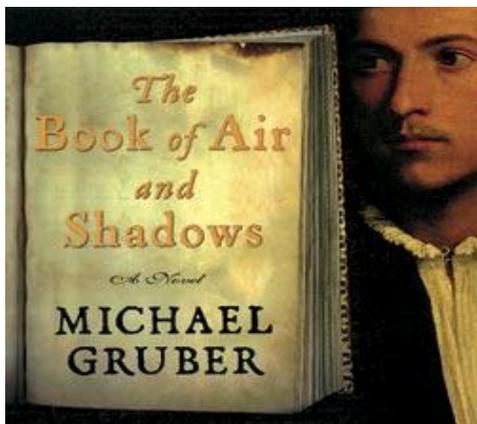


The Bibliophile

English and Communication Department @ La Sierra University Winter 2011



Curl Up With a Good Book . . .

Originally, this column was meant to suggest good reads for the summer; however, we've missed that deadline. Now, if you are thinking of curling up in front of the fireplace with a good book, please consider these recommendations from the faculty.

Lora Geriguis – *The Book of Air and Shadows* (Michael Gruber)

"A fire destroys a New York City rare bookstore—and reveals clues to a treasure worth killing for" (back cover). Michael Gruber's novel is an engrossing thrill ride for the book lover—even more so for the confirmed book nerd. Who knew textual studies and bibliographic research could be so exciting...and dangerous? While pursuing the possible discovery of an unimaginably important and incalculably valuable, previously unknown text by the world's most famous author (take a guess), our hero must fight off death threats from the mob and the irresistible advances of a beautiful rare document thief. If you have suffered through the "Methods and Materials of Literary Studies" course, this book is your reward.

Christine Law – *Outliers* (Malcolm Gladwell)

Gladwell presents an intriguing theory behind what makes pro hockey players, Bill Gates, and Jewish lawyers in New York successful outliers. It made me think twice about whether Grandpa Law's rice paddy farming had anything to do with my success or failure in calculus. We are all impacted by the decisions of those before us and around us. Gladwell's explanation of why is most provocative.

Sam McBride – *Gravity's Rainbow* (Thomas Pynchon)

Why?

1. It is a 'classic' of postmodern literature (and therefore a contradiction in terms).
2. It will take all summer to read.
3. You can be the only person in your circle of friends who has actually read it.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 Novelist Amy Shearn Visits LSU
Tornadoes, Wakeboarding, Scrambled Eggs,
and a Cat Named Mocha
- 3 Gallagher Lectures on Thomas Hardy
- 4 The Writer's Workshop
Donald Davenport Honored as CAS Alumnus
- 6 *Good Heart*; Writing a Play about the City Bus
- 7 Two Students Channel Walt Whitman
Living Poetry in Prague
- 8 Graduate Students at National Conferences
- 9 Passions and Pursuits: Department Faculty
- 11 Alumni Notes
- 12 Alumna Publishes Important Scholarship
Humanities Conference Held on Campus
- 14 LSU Speech and Debate Team Excels
- 15 News from Sigma Tau Delta
- 16 Transitions: From LSU to U of L
- 17 Solusi Skies
- 18 Dollars for Scholars
- 19 Writing Center News
- 20 CWI Orientation & College Writing Instructors
- 22 LSU Drama 2008-09
- 24 LSU Drama 2009-10
- 26 Dark Ages to the Renaissance: Drama at LSU

Sari Fordham – *Gilead* (Marilynne Robinson)

Gilead is the most compelling book I read this year. The narrator, a country minister in Iowa, is writing a letter to his young child. In that letter, we encounter small human dramas (a friend's wayward son) and large ones (abolitionism). The story is anchored by three generations of ministers: the narrator, his father, and his grandfather. They are men of flint: good and honest and complex, and their relationships are a struggle. Robinson is one of America's finest contemporary writers, and *Gilead* is a literary triumph. It's also a fantastically readable novel.

