as professor to the material under examination, and from the often difficult material to the students themselves, complimenting them on their ability to understand and interpret to the point where they really *were* able to understand and interpret, to the point where they became true readers of literature.

So thanks, Muriel, for the encouragement. Thanks for the heartening."

Steve Ward

"Consummate scholar, great teacher, loyal friend. Muriel, you're special. "

Tom Matchie

"Muriel called me a name once, 'Lord of the Files' and recognizing her Chaucer expertise, I hereby dub thee, 'Dutchess of Gentlessa.' My wish for you, Muriel — Joy & Gentlessa."

Bill Cosgrove

"In honor of Will Cather's 139th birthday, I quote for you, Muriel, from Cather's *My Antonia*: 'Ain't it wonderful, Jim, how much people can mean to each other?'"

Chandace Johnson

"Muriel has a way of making one feel special. Last summer I had a short visit with Muriel and her sons. She didn't talk about her retirement. Instead, she was more interested in what was going on in my life. Of course, I came away from that conversation with a glow of good will. That was Muriel."

Howard Peet

"Muriel was the first female in the department to wear pants."

Margaret Skolness

"In my 16 years of working with Muriel, I've always appreciated her quiet leadership and phenomenal teaching. "

Kevin Brooks

"The years fade, but some people remain. Muriel is one of them."

Richard W. Bovard

2012 Holiday Luncheon

It was announced December 7, 2012, that Dr. Muriel Brown will officially retire following the Spring 2013 semester. The 2012 Holiday Luncheon provided the backdrop for a room full of current and past colleagues, professors, and students to celebrate Professor Brown's 39 years of service and dedication to the department and all she stands for. Here's to you, Dr. Brown. We salute you, as our professor, our colleague, and our friend.



Clockwise from back left: Richard Shaw, Bob O'Connor, Tom Matchie, Margaret Skolness, Chandice Johnson, Paula Larson, Bill Cosgrove, Eunice Johnston, Muriel Brown, Jean Strandness, Craig Schnell



Introducing — Dr. Emily Wicktor



Meet Dr. Emily D. Wicktor, the newest member of the NDSU Department of English. A native Minnesotan, Wicktor earned her BA and MA degrees at St. Cloud State University and her PhD in English from the University of Kansas. After teaching as a Post-Doctoral Fellow at Tulane University, she joined the NDSU English department faculty as a Professor of Practice in the fall of 2012. She is currently transitioning into the role of First-Year Writing Director.

Wicktor grew up in St. Cloud, MN. She was a competitive springboard and platform diver for thirteen years, and this talent earned her a full athletic scholarship to St. Cloud State University. She has coached both club and high school diving for several years, and she continued her interest in athletics and academics by co-founding and advising the first-ever Women's Athletic Association at Tulane University. Want to learn how to dive? Stop by Wicktor's office (Morrill 207D) for some tips.

Wicktor's academic interests include Rhetoric/Composition/Pedagogy, Victorian sexuality, Modern American and British drama, Jane Austen, literary theory, and research methods and methodology. Her teaching experience is wide and varied having taught graduate-level Rhetoric and Composition theory, and undergraduate British literature survey courses, study abroad (British Summer Seminar), recent popular literature, literary theory, numerous drama courses, and rhetoric, writing, and research classes. While at KU, she mentored more than 60 Graduate Teaching Assistants, while

working closely with genre theory specialist Dr. Amy Devitt. Wicktor also worked full time at KU's Watson library reference desk and was a full-time instructor in the Humanities library instruction program. In another life, she's a super-hero librarian.

"Best date with a dead guy, ever."

Wicktor on Buddy Holly

As most hip folks are doing these days, Wicktor moved from New Orleans, LA, to Valley City, ND. Though she misses the food, the nightlife, and walking to Tulane each day with James Carville, she's thankful to live again with her spouse, Dr. J. Gregory Brister, who is an Assistant Professor of English at Valley City State University. Their prized possession is their canoe, "Sugarbowl," and they are hardcore camper-canoeists and Boundary Waters enthusiasts. Though Wicktor loves her husband dearly, if she could have "a date with a dead guy," it'd be with Buddy Holly. Best date with a dead guy, ever.

