

Pen & Ink: Notes from the NDSU Department of English

The Buzz

Gary Totten, Associate Professor of English, co-organized the 7th biennial conference of the International Society for Travel Writing (ISTW) at Georgetown University, Mar. 30-Apr. 1, 2012. Totten collaborated with colleagues from Georgetown, Nottingham Trent University (UK) and Misericordia University to referee papers and organize the conference program. Totten presented a paper, "The Politics of Local Color in *Dreiser Looks at Russia*,"

related to his larger book project on Theodore Dreiser's travel writing, and also delivered the concluding remarks at the conference. Totten serves on the steering committee for the ISTW, which encourages and fosters the work of scholars, publishers, and practitioners of travel writing through a range of activities including conferences, a monthly newsletter, and affiliation with the peer-reviewed journal *Studies in Travel Writing*.



PhD graduate student, Tatjana Schell presented "Challenges of Teaching College Composition as a Non-Native Speaking Teacher" during the Graduate Symposium held by the School of Writing, Rhetoric, and Tech Communication (WRTC) at James

Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA. Graduate students from all over the country attended the event held April 5-6,



2012. Kirk St. Amant from East Carolina University was the keynote speaker for the symposium.

Bruce Maylath, Professor of English, delivered the paper "Gateway to a Multilingual World: Managing Complexity in Multilateral International Collaboration" at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, meeting in St. Louis, March 21-24, 2012. The paper highlighted the cross-cultural virtual teams that match students in NDSU's English 455/655 International Technical Writing course with students in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, and France. Joining colleagues from several universities around the world, Maylath also helped lead an all-day workshop titled "Rhetoric and Composition Pedagogy and Scholarship in the Context of Globalization: Emerging Globally Networked Learning Environments as New Gateways for Theory, Research, and Pedagogy."



Dr. Bruce Maylath was one of four honorees selected by the Tribal College Liaison to receive a University Green and Golden Globe Diversity Award. Maylath earned the award for his role in supporting and promoting Dakota Studies at NDSU. The award ceremony was held April 16th, in the Memorial Union.



A Note to Our Readers:

This is the final paper printed edition of *Pen & Ink*. All future issues of department newsletter will be in electronic format. For those who have not been receiving our quarterly publication, you can find us by:

1. Making a donation to the English Department fund at the Alumni Foundation and join their mailing list.
2. Sending your email address to: tina.young@ndsu.edu. Your name will go on the list for the electronic mailing.
3. On the NDSU English website: www.ndsu.edu/english/newsletter/. All current and past issues are archived on the department website.

We still like to hear from department alumni, so jot us a note and tell us where you are and what you've been up to. Send your updates via email to Tina Young or through standard mail to:

Dept. of English
NDSU—Dept. 2320
PO Box 6050
Fargo, ND 58108-6050

We look forward to hearing from you.

Inside this Issue:

Introducing—Dr. Gary Totten pg 2

The Award Goes to... pg 3

Student Spotlight pg 4

We Were Here pg 4

Alumni in Action pg 5

Offering Sound Advice pg 6

Forms & Hollows: Heather Dubrow pg 6



Greetings from the Chair—

Like all of the FM area, we were thrilled to get through the spring without the threat of flooding. The

semester flew by without incident and many great accomplishments, most notably another successful Red River Graduate Student Conference and a very well attended Spring Awards Luncheon. We admitted nine new MA students and three PhD students for Fall 2012 and are already looking forward to working

with this new group of students. Our graduating undergraduates are joining MA programs (including but not limited to our program), going to law school, or finding work thanks to the excellent reading, writing, project management, and collaborative skills they have developed at NDSU.

Kevin Brooks
Department Chair
Kevin.Brooks@ndsu.edu
701-231-7147



Introducing — Dr. Gary Totten

Dr. Gary Totten joined the NDSU faculty in 2004. He earned his undergraduate degree in Humanities and his MA in English from Brigham Young University, and then completed his PhD in English at Ball State University.

