

Footnotes

English Department News and Notes

A Message from Department Chair Robin Inboden

As a very busy semester dashes towards its finish, we can look back on it with a mixture of pride, relief, and exhaustion. With usual *Footnotes* editor **Ty Buckman** on a well-deserved sabbatical this semester, we're a little late in our salute to the new school year, but as always, there's much to report. You'll read about an impressive array of accomplishments and projects from this past summer and fall throughout this issue, but I want to take a moment to introduce two new faces to our department, though at this point, they've already become familiar ones.

Dr. Fitz Smith joins us as the department's expert on 20th-century British and Irish literature, and has hit the ground running with a 180 on the Jazz Age(s) that includes Fitzgerald, Woolf, silent movies, and (rumor has it) a bit of light instruction in the Charleston. Next semester, he'll take the subject to his upper-level class on Bohemians and Revolutionaries and will no doubt include his favorite literary figure, James Joyce. Dr. Smith is in one important sense not new to Wittenberg at all, having graduated as an English major (with an honors thesis on Joyce) in 1995. After bumming about Europe for a while, he completed the Ph.D. program at Washington University in St. Louis. After several successful years as a professor at California State University-Chico, Dr. Smith seized the opportunity to return "home" to Wittenberg—and are we glad he did! He and his black Lab, Sailor, have quickly become department fixtures. Welcome, Fitz!

Our other new face, Visiting Instructor **Kim Thompson**, is a medievalist currently completing her dissertation on economics and identity in medieval literature at the Ohio State University. The dissertation covers medieval genres from hagiographies to ballads. Married, with two adorable and vivacious children, Valaria and Samantha, Professor Thompson is also fluent in Spanish and active in helping the Latino community access health care. Although she is teaching only English 101 classes this fall, eager students have already filled her 180 for the spring, enticingly entitled, "Knights and Ladies and Monks, Oh My!" Welcome, Kim!

Please send news and notes to English Department Secretary Patti Birt, at pbirt@wittenberg.edu, or mail to Patti Birt, English Department, Wittenberg University, P.O. Box 720, Springfield, OH 45501.

This issue of *Footnotes* was edited by **Callon Holloway (06)** and **Dr. Inboden**

English Department Colloquium Series

The Department's fearless **Program Committee** (Dr. Jones, Chair; Dr. Incorvati, Dr. Wilkerson, and Dr. Richards) put together a truly impressive line-up of colloquia for this fall (accompanied, as usual, by great refreshments and decorations).

"Borrowed Kimonos: The Wittenberg Literary Society's Creative Writings from Japan" presented by **D'Arcy Fallon and the Wittenberg Literary Society**; Thursday, September 29 at 4:00 in Ness Auditorium

Acclaimed author and National Book Award winner **Tim O'Brien**; Monday, October 10 at 4:00 in Ness Auditorium:

"Doctors and Dope Fiends: Opiates and Authority in 19th-century Medicine" presented by **Barry Milligan**; Thursday, October 13 at 4:00 in Ness Auditorium

Poet, journalist, screenwriter, and Pushcart Prize Nominee **Richard Beban**; Thursday, October 20 at 3:50 in Hollenbeck 336

Ohio Poetry Circuit Reader **John Koethe**; Thursday, October 27 at 4:00 in Ness Auditorium

"Riding with the Bronze Horseman: Pushkin, Russian Poetry, and the Trouble with Translation" presented by **Doug Andrews**; Thursday, November 10 at 4:00 in Ness Auditorium

WittLit Goes on the Road!

The Wittenberg Literary Society (WittLit) received a grant from the Freeman Foundation in order to travel to Japan last summer to study Japanese literature and write about their experience of Japanese culture. The grant proposal was co-authored by several WittLit members and spearheaded by then-President **Melissa Barrett (05)**. Accompanying the group and leading them in the "traveling writing workshop" they were to become was Assistant Professor **D'Arcy Fallon**. In preparation for the trip, the Literary Society read the works of a number of post-World War II Japanese writers, including Yukio Mishima and Banana Yoshimoto. The group members split their time between Tokyo and Kyoto. Walking tours, visits to museums, fish markets, parks, and temples helped deepen the group's appreciation of Japanese literature and culture. The students presented their Japanese-inspired poetry in September in a special (and jam-packed) colloquium called "Borrowed Kimonos." **Sarah Leavens (06)** designed and helped produce a special 'zine of the Literary Society's selected writings for the event with an additional small grant from the Freeman Foundation and some support from the English Department.

