

Alumni Newsletter

Fall 2005



Department of English Language and Literature



Prof. Kevin McGuirk

Message from the Chair

Greetings,

This is the first of what we hope will be an annual or biannual newsletter sharing the activities of the faculty, students, and alumni of the Department of English Language and Literature. For those of you who graduated some time ago, you might be surprised at the many changes that have taken place in the department in the last ten years: at least fifteen new faculty members on the main campus alone, including myself, were hired. But our mission continues to be the same: we aim to educate students in the creative, critical, and professional uses of the written and designed word, in the history of literature and culture, and in the power of language—recognized since ancient times—to inform, persuade, and delight.

Our students continue to do well after graduation in amazingly diverse pursuits, and our PhDs in particular are so successful (in a very competitive and challenging marketplace) that we have trouble keeping them until they've finished their degrees: recent appointments to tenure-track jobs before degree completion include Bruce Dadey, Mark Wallin, and Valerie Creelman. Indeed, the English graduate programmes are held up by the University of Waterloo community as models of the Waterloo degree—cutting-edge expertise, grounded in theory and tradition.

Of course, what makes English at Waterloo special is the way in which the best in literary and rhetorical studies are blended in our undergraduate (as well as graduate) teaching and research. This is the first year of a new undergraduate Honours degree in Literature and Rhetoric, for example. To keep up with all our news and developments, have a look at our new website (www.english.uwaterloo.ca), designed by Professor Katherine Acheson, which details our programs. Please consider sending us your email address at engalum@watarts.uwaterloo.ca for news of departmental events.

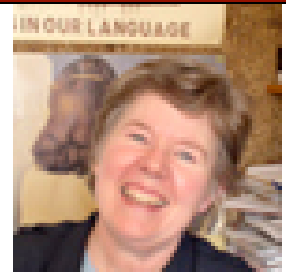
And think about coming to our alumni event this fall! We're right in the midst of planning a reading by alumni authors at the Starlight Club in Uptown Waterloo, led by University of Toronto Professor, and English Department alumnus, George Elliott Clarke, with special guest, St. Jerome's professor and fabulist, Eric McCormack (see back page). This will be an occasion to celebrate, to reconnect with friends and former professors, and to listen to some great fiction and poetry. I hope to see you there!

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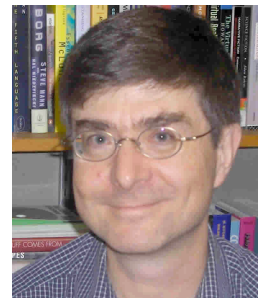
Award-Winning Research

Last May, **Catherine Schryer** was the keynote speaker at the Ontario Medical Education Network. Her talk entitled “Differing Voices: Healthcare Education Research from an Interdisciplinary Perspective,” reflected the SSHRC supported research that she and her colleagues, Dr. Lorelie Lingard (U of T) and Dr. Marlee Spafford (School of Optometry, UW), have been conducting on the genre of case presentations in healthcare education. The group has also won a second SSHRC grant to explore genres or text types that facilitate communication between health care providers.



Ted McGee is in the final year of a SSHRC Standard Research Grant (\$49,000) in support of the textual work on the New Variorum Shakespeare edition of *Othello*. Primarily for scholars, the New Variorum editions list all the variants in significant editions of a play, records the history of emendation of the text, provides a stage history, and summarizes all the criticism on the play. Also collaborating on this project are Dr. Jill Levenson (Toronto), Dr. Edward Pechter (Victoria), and Dr. Joe Porter (Duke).

Fraser Easton is in the second year of a SSHRC Standard Research Grant (\$67,000) in support of archival and rare-book research for his book on the rhetoric of sexual disguise in eighteenth-century journalistic and literary treatments of passing-women workers. A unique feature of this research is the examination of long runs of eighteenth-century newspapers and periodicals for reports of plebeian passing women. A number of UW English undergraduate alumni, including **Shannon Hartling**, **Jennifer Szwec**, and **Y-Dang Troeung** have served as graduate research assistants on the project.



New Faculty

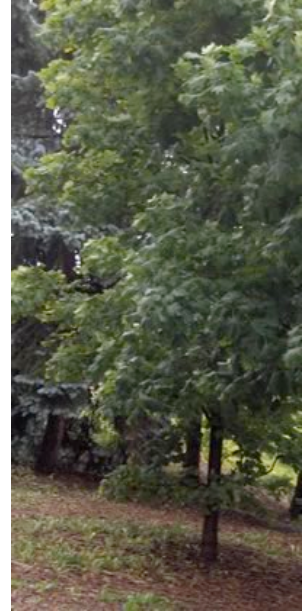
Before joining the faculty at St. Jerome's, **Norm Klassen** trained as a medievalist at the University of Oxford under the eminent Chaucerian Helen Cooper. Subsequent to his first book, *Chaucer on Love, Knowledge and Sight* (1995), he has written on aspects of medieval French literature and Peter Martyr Vermigli, as well as romance and tragedy for a forthcoming Blackwell companion to Chaucer. In connection with his cross-disciplinary interests, he has also co-authored a forthcoming introductory book on Christianity and humanism. Professor Klassen is married with three boys aged 12, 9, and 6; he enjoys coaching soccer and playing snooker, but wishes he had more time to learn how to garden better.

Ken Hirschkop took his BA from Swarthmore College in 1978, majoring in Music History and Theory. After a couple of years as an apprentice harpsichord-maker, he resumed his studies at the University of London and wrote his DPhil at Oxford in the Sub-Faculty of Russian Language and Literature. Despite this multidisciplinary past, or perhaps as a consequence of it, he ended up as a Lecturer in English at the University of Southampton (UK), later moving to a Research Fellowship at the University of Manchester. His doctoral thesis on Mikhail Bakhtin culminated in a book for Oxford University Press in 1999. His research interests then and since include the philosophy and sociology of language, the political dimensions of twentieth-century culture in Europe and North America, and the critical theory of music.

