



Spring 2014



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English Department Newsletter

University of Southern Maine

Alumni News

Marguerite Birrell is a PhD student in the English program at the City University of New York, where she has a five-year fellowship. Her area of focus is Early Modern Literature with a concentration in literature's intersection with the Scientific Revolution. As a homeschooler with a GED and a few community college credits, she was an unlikely candidate for a career in academia, but at USM her life's trajectory changed dramatically. Marguerite's experience at USM

as a working student, and the example of her classmates who held jobs, raised families, even owned businesses and still came to class every week excited to talk about metonymy and metaphor, proved that skilled and gifted students came from many different backgrounds and lead many different kinds of lives. She is so grateful to USM and the English Department for teaching her that, all statistics and probabilities to the contrary, this was something she could do.

Jessica Charle is currently working towards her Masters in Film Studies at Columbia University in New York City. Jessica moved to New York in the Summer of 2013, and since then her short story, *Artificial Intelligence*, has been published in the *Columbia University Online Literary Journal*.

Jessica graduated from USM in 2010; she majored in both English and Media Studies, with a minor in Creative Writing. Before pursuing graduate school, she worked in publishing for two and a half years at New Generation Network as a Content Producer and at the Maine-based beauty online publication *Certified FABULOUS* as a publication assistant.

Jessica has found her education at USM to have been vital throughout her career in all her endeavors. The mechanics of writing, from editing and proofing to writing articles, has helped her excel in the publication industry as well as in the academic world. The creative and analytical skills gained from USM have allowed Jessica to expand and grow in her new home at Columbia.

Colleen Gilbert-The English Department became my home away from home after I transferred to USM for my final two years of college. I had had an erratic undergraduate experience up until that point, attending Oberlin College, Haverford College, and Emory University. But

none of those schools or their professors inspired, challenged, or motivated me the way the amazing English faculty did at USM. The variety of courses offered and the depth and breadth of the faculty's knowledge surpassed any other program in which I'd been involved previously. I have now accepted a full scholarship to the Master's of English program at the University of New Hampshire. USM made me a competitive candidate everywhere. All of my success I owe to the incredible professors who guided and supported me from my first day of Medieval Epic and Romance to my final class of Politics of Irish Identity.

Ezra Koch-I graduated from USM magna cum laude in 2004 with an English major, a sociology minor, and a concentration in creative writing. In the first years after my graduation I worked summers tending bar in the Hamptons, and traveled in the off season. I backpacked all through South America with groups of rowdy Aussies, trained with monks in a temple in China, and hiked through underground cities in Turkey, all the while telling myself I was gathering material for a novel.

In 2009 I moved to California. After freelancing for several papers and finding that the journalistic life just ain't what it used to be, I fell into a job building guitars for Santa Cruz Guitar Company. I enjoy lutherie, and I find that working with my hands gives me the proper headspace needed to work out the kinks in whatever story I'm currently working on. Last fall I began the MFA writing program at the University of San Francisco, where I have been working on my second book-length manuscript.

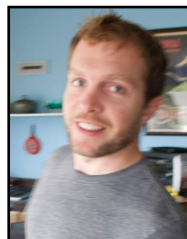
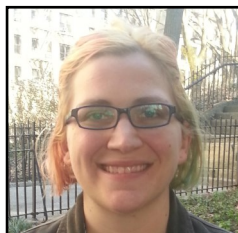
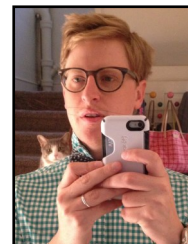
The love I've always had for reading and writing really took shape and solidified during my time at USM, and for that I am forever grateful.

Wade Linebaugh-Since graduating in 2009, Wade Linebaugh left Maine for the graduate program in English at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, PA. Having completed his MA in 2011, he is now a doctoral candidate. His dissertation looks at the ways in which literary modernism articulates disruptive models of subjectivity. The years since '09 have also been spent teaching first-year composition courses, which have afforded him the opportunity to talk and write about Rebecca West, obscenity, John Winthrop, celebrity gossip, literacy studies, and baseball. Along the way, he's found his training in the

discipline of English useful in the nonprofit sector, in professional copyediting, in business presentations, and in reciting the occasional poem for dramatic effect (at a bar). He will spend this summer (variously): working odd jobs, researching the Margaret C. Anderson papers in the Beinecke Library at Yale, spending time at the New York Public Library's Schomburg Center, and attending minor league baseball games.

