

Department of English

Fall 2018 - Spring 2019

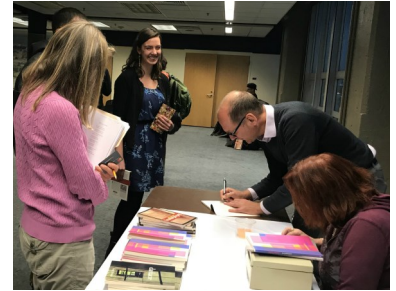
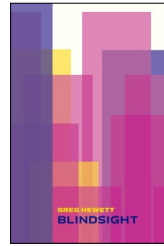
O'Brien Poetry Event Reaches 20th Anniversary Milestone



Greg Hewett

The Department of English hosted the annual O'Brien Poetry Event on October 25 featuring poet Greg Hewett. Hewett is the author of *darkacre*, *The Eros Conspiracy*, *Red Suburb*, *To Collect the Flesh*, and *Blindsight*—poetry collections that have received a Publishing Triangle Award, two Minnesota Book Award Nominations, a Lambda Book Award Nomination, and an Indie Bound Poetry Top Ten

recommendation. He is a Professor of English at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota.



Professor Hewett signing one of his books.

Faculty Lecture Series



On November 15, **Professor Michelle Menting** gave a reading from her new book of poetry, *Leaves Surface Like Skin*. In addition to poetry, her reading featured memoir and flash fiction as well.

On April 11, **Professor Sue Shon** presented "The Aesthetic Afterlives of Slavery: Racial Surveillance and American Visual Culture." She discussed how thousands of runaway slave advertisements circulated every day in colonial and antebellum America

and, while they were created to reclaim human property, they also contained rare information about self-emancipated people. This fact raises questions about the visual surveillance of black people and visual experience in general. Her talk explored these questions as a fundamentally aesthetic problem regarding modern human sensation—that is, as violence that lives on today to justify racial profiling and the policing of people who appear black, Latino, or Muslim.



Social and Professional Gathering for English Majors



Troy Bennett '99
Bangor Daily News

On April 2, the Department of English hosted a panel of experts in journalism, business, design, marketing, and education to discuss alternative careers for English majors. This event gave majors an opportunity to hear how the panelists arrived at their various career paths. A networking session followed that offered the students time to mingle with the panelists, other students, and English faculty.



L to R: James Suleiman, Eve Raimon, Bob Stein, Jennifer Keplinger, Troy Bennett
Provost Jeannine Uzzi was on hand to give the introductions.

Department of English starts Sigma Tau Delta Chapter - Alpha Psi Phi

The USM English Department has formed a chapter of the International English Honor Society, Sigma Tau Delta.

Sigma Tau Delta offers scholarships for students and publishing opportunities. They also hold an annual conference that features notable speakers such as Neil Gaiman and several US poet laureates. Along with the recognition that a member receives comes lifetime community.

Student membership in Sigma Tau Delta is by invitation only to undergraduate and graduate students currently enrolled at a college or university with an active Sigma

Tau Delta chapter. It is an outward recognition of personal accomplishment and signifies that those invited to join Sigma Tau Delta have achieved the Society's high standards of academic excellence.

We hope to have an induction ceremony every year for new members. For more information, please contact our chapter head, Dr. Shelton Waldrep, waldrep@maine.edu, or visit www.english.org.

Benefits of membership include:

- Academic Recognition
- Scholarships
- Writing Awards and Opportunities
- Internships
- Annual Convention
- Student Leadership and Community Service
- Career Advancement
- Lifetime Affiliation and Fellowship

More information can be found at <http://www.english.org/>



SIGMA TAU DELTA
INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH HONOR SOCIETY

2019 Scholarship Winners



C. Elizabeth Sawyer Scholarship - Reilly Johnson I am a transfer student to USM and began my college journey at Central Maine Community College where I obtained my Associate's degree in early childhood education in 2017. I realized I was interested in elementary education as well, so that's what brought me to USM. I am currently pursuing a Bachelor's degree in English, something I've always had an interest in, and I hope to teach first or second grade upon graduation. Without realizing it until fairly recently, I'm following in the footsteps of my grandmother, great-grandmother, and great-great-grandmother as they were all elementary school teachers in their time.

I currently commute from Auburn, where I also work part-time for TD Bank in their call center as a banking specialist and ambassador to new hires. It's important to me to be in a professional work environment while obtaining my degree because I feel the two have kept me well-rounded. Many of the things I learn at work I can apply to my studies, and vice versa.

I have enjoyed my time at USM immensely so far and look forward to the coming semesters as I'll be diving more deeply into student teaching and education courses.