Across the Creek

First the bad news—bad for SJU, but good, we hope, for **Doug Letson** and **Danine Farquharson**. The former has retired from St. Jerome's, but is carrying on with his volunteer work in the K-W community, and the latter has taken up a position in the English Department at Memorial University of Newfoundland. These departures quickly created a need for good teachers. St. Jerome's has been able to hire a number of recent (and not-so-recent) UW grads for courses this fall. **Nadine Gingrich** is teaching a new English course and Legal Studies elective, "Legal Writing." **John Greenwood**, protégé of Professor Hibbard, has taken on the teaching of Renaissance non-dramatic prose and poetry. **Mark Spielmacher** and **Tim Pace** together are shouldering much of the load in "Communications for Mathematics and CS." **Shannon Hartling** has one of the sections of the British survey, including the literature of the eighteenth century on which she did her doctoral thesis. **Dorothy Hadfield**, who has a new book on Canadian drama coming out next year, is teaching the course on that topic. And **Pat Zettel** is again introducing students to the challenges and wonders of Old English language and literature. Happily for us, your former classmates are now at the front of our classrooms.

—Ted McGee, Chair, Dept. of English, St. Jerome's University



Department News



Other very recent faculty hires include **Tristanne Connolly**, a William Blake specialist at St. Jerome's, and **Aimée Morrison**, a rhetoric and new media specialist on the main campus (who designed this newsletter). **Jim Downey**, formerly the President of UW and a member of the English department, retired this summer after a distinguished career as a scholar and administrator. He will be awarded the honour of President Emeritus this October.

This Fall term sees the second offering of **English 301H: Honours Literary Studies**, a new course exclusively for Honours Literature students and currently taught by **Kate Lawson** and **Ted McGee**. **Murray McArthur**, whose long service as department chair concluded in June 2004, has just returned full-time to the classroom after a year's sabbatical leave. **Ken Graham** was one of the organizers of the 17th Waterloo Conference on Elizabethan Theatre, which was successfully held this past June 16th to 18th.

Recent Ph.D. defences include: **Michael Truscello**, **Faith Jones**, **Erin MacDonald**, and **Valerie Creelman**

Recent visiting speakers in English at UW have included: **Mark Poster** (September 2005), new media theorist at the University of California, Irvine; **Charles Bernstein** (2005), poet and Regan Professor of English, University of Pennsylvania; and **Katherine Barber** (2004), editor of the *Canadian Oxford English Dictionary*.

English Department Alumni Profile



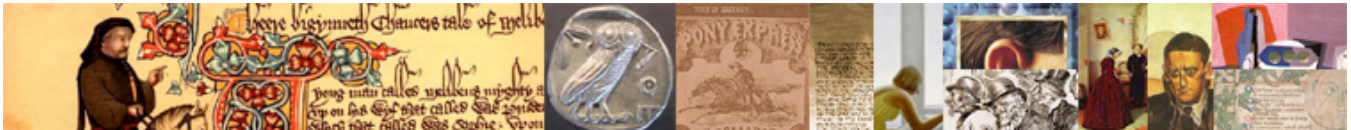
Mary Bales, English alumna

Mary Bales, Real Estate Professional and Community Benefactor

I've been asked to contribute a few words about my experiences as a UW English graduate. My university education followed a less than straight road: I pursued science and engineering at Purdue University and subsequently completed two graduate degrees in English at the University of Waterloo. After that I spent some time at the University of Toronto taking courses at the Mediaeval Institute.

A career in real estate seemed an unlikely choice but it has been a wonderful use of many aspects of my education. Studies in engineering have prepared me for understanding drawings, construction techniques, and structures in general. English in general—especially analyzing literature—helped me to become a critical thinker, especially valuable in negotiations. Writing well is also an essential part of my success! It is the foundation for preparing good advertising, sketching proposals for clients, and drafting legal documents.

My university education has enhanced my volunteer activities. I have served on several boards of directors, including the Grand River Hospital, the United Way, the YWCA, Economical Insurance, and the University of Waterloo, where I am also involved in several committees. My professional and volunteer experience led me to establish "Heartwood Place," a charitable organization committed "to creating safe, affordable and adequate housing." I strongly believe that we must place great value on encouraging people to develop their strengths and talents; decent housing and good education are essential components, both of them well worth our financial as well as personal support.



Friends, Faculty, Alumni, bring us your ears!

Come and hear alumni authors read! Meet old friends and professors!
Stay late and party to the sounds of DJ Shax-pere!

Thursday, October 20, 2005
Starlight Club, 47 King St North, Waterloo

doors open, 7 pm
readings begin, 8 pm
tickets limited: \$5 per person; max 2 per person.

Alumni and Faculty Members, please register online at <https://alumni.uwaterloo.ca/alumni/secure/author/index.html> to reserve a place.

Current students register at the English department main office, Hagey Hall 253, after October 1st.

Authors:

- **George Elliott Clarke**, author most recently of George & Rue (2004)
- **Carrie Snyder**, author of Hair Hat (2004)
- **Melanie Cameron**, author of Holding the Dark (1999) and Wake (2003)

and burgeoning young talents, **Emily Anglin**, **Colin Vincent** and more, with special guest, St Jerome's professor **Eric McCormack**, author of many acclaimed novels, among them First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women (1997) and The Dutch Wife (2002)