With a research area in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American literature and culture, Totten pays particular attention to Edith Wharton and Theodore Dreiser. Totten's 2007 publication, *Memorial Boxes and Guarded Interiors: Edith Wharton and Material Culture* (editor, University of Alabama Press, 2007) looks at Wharton's relationship to the writing market and the role of consumer culture in her fiction. Not

only is he the president of the Edith Wharton Society, but is also the Vice-President of the International Theodore Dreiser Society, and is on the Steering Committee of the International Society for Travel Writing.



Travel literature has become the crux of his sub-specialty research. Totten is currently working on two book manuscripts, one on Theodore Dreiser's

early twentieth-century travel narratives and another on issues of mobility and identity in African American travel writing, 1893-1938.

Totten's interest in NDSU was partially initiated by his desire to work with graduate students. Totten thoroughly enjoys teaching his "road book" courses where he incorporates texts like Dreiser's *A Hoosier Holiday*, in which readers get a full appreciation for the "traveler's gaze" portrayed in the text.

In addition to researching and teaching travel writing, Totten especially "loves theory. I'm kind of a theory-head." While teaching theory, Totten advises, "you have to practice applying it. Theory is dense and heavy." His critical approach blends new historicism, narrative theory, and cultural and critical race theory.

"I'm kind of a theory-head"

Totten has even toyed with the idea of teaching a course that combines travel literature and theory with his other passion, zombie literature. The class would apply post-structuralist theory to Colson Whitehead's *Zone 1* and Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*. Yes, many of his



favorite read-for-fun books are zombie novels. Totten admits he likes the "quirky characters that aren't predictable. People react to zombies, and I like being surprised."

In May, Totten had the surprise of winning the Outstanding Service Award from the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences for his role in the development of the NDSU Faculty Senate, where he's enjoyed learning about the university system and how it works. He admits, "As president of the senate, I relied heavily on the Senate Executive Committee. I value academic freedom and enjoy working with policies that affect people's lives." Totten has pulled off the impressive balance of being a vital member of the local community while also being an active scholar on the international stage.



This *Lord of the Rings* spinoff was shared on the North Dakota State University memes Facebook page, and as one who has been befuddled by the maze of corridors meandering through Minard Hall, the wisdom of Boromir's observation is relevant and poignant.

The English Department is now scheduled to return to third floor Minard in May 2013. As the restoration continues at the south end of the building, the third floor is open to the sky. Renovations called for the uppermost story to be removed in order to make the ceilings in that wing of the fourth floor standard height. The north end's construction progresses toward the final product, and as that progression slowly edges toward completion in Dec. 2012, we await the day a person may once again "simply walk through Minard Hall."





Front Row: Kellam Barta, Linnea Nelson, Abby Hammes, Bailey Brazier, Celena Todora, Tatjana Schell, Rebecca Hayes.
Back Row: Dr. Robert O'Connor, Dominic Manthey, Angela Lorenz, Michele Cleveland, Naomi Koehler, Teresa Iverson, Jade Sandbulte.

At the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences awards luncheon, held on May 10, 2012, Dr. Gary Totten, NDSU

Professor of English, received the College's Outstanding Service Award. This award is designed to recognize outstanding service by honoring a level of involvement within the College or University that clearly exceeds the norms associated with the professional service component expected of the faculty. Totten's nomination stems from his continued dedication to the formation and integration of the NDSU Faculty Senate.



Dr. Bruce Maylath, NDSU Professor of English, received an Honorable Mention award from the College of AHSS for Outstanding Teaching.

This award recognizes outstanding teaching at the undergraduate and/or graduate level. It acknowledges the extraordinary enrichment that the teacher provides for students which is above and beyond the normal level of excellence expected in the classroom.

The Award Goes to ...

The 2012 Awards Luncheon held on April 30th was well attended. Congratulations to the student and faculty award recipients. Your dedication is honored and well-deserved.

Kellam Barta was awarded the Bill Cosgrove Award for Excellence.

The Hal and Alice Dickey Memorial Scholarship went to Mariah Torgerson.