English Department and Witt Lit Pick Pig!

Inspired by a time honored tradition, the English Department, in association with the Wittenberg Literary Society, quite literally brought home the bacon to Wittenberg on October 1, 2005, when we hosted our first-ever Pig Pickin'. The architect of this event was our very own Dr. Rick Incorvati, who was introduced to the devout practice of Pig Pickin' by his grad school English department at UNC. Let it here be said that there is far more to a Pig Pickin' than mere joyous gluttony. Dr. Incorvati and a handful of devoted students kicked off the preparations at 3 o'clock in the morning, painstakingly building the large fire and carrying the "founder of our feast" to its culinary berth. From the wee hours of the morning up to dinner time, shifts of workers manned the pig to ensure pork perfection. When it was at last ready for eating, the pig was picked clean by a crew of nimble-fingered literary types and all present proceeded to—well—pig out. The event was held at Dr. Cynthia Richard's lovely home, and in addition to eating and bonding, the revelers were treated to an array of student and faculty composed odes to the pig, and some wonderful folk music courtesy of faculty music group Stuffed Possum & Cornbread. Festivities lasted into the night, and it was unanimously agreed that this quirky event was the best thing since pre-wrapped sausage. Tradition dictates that the pig must appear mysteriously, from an unknown generous donor; equally mysterious (but giggly) donors awarded Dr. Incorvati a statue inducting him into The Order of the Pig (displayed on his desk). It seems safe to say that the department and the literary society are eagerly looking forward to next fall, and what will hopefully become our own Annual Pig Pickin'!

--Sabrina Renkar

Award-winning Author Tim O'Brien Visits Wittenberg

Even among an outstanding group of fall colloquium presenters, **Tim O'Brien**, National Book Award winner, made quite a splash when he appeared on campus October 10. Appearing at Wittenberg as part of this year's Wittenberg Series, O'Brien, in addition to speaking to the entire campus community, also visited several classes, and spoke to a smaller gathering of English faculty and students at one of our department colloquia. The focus of the talk was "the writing life" and O'Brien's own experiences as an author. It was largely a Q & A-oriented session, and O'Brien offered those in attendance a plethora of captivating insights and practical advice about the art of writing and what it is to be a writer. After the colloquium, most of the English Department faculty, as well as a handful of students, were fortunate enough to join O'Brien at President Erickson's home, where Dr. and Mrs. Erickson hosted a lovely dinner reception prior to O'Brien's university address. Overall, both the faculty and the students found O'Brien to be down-to-earth, approachable, and quietly charming. By the end of the evening, it seemed clear that most in attendance, whether they were writers themselves or not, were greatly inspired by O'Brien's visit to Wittenberg. The senior class can look forward to building on his visit by reading his 1994 novel *In the Lake of the Woods*, this year's common text for the senior written comprehensive exam.

--Sabrina Renkar

WittLit Receives Official Recognition

The Wittenberg Literary Society (WittLit) has been recognized as an official student organization by Student Senate. This year's officers are President Liz Powers '06, Vice President Bill Childers '06, and Treasurer Colleen Halley '07. Luckily, they haven't let success go to their heads, but have continued their hard-driving campaign to be the coolest group on campus, complete with pig-pickin's, Scrabble tournaments, and open mic nights. No doubt, members are lobbying even as we speak for a repeat of last year's successful gourmet grilled cheese sandwich/ poetry reading night!

Get Published!

Wittenberg is fortunate to have a number of very professional and polished publications right here on campus—and two of them are looking for *your* submissions!

Spectrum, Wittenberg's journal of undergraduate nonfiction writing in all disciplines, is looking for your submissions. They consider nonfiction writing of any length, including theses. Application forms are available in the Writing Center, and students can e-mail spectrum@wittenberg.edu with any questions. The deadline is January 23, 2006.