Contributing to

a Work of Art

Northern Eclecta



Each spring, students enrolled in NDSU's English Literary Publication class produce a volume of the literary journal, *Northern Eclecta*. This artistic publication features original works by NDSU and secondary school students in the form of fiction, non-fiction, art, photography and poetry. Submissions for *Northern Eclecta*, Volume 7, to be published in 2013, are now officially open.

Students from all academic backgrounds are encouraged to contribute creative works. For the first time, The NE editors will be accepting submissions from all NDSU alumni. Please consider contributing an original non-published work. *The deadline for alumni to submit their work is Monday, March 11, 2013.*

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.

Submitting is free, and contributors included in the journal will receive a complimentary copy. The submission deadline for NDSU students is Monday, March 18, 2013. The deadline for area secondary students is Monday, March 25, 2013. For more information on the journal and how to submit, please 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.

Excerpts ~ Northern Eclecta 6

The Narrow Path

by Cade Krueger

We walk along the narrow path,
Hand in hand, step in step, we hath.
Do not look down, to fall is death.
Behold below; the reaper's bath.

You slip away, I lose my breath.
I stretch to reach, don't leave me lest,
I fall as well; embrace death's grip.
The sound of drums, upon my breast.

The path is long, we cannot tip.
To fall is death, on jagged lip,
Of ancient stone, my heart will sleep.
The drums will cease, my body rip.

Now take my hand, it's yours to keep.
The path is long, the fall is steep.

Insights

Sunshine shines brightest
On those people who dare to
Venture from the shade.
— Brie Michaelson

I'm lost but enjoying the scenery.
— Shahana Norton

Forever ended too soon.
Start again.
— Donald Hanninen

Kicking

by Rachel Grider

We live our lives like gypsies, running wild
North by Northwest
Defining our existence with a series of gestures—
Reactions. Factions. "Ultra-Actions."
All moving faster than we can.

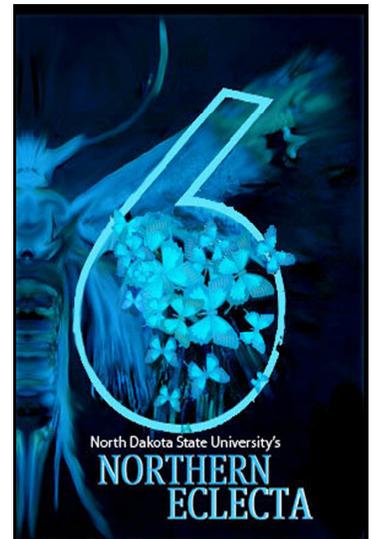
Fighting. Spitting. Grinning. Waving. Running away.

Blowing it.

Hitting the pavement,
Wasting our time; "Trainspotting at Leith Central Station."
Choosing the wrong words and the wrong fights.

But this is a familiar bend in the road
And we're as shameless, defiant, and alive as we've ever been.
We stand up, grinning, wiping the blood from our noses

Kicking again.



North Dakota State University's

**NORTHERN
ECLECTA**

Issues of *Northern Eclecta* 6
are available for \$6 in Morrill
219 from the NDSU English
Department and at The
NDSU Bookstore.

Six-Word Essays

Got my revenge, lost everything else.
— Joni Wiebesick

One gains knowledge while losing imagination.
— Nick LeDoux

Road to nowhere; longest walk ever.
— Jazmin Amos

I read fast, but remember nothing.
— Mohamed Abdirahman

To See

by Kasey Chesley

Seeing is believing
but it can be quite deceiving
because people see only what they desire
as they build their own empire
on the wishes they so desperately need
it comes from their own selfish greed
they will never stop wanting more
because everyone wants the higher score
but riches cannot buy happiness

I myself must confess
I am a victim of the envy
but only of the things people let us see
because you never know what they are hiding behind their door
for they are the ones needing more

Luke Armstrong—“buenos dias” de Guatamala



Luke Maguire Armstrong (lukepartacus.com) was a baby, who became a boy, who became a man. After finishing NDSU degrees in philosophy and English abroad in Chile, Luke backpacked from Chile to Guatemala, where he spent four years as director of development at the organization, Nuestros Ahijados. His work to battle infant malnutrition was featured on the ABC News Global Health Special: Be the Change, Save a Life. He is the author of “iPoems for the Dolphins to Click Home About” (2010) and “How We Are Human” (2012). Follow @lukepartacus.