Abby (Cuffey) McGuire recently graduated with a Master of Library Sciences from Emporia State University. After working in Special Collections in Glickman Library and taking one of Professor Lorraine Carroll's classes during her senior year as an English major, she realized her passion for libraries and embarked on her journey towards professional librarianship. After graduating from USM and moving to Kansas with her husband, she was accepted into an MLS program at Emporia State and finished her degree in 2013. During this time, she was also a Reader's Advisor for a regional library system in Kansas, providing library materials to rural patrons. She recently moved back to Maine, and now works at the Walker Memorial Library in Westbrook. Looking back to her experience at USM, Abigail is so happy that her English professor incorporated libraries into academic life. It was definitely the inspiration behind her aspirations to work in a library!

Stacy Normand-I graduated from the USM Department of English in 2011. After graduation, I completed a year of service with AmeriCorps VISTA, during which I implemented the skills I developed as an English major to recruit volunteers, write grants and reports, and communicate with community partners. I currently work at the Council for International Education Exchange as I prepare to enter a Master's in Social Work program at Salem State University. I am very thankful to the wonderful faculty in the English Department for providing me with a strong Humanities-based education.



Find us on Facebook! USM English Department Alumni

Student Organizations

USM POETRY CLUB

This year, USM students founded the first undergraduate Poetry Club. Students met on a weekly basis to share poetry, do hands-on writing exercises, and workshop each other's pieces. The club is gaining momentum, and grew three-fold from the Fall Semester to the Spring. Club president Martin Conte is looking forward to the future of the club and its place in the creative community of USM.

For more information:

martin.conte@maine.edu

THE ENGLISH STUDENT ASSOCIATION

The ESA is a group of like-minded individuals who form a supportive community for English majors and non-English majors alike. We enjoy gathering to discuss our literary, theatrical, artistic, and linguistic interests; and additionally like to plan fun and enlightening events that pertain to those interests. Join us to converse with a fun, stimulating, and encouraging group of people!

For more information:

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O'Brien Poetry Event

The Department of English hosted the annual O'Brien Poetry Event on Friday, November 1, 2013, featuring poet Charles Simic. Simic's first book, *What the Grass Says*, was published in 1967; since then, he has published more than 60 books internationally. He has been honored many times over, with the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry, the Notable Book of the Year by the *New York Times*, fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. He served as Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry in 2007. Simic is Emeritus Professor at the University of New Hampshire.



Simic during his reading at the O'Brien Poetry Event



Faculty Lecture Series

This academic year, four professors gave lectures in their respective fields.



In October, Professor Eve Raimon spoke on **"We're Better Than That": Memory and Recovery in New England's African American Memorials.**



In February, Professor Nancy Gish spoke on **"Traditions and Talents: Rome, Britain, and World War I."**



In November, Professor Bud McGrath spoke on **"Ireland's Latest Troubles and the Rise and Decline of the Field Day Theatre Company."**



In April, Professor Ann Dean presented **"What You Do When You Hit a Wall: A Qualitative Study of Difficulty in First-Year Writing Courses."**

Scholarship Winners



Jennifer Balser Last summer, I had the privilege of attending the Stonecoast Writers' Conference as the recipient of the Rick Carbonneau Scholarship. I was nervous because I had not been writing for very long, and I was not sure I was prepared. But there was nothing to worry about. The atmosphere is welcoming to writers of every level, from novice to published authors. You are surrounded by people who are at the same stage as you are and you encourage one another, and you meet those who have been where you are and they give you valuable insights on how to keep going. I sat under the tutelage of Susan Conley, who was brilliant, and, and I was able to spend time with the other workshop teachers as well; they are valuable resources who make you dig and push and examine, and though you may not appreciate it at the time, you discover it was well worth it. ***Carbonneau Scholarship 2013***



Melissa Bell I am truly honored and thankful to have received the Rodway Scholarship. The faculty in the English Department are extremely dedicated to their professions and very committed to their students. In the classes that I have taken thus far, each of my professors has been a brilliant lecturer and has provided phenomenal learning experience. They promote great classroom discussions, are highly knowledgeable, and are very approachable. As an English major, I truly look forward to attending every one of my classes and I know that my abilities as a critical thinker, reader, and writer are being strengthened in all facets. I am confident that my education here at USM is preparing me for the next step in my academic career as I plan on attending graduate school after receiving my bachelor's degree. Although I am not certain what path I will be taking into higher education, I could not be more satisfied with my educational experience here at USM. The monetary aspect of this award will also be a great help in funding my education in the coming year. Finally, the fact that I was considered for this award by my professors is the greatest honor I could have expected, and I am very grateful for this recognition. ***Rodway Scholarship 2014***