The Wittenberg Review of Literature and Art (Witt Review) plans on expanding a bit this year in both size and scope. They are accepting submissions of fiction, poetry, and art until Friday, January 20th. If you have any questions, feel free to e-mail Liz Powers.

Alumni Careers Day Offers Networking Opportunity

Friday, October 28, the beginning of Homecoming Weekend also marked the annual Alumni Careers Day events. This year, a number of departments, including the English Department, experimented with a new format, in which alumni with similar careers were grouped together to "mix and mingle" with interested students regardless of major. The English Department's alumni, as usual, showcased the versatility of our major. Returning English alums included: Megan McCann '93, Operations Manager, Geneva Technical Services; Keith Phipps '95, Editor, *The A/V Club*, *The Onion*; Bryce Thompson '95, Senior Information Security Analyst, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago; Anne Ford '95, Editor, Rand-McNally, and freelance writer; Johnny Pryor '99, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, Clark County; and Kelly Walters Frost '97, M.L.S. New York University.

Important Reminders for Seniors

Spring semester and senior comps are just around the corner. Members of the Class of 2006 should re-read Tim O'Brien's *In the Lake of the Woods* over winter break and prepare for the written comprehensive exam coming up on Saturday, January 21. If you have any questions about comps or English 405 (depending on whether you're an "old" or "new" major), check out the new English 405 page on the department website.

Faculty Notes

Lori Askeland was elected to the National Network Board for the Lilly Fellows Program in the Humanities and the Arts (LFP) at the national LFP meeting this fall, which she attended as Wittenberg's official representative, along with her colleague **Ty Buckman** (Sept. 28-Oct. 3). Wittenberg is one of 77 "academically strong" church-related colleges and universities of a wide variety of institutional types and religious affiliations that belong to the LFP Network, including schools from both Catholic and Protestant traditions. The Board shapes the Network's programs and policies, making decisions on institutional membership applications, grant proposals and fellowship applications.

Additionally, Dr. Askeland will be reading from her current memoir manuscript, "Grafting: A Love Story" at the Adoption and Culture International Conference in Tampa, Florida, this November 18-20, and is looking forward to her sabbatical next term. She'll be using the sabbatical to work on the memoir, revise at least one scholarly article, and to focus on integrating service learning into an Honors Seminar entitled "Orphans in History and Culture," in which she'll be using her new book, "Children and Youth in Adoption, Orphanages, and Foster Care," due out from Greenwood Press this December. (You can find it on Amazon already, if you're so inclined.)

Ty Buckman was on sabbatical this semester. During a two week research trip to the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D. C. in August, he heard someone call his name as he crossed Pennsylvania Avenue. He turned around to find a surprised **Laura Drinkwine (04)**, who had just accepted a position as a speech writer in the office of Ohio Senator George Voinovich. Over lunch, Laura explained how her work on *Paradise Lost* in Prof. Buckman's senior seminar had opened numerous doors for her in the nation's capital. The substance of the conversation was reported by Prof. Buckman and could not be independently verified.

Robert Davis gave one of three homecoming lectures on Friday, October 28 for returning Wittenberg alumni. The lecture, entitled "Angelheaded Hipsters: *Howl* at 50," commemorated the 50th anniversary of the first public reading of Allen Ginsberg's iconic Beat poem. Dr. Davis will also be featured in an article on "Excellence in Higher Education" in the December issue of *Ohio Magazine*.

Dr. **Kent Dixon** got a collection of eleven short stories and one novella off to an agent who asked to see it. Waiting. Meanwhile, it's all about contests for such collections. About half previously published, and half new work, all around the theme of *Siren Songs*.

Dr. **Mimi Dixon**, after winning the creative nonfiction award at OSU's *The Journal*, was a finalist in a fiction contest at *New Letters*. Her First Place essay is currently still available online at: http://english.osu.edu/journals/the_journal/Archives/Issue291Archive/StillDixon291Archive.htm

D'Arcy Fallon visited Oregon State University in Corvallis in August, where she presented a lecture, "Women in Communes" at the conference "Dancing on the Rim: Nations, Borderlands, and Identities." The conference was held by the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Society. While in Corvallis, she appeared at Grass Roots Books and Music bookstore for a public discussion and book signing of her memoir, *So Late, So Soon*. In Portland the same week, she appeared on K-BOO radio, discussing Christian cults. In September, she became the new faculty advisor for Wittenberg's student newspaper, *The Torch*.