Alumni in Action

Tanja Leung—“hello” from Denver, CO

Tanja Leung earned her Juris Doctor degree from Stetson University College of Law in Gulfport, Florida, where she co-founded the law school’s Asian American Law Student Association. Tanja is an attorney at the Denver law firm, Katz, Look & Onorato, P.C., where she focuses her practice on estate planning and estate administration.



Robert Rogge —“musta” from the Phillipines



Robert Rogge finds himself currently running a business, about to be CEO of a start-up company, and half-way through his first novel, all while working in a tiki bar on a tropical island in the Phillipines. Rogge spent time in Spain, and his novel is one giant love story for Barcelona. Though he can’t return because of pollution issues, he now has his start-up and being in charge affords him the option to place it where he wants. “I reckon I’ll put it on the Costa Brava in a nice sea-side town and continue to mix business with pleasure. But hell, it is hard to write a novel when you are CEOing a start-up.”

Eat with your hands! Photo taken by Pete Dadds, photographer for Discovery Channel

Aaron Anfinson—“neih hou” from Hong Kong

Since graduation, Aaron has been focused on teaching and education, developing programs in Vietnam, completing a Master’s of Education degree, working on literacy programs in postcolonial Hong Kong, and lecturing at a college in the Middle East. This passion for language, teaching, and multicultural living started with a year of Americorps service at a Moorhead Public School, a community service project working with refugees and New Americans, and, of course, with the English program and faculty at NDSU. Currently, he’s applying to the PhD program in the School of English at Hong Kong University. Within the areas of Sociolinguistics and Linguistic Anthropology, his research interests are language and globalization, gender and identity.





focusing on Klosterman's work and ideas. Klosterman, a native North Dakotan, has published several bestselling non-fiction books on popular culture as well as two novels. Currently, Klosterman writes the "Ethicist" column for *The New York Times Magazine*.



On Oct. 31, 2012 about 25 English majors attended the second annual fall advising event, "What's Scariest Than Being an English Major?" Faculty members, career service representatives, advisory board professionals, and students with internship experience were available to discuss course recommendations, career choices, and

the value of completing an English degree.



The Cosgrove Seminars kicked off its fall reading series with author Geoff Herbach presenting from his latest young adult novels, *Stupid Fast* and *Nothing Special*. The novels chronicle the story of young Felton Reinstein who is thrust into the role of jock thanks to a late growth spurt. Herbach teaches creative writing at Minnesota State University, Mankato.

In conjunction with National Day on Writing, October 19, 2012, the Center for Writers, Student Government, and Office of the Provost hosted an open house in the newly renovated and expanded Center for Writers. National Day on Writing is an annual event organized by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Designed to "draw attention to the remarkable variety of writing we engage in," the day has traditionally been declared a national observance by the U.S. Senate. In addition to the CFW Open House, the day's celebration at NDSU included an Exquisite Corpse story written on the NDSU Facebook Page, seminars on workplace writing and resources for writing, and a workshop on learning calligraphy.

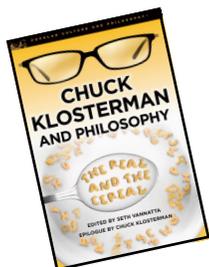


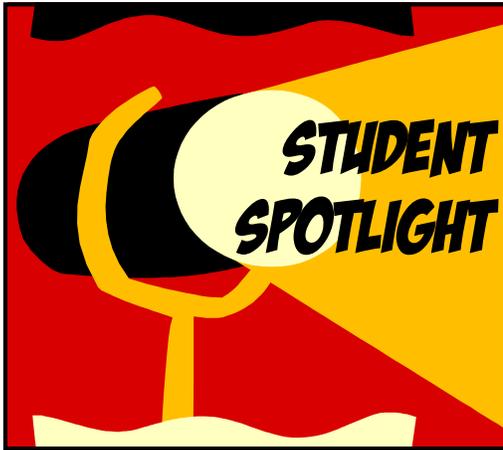
Center for Writers Directors—Past and Present: Bonnie Cooper, Mary Pull, Chandice Johnson, Dr. Richard Shaw

The Dead Writers Ghostly Gathering brought forth the specters of Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath. William Shakespeare presented a dual reading of "Shall I Compare Thee to a Summers Day" Sonnet 18 in Russian and English. Kurt Vonnegut read his response letter to the Superintendent of North Dakota's Drake School District regarding the book burning protesting Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five*. The apparitions of musician and composer John Cage and poet Gertrude Stein floated through the room. Ezekiel prophesied from his Old Testament book. Disney storywriter and illustrator, Bill Peet read from his children's book, *Capyboppy*. Isaac Bashevis Singer read from his short story collection *Gimpel the Fool*, and Dylan Thomas read from his *Collected Poems 1934-1953*. The annual haunt provided eerie entertainment and was held in the Spirit Room, downtown Fargo on Nov. 1, 2012.