Katherine Thoreson received the Professor Ralph Engel Scholarship.

The Gerald Wilson Hunter and Phyllis Krantz Hunter Scholarship was received by Naomi Koehler.

Jesse Wagner earned the Pamela

O'Connor Memorial Scholarship.

The Mart and Lois Vogel Awards for Excellence were given to Teresa Iverson, Dominic Manthey and Josie Tafelmeyer.

Michele Cleveland, Angela Lorenz, Tyler Ringstad, Erin Stegman, and Celena Todora each earned an English Faculty Scholarship.

The Madeline S. Gittings Endowed Scholarships were awarded to Bailey Brazier, Abby Hammes, and Linnea Nelson.

Jade Sandbulte received the Rooney Scholarship.

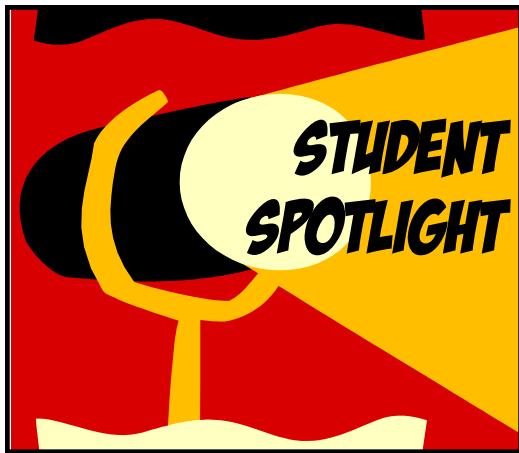
The Graduate Teaching Award went to Becca Hayes.

Tatjana Schell was awarded the Graduate Paper Award.

The Mart and Lois Vogel Faculty Teaching Award went to Dr. Robert O'Connor.

Thanks to everyone for your continued support of the program, the awards, and their honorees. Your support makes another's dreams attainable.





"Mehriba." It's the one word Emily Grenz speaks in fluent Turkish. In fact it's the only word she knows in Turkish. Since it means "hello," Grenz is at a good starting point for her upcoming 8-week Turkish language immersion program which runs June 18th to August 18th.

Grenz was accepted into the Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program which is a program of the United States Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. CLS offers intensive summer language institutes overseas in thirteen critical need foreign languages and the application deadline for the 2012 program was November 1, 2011. Grenz found out in January that she had made the first round of cuts. In February Grenz was told she had made the alternate list and she was informed of her full-time program status after spring break.

With thirteen options available, Grenz chose Turkish "because the Turkish program was geared to someone without any prior knowledge of the Turkish language and also because I have a cousin who lived in Turkey." Grenz willingly admits to having no Turkish language proficiency. When she was phoned to take an oral proficiency test, one that normally takes from 45 to 60 minutes, Grenz was finished in 4 minutes and 32 seconds. "I kept saying 'the only word I know is hello — mehriba. Mine must be the fastest test on record.'" During the 8-week language immersion program Grenz will be living with a host family, and while she knows nearly nothing of the Turkish language, she signed an agreement to speak no English after the first three weeks of the program.

Grenz will be staying in Ankara, Turkey and will be learning at the Tomer Institute in Ankara. Launching into this unknown territory has Grenz "excited and nervous. This trip is definitely pushing me out of my comfort zone." But this isn't the first time Grenz has travelled alone abroad. She spent the summer of 2011 in Germany. From there she toured 11 countries, with "Rome and its history as my favorite place, so far." Prior to her departure for Turkey in June, Grenz is also spending 12 days touring Croatia and Italy with the NDSU Concert Choir on their "Concerts in Cathedrals" tour.

Though her summer will be jam-packed, Grenz is excited to study abroad and notes "that I am very much about experience and taking in whatever I can. My goal is to see and experience as much as I can. It's going to be cool."

Emily Grenz began her double major in English Education and History at NDSU in 2009 and expects to graduate in Spring 2014.