CAHS Annual Dean's Scholarship - Paige Marcello As an English Major I have been given many opportunities to grow as a student and as a writer. I would like to further my education as an English Major and hopefully be able to go into Publishing/Editing in the future. This award has allowed me to continue my education in the fall of 2019 and purchase all the books/supplies needed for my classes. I'm beyond thankful to be a part of the English Department as well as thankful to have received this reward. I encourage anyone who is not a part of the English Department to take any of the English courses offered. Each and every course has been educational, as well as fascinating!



Virginia Weaver Scholarship - Sarah Rouleau When I graduated high school, I had my heart set on being a high school English teacher. I thought I could help high schoolers continue to fall in love with books in this digitally dominated world. After trial, error, and experience, I discovered I was better suited in an elementary classroom. These experiences ultimately led me to the K-8 track with a concentration in English here at USM. Because of USM and the Department of English I have had the opportunity to hone my skills as a writer, reader, and future educator. I have learned much from my professors and discovered new things which I have become passionate about. I transformed from the quiet student who didn't think to question anything into a student who asks why, with more curiosity than ever before. I am thankful for the opportunities I have been granted here and can't wait to help instill all the knowledge I have gained into my future students. A huge thank you to all the amazing professors who have helped me along the way.

Jordan Maroon Scholarship—Julien Baker | Rick W. Carbonneau Scholarship—Stephen Fasulo | CAHS Annual Scholarship—Jacob Simard

Faculty Highlights

Professor Emerita Kathleen Ashley continues to be active in her retirement:

- “Social Functions” was published in *Cultural History of Theatre: The Middle Ages*, Vol. 2 in 6-vol. series, ed. by Jody Enders (Bloomsbury, 2017, publ. 2018), pp. 39-58.
- “Psalm-Singing at Home: The Case of Etienne Mathieu, a Burgundian Protestant,” was published in *Domestic Devotions in the Early Modern World*, ed. Marco Faini and Alessia Meneghi (Brill, 2018), pp. 71-81.
- “Introduction: Claire’s Key Phrases” was published in a special issue, “Encore Performances: Papers for Claire Sponsler,” of *Philological Quarterly* 97/4 (2018): 375-87.
- She delivered a paper, “Identifying the ‘Other’ in Burgundian Towns,” at the Society for Western French Studies, Portland, ME, Nov. 2, 2018, and she was a panelist at the “Calling Sainte Foy’s Name,” a Roundtable on Names and Naming at the Medieval Congress, Kalamazoo, MI, May 9, 2019, and “Women in the Archives,” a Roundtable on Feminism in Medieval Studies in Honor of Elizabeth Robertson at the Medieval Congress, Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 12, 2019.

Professor Mike Bendzela’s experimental novella, *February*, has been accepted by Running Wild Press’s Annual Novella Anthology, publication date to be announced. His story, “Fertility,” won the Two Sisters Writing and Publishing flash fiction contest in February, 2019. A parable, “Gluttony,” was published in *Meat for Tea: The Valley Review*, Vol. 13 issue 1, of Southampton, MA. “Three Parables from Flyspeck Farm” appeared in the Summer 2018 Fiction Only issue of *The Ilanot Review*, published out of Israel.

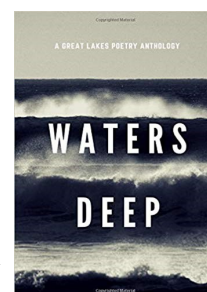
Professor Ben Bertram’s new work on the Renaissance humanist Erasmus will soon appear in the journal *Criticism*. He recently delivered papers at the Modern Language Association and the Shakespeare Association of America.

Professor Lorraine Carroll received an Osher Map Library Faculty Fellowship, which enabled her to work closely with Drs. Matthew Edney and Libby Bischof in redesigning assignments to address the OML materials.

Professor Gibson Fay-LeBlanc’s second book of poems, *Dangle Dazzle Dive*, has been selected for publication by CavanKerry Press and will appear in 2021. Gibson also recently accepted the position of Interim Executive Director at the Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance, a statewide literary organization with offices in Glickman Library.

Professor Jane Kuenz was the Faculty Marshall at this year’s commencement.

Professor Michelle Menting appeared on a panel April 13, 2019, as part of “Leaf of Voices Part II: Honoring the Teaching Poet” sponsored by the Portland Public Library and hosted by Portland’s Poet Laureate, Linda Aldrich, in celebration of National Poetry Month. She was also co-editor of *Waters Deep: A Great Lakes Poetry Anthology* published by Split Rock Review.



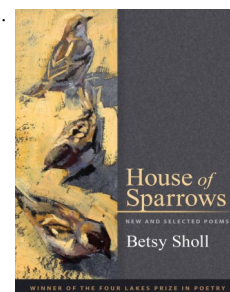
Professor Judson Merrill gave a Lightning Talk, “Fiction is the Antidote to Fake News,” at the 2nd Annual USM Research & Scholarship Symposium on March 29. On April 10, he was a guest writer at the Maine College of Arts in Portland. He also published a piece of nonfiction in USM’s own *Stonecoast Review*.

