ENGLISH MATTERS - SPRING 2015

TO GROW AND FLOURISH

If you are in a conversation with Brian Reed, the new Chair of the English Department, many things can happen. He’s likely to ask you what you are up to—and start listening, which he does well. He has been listening to our students: “We in the English Department are helping them to develop the communication skills that they will need to be successful in the twenty-first-century workplace, and we are teaching them to think bigger, about the values and goals and experiences that make for a life...

NOTED BY THE CHAIR

In Fall 2014, I became the new Chair of the UW English Department. I am humbled and honored by this opportunity to work with my faculty colleagues and the department’s staff to create and sustain an inclusive, rewarding community where students from all backgrounds can learn, grow, and thrive. I first came to the University of Washington back in September, 2000, and I am a little in awe—and a lot proud—whenever I stop and remember that this is my fifteenth year teaching at a globally ranked and...

TEN TAKES ON AUSTEN’S WORLD

How much can one learn about Jane Austen in five-minute tidbits? Quite a lot, as guests discovered at a February 19 event hosted by the UW Department of English. The event, at ACT Theater, featured ten Jane Austen aficionados discussing the author’s long-standing influence for five minutes each. The evening’s strict format of five minutes and 20 slides for each presenter is based on the Japanese PechaKucha, a presentation style developed in 2003. By exploring many facets of Jane Austen through...

ENGLISH MAJOR AT UW AMONG THE TOP-RANKED IN THE NATION

Citing especially our focus on interpreting literary texts “while analyzing theoretical problems in relation to the societal, historical and political context of the writing,” USA Today named UW’s English major #3 in a list of the 10 top English programs in the US, ahead of those at Harvard (#4) and Yale (#8). The top two spots went to East Coast schools, Georgetown and the University of Pennsylvania. The story also noted our students’ “excellent analytic, research and writing skills.” The...

EMERGING DIRECTIONS AND CONTINUING TRADITIONS IN THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
English departments are eclectic places these days. As a faculty, our scholarship and teaching center on reading and writing a wide variety of texts. Our investigations contribute to deeper understandings of literary and cultural texts, to the writing of fiction and poetry, and to knowing more about how language and rhetoric work in settings in and out of the academy. This year the newsletter editors asked faculty who wish to contribute to write a little about their own sense of the directions... Read more

**REIMAGINING THE HUMANITIES PHD**

Simpson Center receives grant to build bridges between UW scholars and two-year colleges. What does it mean to do socially relevant English scholarship in a time of rising inequality? How can scholars find new non-traditional forms to reach beyond the academy? What does a successful teaching career look like when nearly half of all undergraduates attend two-year colleges? What do English students and faculty at the University of Washington and two-year colleges have to gain by working together... Read more

**HELPING SOLDIERS TELL THEIR STORY AND DEFEND THEIR VOICE**

In the early 70s when I first started teaching, young Vietnam veterans were just starting to come back to college and were enrolling in my English classes. We were the same age—midtwenties. I wasn't drafted because I had a high lottery number. When they came back, I wanted to know their story, particularly the Asian American soldier sent to fight an Asian war. I interviewed and recorded the oral histories of many veterans and though we were peers, I always felt that there was a huge gulf... Read more

**CAREGIFTED: IN THE END, IT'S ALL WORTH IT**

"I am a professional imaginer!– and yet even I couldn't imagine what caregivers do for their special-needs family members every day." Poet Heather McHugh used her 2009 MacArthur "Genius" award to launch a non-profit that provides week-long getaways to people who have spent a decade or more doing full-time care for a family member. After a decade of heavy-duty care (diapering, laundering, cooking, feeding, lifting, toileting, getting relatives to hospitals and therapies, repairing what's... Read more

**RETIREMENTS - TOM LOCKWOOD**

Tom Lockwood joined the English Department in Fall Quarter of 1967; he will retire after Winter Quarter of 2015. During his almost forty-eight years in the Department, he has excelled in all three faculty activities: teaching, research, and service. He has also accumulated one of the biggest retirement funds in the history
of academia. Tom and I taught together in the Department's Literary London Program in Spring Quarter of 2001. I attended all his classes and the plays his students watched,... Read more

RETIREMENTS - HEATHER MCHUGH

The experience of reading one of Heather McHugh's poems is a lot like that of talking to her. Whether on the page or at the tip of her tongue, there is that rush of the high-wire performance at the level of language, puns layered with wit and wordplay, the quirkiness and quickness so characteristic of her mind at work. At the core of these word-rich acts is not only Heather's seemingly stratospheric intelligence, but her equally powerful generosity of spirit. As her colleague, I know I felt... Read more

RETIREMENTS - MÍŒÁL VAUGHAN

Our wild Irish lad, MiŒáel Vaughan, is retiring after 42 years at the University. Born in Dublin, raised on the estate of the President of Ireland for whom his father worked, he grew up playing in what felt to him at the time like the world's biggest, safest back yard. MiŒáel still considers his father's home village of Lahinch on the beautiful coast of county Clare his spiritual home. Like many Irish boys, he considered becoming a priest, but decided eventually that literature was his true... Read more

FACULTY NOTES

Linda Bierds' new book, Roget's Illusion (Marian Wood/ Putnam, 2014) was one of ten nominees for the National Book Award for Poetry; work from the book was included in BestAmerican Poetry, 2014 (Scribner's). David Bosworth was promoted to full professor. His new book The Demise of Virtue in Virtual America: The Moral Origins of the Great Recession was published by Wipf and Stock, August, 2014. After her arrival at Washington as an assistant professor, ... Read more

GRADUATE STUDENT NOTES


ALUMNI NOTES
Jenni Baldwin (BA ’04) is in her second year of teaching English at the Upper School at The Overlake School. She was voted Best Teacher of Redmond by the Redmond Reporter and was a four-time finalist in the 2014 Microsoft Office Mix Lessons for Life Contest. Melinda Lueth Bargreen (BA ’68, MA ’69) is the author of a new book on Seattle Opera's history: 50 Years of Seattle Opera, published in August, 2014, by Marquand Press. Her doctorate in English was from the... Read more

52ND ANNUAL THEODORE ROETHKE MEMORIAL POETRY READING

ENGLISH MATTERS MOVES TO DIGITAL ONLY IN 2016

This will be our last print edition of English Matters. Because the English department would like to make our newsletter available in a more sustainable and environmentally friendly format, we will publish it electronically from now on. If you would like to continue receiving English Matters, please e-mail jworm@uw.edu to update your e-mail contact information. We will not use your e-mail address for purposes beyond distributing English Matters.

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