EMILY GRENZ



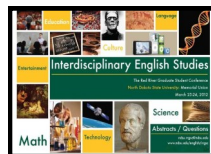
Graduate students Chris Lindgren, Steven Hammer, and Heather Steinmann presented their research at the Graduate Research and Arts Forum on April 11, 2012. Lindgren's project, "GUI Power: Computer Science and Composition's (Soft)wares and Ways Toward the WYSIWYG and Away from Processes," considers the ways commercialization of software has pushed consumers onto the surface of the computers, but away from

the expressive power of processes. Hammer and Steinmann were presenting the formation of "The Chimera Cooperative: Multimedia Happenings that Bridge the Gap Between Performer and Audience."

Dr. Gail Houston, University of New Mexico, was the keynote speaker in the 9th Annual Red River Graduate Student

Conference. The RRGSC began as an opportunity for NDSU English graduate students to organize a professional conference where they could present their research. This year's conference centered on the theme of "Interdisciplinary English Studies" and was held at NDSU March 23-24, 2012.

Associate Professor of English at the



University of North Dakota, Dr. Rebecca Weaver-Hightower, discussed her recent book project, *Frontier Fictions: Writing, Remorse and Reparation in the Settler Colony*, as well as her research methodology on April 18, 2012. Weaver-Hightower was the 2011 Summer Scholars visiting professor.

On April 23, 2012, *Northern Eclecta* authors organized a coffee house poetry reading event at Jitters Coffee House in Fargo. The evening showcase featured the authors from *Northern Eclecta 5* and authors published in the forthcoming 2012 issue *Northern Eclecta 6*, reading their own works.



Alumni in Action

Since *Wednesdays*

In our March issue, we featured poems from *Wednesdays: A Collection of Four Poets*, along with updates on two of those poets, Laura (Stowe) Gilles and Paige (Anderson) Riehle. We are happy to bring you an update on Ryan Trauman, in his own words, along with a poetic selection of his current work.

Mark Stone was unavailable for comment, but his work has appeared in *The Missouri Review*, *Red River Review*, *Lumina*, and the *Crab Creek Review*. Stone holds an MFA in writing from Sarah Lawrence College and was a winter fellow at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown.

Ryan Trauman



AFTER NDSU: I moved to Boulder, Colorado, where I completed my Master's Degree in Creative Writing from the U of Colorado. I then entered into an apprenticeship with a professional production potter in Longmont, CO for two years, after which I opened my own studio. Being a much better potter than businessman, I closed the studio after

two years. After working a few odd jobs, I moved to Kentucky where I taught full-time at Sullivan University for three years until being accepted as a University Fellow into the Rhetoric and Composition Program at the University of Louisville. I will graduate with a PhD in Fall 2012.

ABOUT WEDNESDAYS: Each of us had a voice significantly distinct from each other. We all had a different circle of friends and acquaintances in the local community. These differences helped reduce competitive threats, while allowing us to develop our senses of individuality.

About the time we'd all been giving readings around town and on campus, it just so happened that The Plains Art Museum was set to have a huge grand opening. When Jane Gudmundson contacted us to see if we'd be part of the Grand Opening festivities, clearly, we were willing. The atrium space was beautiful and perfect for a reading. We decided then, we'd try to raise enough money to put together a collection to commemorate the occasion and I know that the museum was a primary financier. The reading was a success. Almost three hundred people attended. It was packed. We sort of felt like rock stars. And the collection has served its purpose as a commemoration of that celebration and of our small group of poets. It certainly was the public pinnacle for us as a troupe.

"When I Visit" was featured in the March 2012 issue of *Pen & Ink*, and it is my favorite personal poem from the *Wednesday's* publication.

Theirs to Offer

by **Ryan Trauman** — circa 2011
For *Leanne, Daniel, and Lydia*

I used to write poems to my future wife.
At the time, I'd never met her,
(silly, I know)
and most likely I still haven't.
And I'm sitting here listening to Bob Dylan
having Visions of Johanna.
How his looking for her
turns her into something
she never was to begin with.

Some heroes get lost
making their way to us.