Professor John Muthyala wrote an article for the *Portland Press Herald’s* “Maine Voices” column about the four pillars of USM’s academic vision. <https://www.pressherald.com/2019/01/19/maine-voices-the-arts-and-humanities-are-pivotal-for-maines-economic-future/>

Professor Sue Nadeau was awarded a CTEL grant for her participation in the OLC Online Teaching Mastery Series.

Professor Eve Raimon delivered a paper, “Reclaiming Memory: The Struggle for Restorative Justice in the State of Maine,” on the Malaga story to the First International Gloria Anzaldúa Conference in Paris, France, in May.

Professor Betsy Sholl, former adjunct faculty and Maine Poet Laureate, has published, *House of Sparrows*, with University of Wisconsin Press.



Professor Laima Ruoginis’ essay, “On Identity and Acceptance,” was published in *Vilnius Review*. Her essay, “Bhutan, A Land of Poetry,” was published in the *Tashi Delek*, the inflight magazine of Royal Bhutan Airlines. She also participated in a panel discussion on global literature at The Beijing Spring Writers’ Festival and was a speaker at the Vilnius International Book Fair where she spoke about her novel, *Journey Into the Backwaters of the Heart*. Her work of literary nonfiction, *Journey Into the Backwaters of the Heart*, will be translated into Lithuanian and published by Alma Littera. Her book, *The Unlocked Diary: On the Brief Life of the Poet Matilda Olkin*, will be published by The Institute for Lithuanian Literature and Folklore Press. Her interview with Smithsonianmag.com about her translation of the writing of Poet Matilda Olkin appeared in October, 2018.

Professor Shelton Waldrep was interviewed on June 26, 2018, for the podcast “USM Now” on WMPG about his research and publications. <http://www.wmpg.org/podcasts/usm-now/> He was also interviewed in Paris, France, on April 16, 2019, by the French-German cultural television channel ARTE on Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. On April 24, 2019, Professor Waldrep presented the paper “Truman Capote’s Experiments in Post-Modern Reportage” at the annual meeting of the American Literature Association in Boston.

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Current Student News

Vicki Sullivan wrote a Maine Observer column for the *Portland Press Herald* about her return to the classroom: "USM Student Goes Back to the Future." <https://www.pressherald.com/2018/10/28/maine-observer-usm-student-goes-back-to-the-future/>

The following English majors earned the distinguished Outstanding Academic Achievement award from the Little East Conference: **Haley Bantz**-Women's Cross Country, **Kacey Foerster**-Women's Volleyball, and **Sarah Michaud**-Women's Soccer.

Alumni Corner



Pender Makin, '91, '08 BA English/MS Educational Leadership is the current

Commissioner of Education for the State of Maine.

Makin was named the 2013-2014 Maine Principal of the Year by the Maine Principal's Association and has also received the Milken Educator Award, a national distinction bestowed upon exceptional educators. Prior to her appointment, she served as the assistant superintendent of the Brunswick School Department.

Danielle Letourneau '13 English/

'15 Stonecoast MFA is currently working at USM at LAC. She presented a paper at the annual conference of the International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts in March, 2019. The paper, entitled "Pejorative and Polarizing Perceptions: The Fight for the Abolition of Genre Prejudice," was written during her third semester at Stonecoast MFA.



Terri Plummer '16, is the current UMS Board of Trustees Graduate Student

Representative and was recently appointed as the Director of TRIO Programs at USM.

Update from **Erik Squire '18**... I was a transfer student from SMCC, and in 2018 I finished my degree in English with a minor in Educational Studies.

In 2018, I was finishing up my work as USM's Maine Policy Scholar, researching ways policy could support literacy proficiency in Maine. In October of last year, I continued on in my work by forming a bi-city community literacy team in Saco and Biddeford consisting of educators, literacy specialists, librarians, and involved community residents. Recently we held two citywide forums, gained the invaluable input of citizens, and used this info to guide our plans for community literacy initiatives—as we are trying to support families in promoting literacy for birth-pre-K children.

As for another exciting advancement, in the spring of 2018, I applied for early decision for Teach for America and was accepted for the school year of 2019. This summer, my wife (who graduated from USM this spring) and I will be moving, with our three year old daughter, to the West Coast! Teach for America placed me in San Francisco, where I will be teaching 7th and 8th English Language Arts, at a school in the Mission District. Education is my great passion in life, and I'm very excited to have this journey underway!



If you have tips or updates about your career or personal milestones, please send them to Pam LaRiviere at harjula@maine.edu.

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