Marilynn Loveless - *Shakespeare's Wife* (Germaine Greer)

Referring to the theories in her book as "daring" and "heresy," Germaine Greer nevertheless offers nothing new by way of evidence to support these theories. However, her scholarly and engaging writing, along with her ambition to demarginalize said Mrs. Shakespeare--a worthy endeavor (even if it's already been done), makes for worthwhile reading.

Melissa Brotton – *A Three Dog Life* (Abigail Thomas)

This is an inspirational story filled with courageous insight, witty humor, and raw honesty. In her memoir, Thomas finds surprising relief in taking care of three dogs after her husband's accident and the resulting brain injury that transformed their relationship. Thomas doesn't skirt around the hard questions and each chapter deals with various aspects of long-term grief. The main message is tender and courageous—hang onto love as long as you can, and roll with life's hardest punches, even while you continue to share in the fullness of life. Compellingly personal, Thomas stacks up the bare-bone essentials of life in the aftermath of the incident that changed her life forever. *A Three Dog Life* teaches deliverance from despair, as it invites the reader into the author's inner chambers and promises that life can be revived after great heartache.

Winona Howe – *The Balkan Trilogy* (Olivia Manning)

As always, I considered several candidates for this recommendation but have decided to go with Manning's trilogy: *The Great Fortune*, *The Spoilt City* and *Friends and Heroes*.

Manning's prose is poetic and lushly beautiful, her portrait of the citizens of Bucharest and Athens, and how they are impacted by the inevitable approach of war, is poignant, and her examination of the marriage

of Harriet and Guy Pringle (the main characters), is both intriguing and disheartening. Comprising half of the World War II epic, *The Fortunes of War*, Manning's Balkan books are complex and thought-provoking. The fact that the books closely (but how closely?) reflect the personal experiences of the author and her husband invites speculation (and more research). And finally, Manning has included interesting individuals in secondary roles—in particular, Prince Yakimov who is one of the great characters in 20th century British fiction. ■

Novelist Amy Shearn Visits La Sierra University

Sari Fordham

What's it like writing a book? How do you get an agent? Do you worry about your characters? These are some of the many questions La Sierra students were able to ask Amy Shearn author of *How Far is the Ocean From Here*.

On February 3, Amy Shearn and her family escaped a New York City winter for the California sun at La Sierra University. She spent the morning visiting with the Long Project class and talked about what it was like writing her long project. She was warm and funny and interested in what each student was working on. She met with more students at lunch, and in the evening, she gave a reading.

About the event, Amy Shearn later wrote: "That was so fun. Thank you for inviting me, and for being so accommodating of my whole family. Please extend my thanks to your colleagues and class—they were all great." ■

Tornadoes, Wakeboarding, Scrambled Eggs, and a Cat Named Mocha

Sari Fordham

"What do you want to get out of this class?" I asked students the first day of Writing for Publication. Each student gave some variation of the "right" answer—*I want to improve my writing*—but no one mentioned getting published or even being a writer.

"What about money?" I asked. "Anyone here to get rich? John Grisham can make 25 million in a year." I was kidding, sort of, and they politely laughed. But I was also not kidding. I wanted the students to know they *could* sell their stories. Everyone has a story to tell, a compelling one. It's just a matter of knowing your audience, focusing on a single point, and, of course, writing brilliantly.

I passed out a booklet of publication guidelines and invited students to pick up sample magazines. Adventist publications (such as *Insight Magazine*, *Spectrum*, *Our Little Friend*, etc.) had generously donated stacks of current issues. "By the end of the quarter, you'll each submit three stories," I said.

We began by analyzing target magazines: *Who is the audience? What types of stories have been published? What types of stories would the editors like more of?* Students read on-line interviews and even e-mailed editors. Next, we workshopped drafts. Discussions were lively. The class took each effort seriously and supported each other's narratives. They also gave insightful feedback. *Was the language really right for four-year olds? Did the hook reflect the narrative conflict? What about a title?* For titles, students favored concrete words: Tornado, Wakeboarding, Scrambled Eggs, Mocha. I was impressed. "You guys should write my titles."