Even those not born. We live with them,
always here, never arriving, but with us
still. Dead parents, unborn children,
possible wives,
what we would have said.

Let's not forget, though,
the monsters left under the bed,
the end of remission, goodbyes,
and not getting to say goodbye.

These are the celestials standing
in the corner watching us sleep.
Comfort isn't theirs to offer.

Though the lucky among us,
manage to take it anyway.

PERSONAL GOALS: My creative and professional interests at the time of my graduation all pointed towards the life of a professional poet. However, the more I came to understand about my own investments in a literary career, the more I realized that I wouldn't be happy as a poet with a public audience. As far as poetry has been concerned, I'm still as active as ever, but I have only myself as an audience. My goals are to continue to cultivate my role in the national discussion on the future of digital scholarship in the humanities, as well as developing my practices as a teacher in digital writing classrooms.

BRAGGING RIGHTS: I screened a couple of short, digital video-essays at Michigan State University's Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature Film Festival. I've been a guest lecturer at various institutions, published a creative nonfiction essay in the *North Dakota Quarterly*, and I have two publications forthcoming from the *Computers and Composition Digital Press* at Ohio State University. I worked with the Center for Digital Storytelling (Denver and Berkley branches), as well as the Digital Media and Composition Institute at the Ohio State University.

Department Office: 219 Morrill Hall Michele.Sherman@ndsu.edu
Phone: 701-231-7143 Tina.Young@ndsu.edu



"like" us on Facebook: NDSU Department of English

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/NDSU-Department-of-English/189234337782759/>

The second annual Department of English Advisory Board convened Friday, May 4th. Seven Board members, including new member Heid Erdrich, provided an external perspective on three initiatives the department is considering:

1. A Digital Humanities emphasis at the graduate and perhaps undergraduate level. While all scholars are increasingly digital, DH as an emerging field would introduce students to methods of textual encoding, to digital scholarly publishing, and the possibilities of collaborative interdisciplinary projects.
2. A Creative Writing Minor that would expand undergraduate offerings in this popular area, but would do so with awareness of how creative writing can support future teachers and professional writers, in addition to being personally fulfilling.
3. A graduate professional writing certificate that would allow recent graduates, early or mid-career professionals, to take specific courses that would build skills and capacity but not require the significant time commitment that is needed for a Masters Degree.

Offering Sound Advice

Alumni thoughts on these topics are welcome, and in general, the board acknowledged that a Digital Humanities program could act as an anchor for the department on all levels, and be especially helpful in creating interdisciplinary ties.

A subgroup on the Board supported the development of a CW Minor. Using the community of local professional creative writers was discussed as a feasible path to work around staffing issues, while injecting freshness into the program.

A second subgroup looked at the value and logistics of a graduate certificate, as well as the kinds of courses that would be needed. Board members suggested that a modular approach, instead of or in addition to a course-based approach, is an option to consider. A manageable, online certificate seems likely to appeal to not only professional writers but professionals in various fields who want to improve their writing and communication skills.

The next annual advisory board meeting date is May 3, 2013.

Forms & Hollows: Poems by Heather Dubrow

Wednesday, June 13, 2012

7:30—8:30 pm

Jitters Coffee House

1414 12th Avenue North, Fargo

"These poems are the work of a true, accomplished poet—attentive, honest, and sly." — John Hildebidle

Dr. Heather Dubrow, John D. Boyd, SJ, Chair in the Poetic Imagination, of Fordham University will be reading selections of her original poems. Dubrow is the English Department's Summer Scholar, the fourth nationally recognized scholar invited to campus for one week to teach a seminar in her area of expertise. This year's summer course studies "New Approaches to Genre."

Dubrow is the author of six scholarly books and the collection of her poetry, *Forms and Hollows* (Cherry Grove), was published in February 2011. Her other publications include a co-edited collection of essays, two chapbooks of poetry, along with a forthcoming edition of *As You Like It*. Her poetry collection will be available for purchase at the program for the discount price of \$10.