Oct. 4, 2012 marked the second annual "Let's Hear it for Homecoming" NDSU Department of English book reading event. Dr. Kevin Brooks, Dr. Melissa Vosen Callens and Sybil Priebe read from and discussed their papers recently published in the book *Chuck Klosterman and Philosophy: The Real and the Cereal*, a collection of 22 academic papers





CAPSTONE: PROJECTING CAPITAL EXPERIENCES

The Capstone Experience has been part of the required curriculum for all first-year students beginning studies in Fall of 1996. The English Studies Capstone Experience (ENGL 467) is described as a cumulative and integrative study for English majors of English language, literature, and composition. The Capstone course is typically offered in the fall semester; students explore career, graduate school, and professional school options. They also produce a "capstone project" that either extends their work on a subject of interest to them, or fills a gap, allowing students to explore an idea or skill not developed in earlier coursework. Every undergraduate is assigned a faculty member to act as a mentor for his/her final research project. These projects incorporate aspects from the student's educational interests along with professional goals, which then propel the student into his/her next life step. What follows are highlights from three student projects of the Fall 2012 Capstone course

which included 22 students whose works ranged from the literary study of Arthurian legend's Morgan le Fay to the rise of zombies in pop culture. All English Capstone projects are available in the [NDSU Library Digital Repository](#).

KELLAM BARTA: The Mascot Effect 2: Social Factors Influencing Pronunciation of *Coyote*

The purpose of Kellam Barta's project is to build upon previous findings which suggest that a university mascot with varying pronunciations contributes to establishing and maintaining a sense of local identity through specific sound features. In NDSU's case, does the "s" in Bison sound like an "s" or a "z"? With Dr. Bruce Maylath as a mentor, Barta's current project is a field study in sociolinguistics, investigating a similar phenomenon at the University of South Dakota, whose "Coyotes" may encode group identity based on whether or not the final syllable of the word representing the school mascot is pronounced. In addition to demonstrating "the mascot effect" at USD, this project explores the story of the word *coyote*, and how social factors may have shaped its use.



ABBY HAMMES: Lady Lawyers: How *The Good Wife* Portrays Females in the Legal System

Abby Hammes' capstone project examined popular culture representations of female lawyers. Although much research has been done on this topic, it has not been revisited in many years, since the overwhelming response to *Ally McBeal* in the late 1990's. Using mentor Dr. Amy Rupiper-Taggart's advice, Hammes analyzed a more current television show, *The Good Wife*, which first aired in 2009, to examine how American television portrays females in the legal system, how stereotypes and prescribed gender roles influence these women's behaviors, and what these characters suggest about the way society thinks about female lawyers in regards to their professionalism and success.



KATE HAUGE: Honeymoon Hitchhikers: Archival Letters to Creative Nonfiction

Kate Hauge's creative nonfiction project is based on the letters written by Mildred La Due Mead to her family during the time that she and her newlywed husband were in California after eloping and leaving Minnesota. The letters, held by the Minnesota Historical Society, give fairly detailed accounts of arriving in California mere days after the stock market crashed in 1929 and the following year as the newlyweds struggle to establish themselves in their new environment. With the help of Dr. Miriam Mara, Hauge transformed selections of these letters into a narrative structure, by taking historical context into account and attempting to stay as true to the letters as possible, and only extrapolating to fill the gaps when necessary. The La Due family was one of the founders of Fertile, MN.



WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

We want to know where your initiative and ingenuity have taken your English degree. Plus, knowing your story can improve the curriculum for future students.

Send your updated story to: Tina.Young@ndsu.edu

For your story, please consider including:

- Your graduation year and emphasis
- Whether you continued for an advanced degree
- Your career choices and opportunities
- What you (or we) might do differently
- Current position, locale, and photo