Martin Conte Not too long ago, I had the opportunity to sit down and chat with Virginia Weaver. She told me about her decision to retire, and her many years at USM. She could remember specific students by their names, and told me a few anecdotal stories from her career: the student who found herself answering the questions on Jeopardy, the returning student who was learning to write more engaged letters to her son, and many, many more. This dedication by the faculty to each student, on a case by case basis, is the heart of USM. I came to USM as a transfer student, and what I found in the English Department is a faculty of dedicated, engaged, invested, and innovative professors. These professors have welcomed me graciously into the university's community, and I will always be grateful to them. Maine is a state focused on place and community, and the English Department reflects that philosophy. The study of English Literature is the study of how individuals throughout history have collected and communicated their thoughts and emotions with the written language. With the help of the CAHS scholarships I have received, and the tremendous talent and care of USM's faculty, I hope to be able to do the same.

Virginia Weaver and Jandebeur Scholarships 2014



Ashleigh Hamilton Being a young mother to an eccentric toddler, my approach to education is not exactly in line with most "average" students. Understanding that much of my daughter's early life will be surrounded by and influenced by the continuation of my education, I try to include her in as much of my at-home studying, mostly the reading, as I am able. I attribute much of my academic success to the accessibility and commitment from my professors in the English department, especially Professor Ashley, and the entire Classics department, Jeannine Uzzi. I have endless gratitude for their continued encouragement to follow my academic dreams, which include attending grad school for Medieval Literature or English and Latin education.

Montgomery Scholarship 2014



Madalyn Terry I have never been a very decisive person; however, as a senior in high school, I knew undoubtedly that I wanted to attend USM. The past four years have proven that I made the right choice. I am honored to be this year's recipient of the C. Elizabeth Sawyer Scholarship. I am grateful both for the financial support and for the recognition from a group of faculty members who have been essential to my development as a student and whom I deeply respect. I'm not sure where I'll be in the next four years, but I know that my professors and the diverse community of my peers have surpassed my expectations for my experience at USM: they have extended my education beyond the walls of the classroom by teaching me how to become not only

a more avid and focused learner, but also a more attuned and thoughtful adult—to them I will always be grateful. ***Sawyer Scholarship 2013***

Student/Faculty Socials

On November 6th, students and faculty gathered together at our annual Fall Social. There was food, fun, and games (including a faculty bingo game that left some of our own professors stumped), and live music provided by current English majors.



Students Philip Shelley (left) and Jacob Lowry after their performance



Members of *Naked Shakespeare*

In similar good cheer, students and faculty came together on March 19 for the Spring Social. Students and professors mingled and participated in a workshop and performance by Portland's own *Naked Shakespeare*.

Faculty Publication and News

Professor Nancy K. Gish has been awarded the title of **Honorary Fellow of the Association of Scottish Literary Studies** given to "women and men who made a substantial and distinctive contribution to the Scottish Literary Tradition." The award was presented at a special ceremony in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Congratulations to **Professor Shelton Waldrep**, who has been awarded the Trustee Professorship for 2014-15 for his current book project, *Future Nostalgia: Performing David Bowie*, forthcoming from Bloomsbury. He presented portions of this work this past academic year at the University of Southern Maine as part of the English Department's Faculty lecture series, at the Contemporaneity Working Group at Brandeis University's Mandel Center for the Humanities, and at the 2014 International Conference on Narrative at MIT.

Professor Kathleen Ashley has recently published the following two articles:

- "Cultures of Devotion" in *Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, Ed. Judith Bennett and Ruth Karras (Oxford UP, 2013).

- "Scripts for Funeral Theater: Burgundian Testaments and the Performance of Social Identities" in *Women and Wills*, Ed. Joelle Rollo-Koster and Kathryn L. Reyerson (St. Andrews Studies in French History and Culture, 2012).

Professor Ann Dean's article "Why Linked Courses Can Succeed with Students But Fail with Institutions" will appear in the Fall 2014 issue of *WPA: Writing Program Administration*.

Professor Nancy Gish gave a paper at the Modernist Studies Conference in Brighton, England in August 2013 on David Jones and War: **David Jones's War: "Day by Day in the Waste Land"**

Professor Gerald Peters' book, *Rereading Goethe, Rethinking Culture*, was recently published as part of the new Directions in the Humanities Series, Common Ground Publications, 2014.

The following faculty were awarded Faculty Senate Research Grants for 2013-2014:

Lucinda Cole, F.C. "Bud" McGrath, Gerald Peters, Eve Raimon, and Lisa Walker

Professor John Muthyala was awarded a Faculty Senate Research Grant for 2014-2015.

The following faculty received Faculty Senate Awards for 2014: Professor Ann Dean - Teaching, Professor Shelton Waldrep - Scholarship