Karen Hayes presented her paper "Surprised, but not by Joy: Political Comment in *Out of the Silent Planet*" at a conference on Friday, November 11. The conference, "Past Watchful Dragons: Fantasy and Faith in the Work of C. S. Lewis," was held at Belmont University in Nashville, TN, and focused on the work of not only Lewis, but also J. R. R. Tolkien; this was exciting preparation for her English 180, which deals with both of those writers. Her paper examined Lewis's attitude

toward the British Empire and compared his work to George Orwell's.

Scot Hinson is enjoying his sabbatical with his wife, Amy Korpieski, and their daughter Sylvia Blue Korson, born May 23 with quantities of soft, dark hair on her little noggin and a benign and wise look on her face. We feel sure that Dr. Hinson is withholding some of the darker moments of American gothic fiction from her bedtime story list until Sylvia is older.

Robin Inboden is headed in early December to a meeting of the national Development Committee for one of the ETS literature tests in Princeton, NJ. She will also be on medical leave from teaching during spring semester, but will continue her duties as chair and other administrative and advising duties as soon as she is able. She has carefully scheduled surgery (nothing to worry about) for after the BCS bowl in which she hopes to watch the Buckeyes play, and she looks forward to attending a conference commemorating the bicentenary of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's birth in early March in Waco, Texas. She merely laments the fact that such a fabulous conference is to be held in Waco, Texas, as opposed to, say, Boston, London, or Florence.

A couple of **Rick Incorvati's** articles have made it into print this fall, one on teaching eighteenth-century women poets and the other on an apparent depiction of homosexuality in a Walter Scott novel. He also has a book review forthcoming in the *Keats-Shelley Journal*. But his most remarkable accomplishment of the semester was certainly roasting a whole pig--all the while attempting to conceal from others the dangerously little knowledge he brought to the process. Add to that his recent purchase of a banjo and his catching of an 18" brown trout (on a fly he tied himself), and he's just about ready for his guest spot on *Hee Haw*.

Jody Rambo's poems "Thel's Lament" and "My Lovely Assistant" will appear in the *Notre Dame Review*, Summer 2006, Issue #22.

Cynthia Richards's article "Romancing the Sublime: Why Mary Wollstonecraft Fell in Love with that Cad, Gilbert Imlay" will appear in the spring issue of *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*. An interview with her appeared in a Czech media journal following her Fulbright semester in the Czech Republic. The interview focused on a course she taught there on American monsters as heroes in film and fiction.

Visiting Assistant Professor **David Savola** presented a paper at the biennial conference of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment in Eugene, Oregon last June. His paper was titled "'A Very Sinister Book': *The Sun Also Rises* as a Version of Pastoral." Dr. Savola described the conference as "like, way cool, and stuff." He also got to meet the foremost Hemingway authority in Norway.

Dr. **Carmiele Wilkerson** was keynote speaker for the annual NAACP Freedom Fund Dinner in October. Her talk was presented for the Springfield chapter of the organization.

Alumni News

English major graduate **Rebekah Cundiff (01)** will marry Wittenberg graduate Eric Bell (Physics) in August 2006. She is also scheduled to complete law school in the spring of 2006. For those interested, check out ericlovesrebekah.com.

Dan Stroeh (01) has had his award-winning play *it is no desert* published in *Kennedy Center Presents: Award-Winning Plays from the American College Theater Festival*. The collection, with a foreword by writer/director Neil LaBute, is published by Watson-Guptill Publishers.

Anitra Walden (04) was preparing for a successful second year at Tulane Law School when she, her fiancé, and their two kittens had to evacuate ahead of Hurricane Katrina. After her initial shock and devastation, Anitra has made the move to the University of Cincinnati College of Law and looks forward to a wonderful summer job with one of Cincinnati's top firms.