At the end of the quarter, they e-mailed editors their submissions, CCing me. It was a scary time. "But I'd like to revise more," students said.

"But the deadline cometh," I said.

In class, I gave a pep talk: "A writer is someone who writes and submits. Publication is fickle; don't worry about it. A writer must persevere." I told my rejection stories. "The point is submitting."

Two days later, a few students had already gotten acceptance e-mails. Over the next several months, more and more acceptances arrived. Of course, not every piece was taken. But from my vantage point, each piece was a success. The stories were not simply homework assignments; they represented the efforts of working writers.

Writing For Publication class - Publications

Adrian James

Spectrum Magazine, Summer 2008
"Uphill, Downhill, and the Wretched of the Earth"

Mike Tyler

Spectrum Magazine, Fall 2008
"In the Footsteps of the Stahls: Thoughts on Adventism"

Megan McDonough

Insight Magazine, March 28, 2009
"Standing Up to Fear"

Our Little Friend, April 18, 2009
"Bubbles"

Rebecca Renee Hess

Our Little Friend, January 10, 2009
"Lonely Lola"

Insight Magazine, April 24, 2009
"The Empty Schoolhouse"

Brittany Pick

Our Little Friend, February 21, 2009
"Jacob and the Dark"

Insight Magazine Online
"Dark Canyon"

Blake Gorth

Insight Magazine, April 11, 2009
"Fired Up"

Jonathan Stefanovic

Our Little Friend, August 22, 2009
"A New Friend"

Primary Treasure, March 14, 2009
"Saving Mocha"

Kassy Skortez

Adventist Today, Website
"The Church is Not My Haven"

LaTasha Ellis

Guide Magazine, April 2009
"LaTasha's 'Easy' Medal"

Guide Magazine, May 2009
"Attacking Asia"

Sumbal Shaffi

Insight Magazine, May 30, 2009
"My Two Blessings" ■

Gallagher Lectures on Thomas Hardy

Melissa Brotton

I was delighted to have Dr. Jonathan Gallagher as a guest lecturer in my Nineteenth Century Literature Survey course during Winter quarter. While Gallagher's academic background is in theology, his British ethnicity along with his special interest in the subjects of linguistics and literature make him an excellent candidate to speak on his favorite, late-Victorian writer, Thomas Hardy.

A native of Hardy's Dorsetshire, Gallagher led a riveting discussion of Hardy as a poet who has had a great personal influence on his life. Hardy's poetry contains motifs of melancholy embedded in natural metaphors.

As a poet, he was influenced by the Romantic movement in terms of his interest in nature and the supernatural.

Gallagher framed Hardy's poetry in the British tradition, noting parallels between his own experiences and Hardy's, showing us the various places of importance to Hardy on a map of Britain, and bringing British culture to life for us with his sense of humor and his accent. He sees Hardy's poetry as primarily concerned with the human response to suffering, themes that are addressed at various interpretive levels in the linguistic choices Hardy makes as he writes about subjects of loss and grief as he does, for example, in "Neutral Tones."

Gallagher referred to the more subtle aspects of Hardy's poems, using his own native understanding of British domestic dynamics, such as how meaning is manifested through dialogue between British husbands and wives, who are typically more reserved and less direct in emotional expression than are their American counterparts.

Gallagher was even able to bring in his knowledge as a long-time bird watcher in his discussion of "The Darkling Thrush." His contribution to my class was an enriching approach to the writings of a British author with whom he shares a native culture and a natural love for the English language. ■

The Writer's Workshop

Brittany Pick

I've been a closet writer for most of my life, but putting ideas on paper is, while therapeutic, also stressful. It's one thing to have a face-to-face conversation with a mentor or even a peer. Allowing a wide audience to experience the inner caverns of your imagination is a whole other story, especially when you aren't around to justify why you decided to kill off the main character in the surprise ending.

The Writer's workshop has peeled open my insecurities about sharing my writing. I've taken several workshoping classes at La Sierra University, such as Writing for Publication, and Short Story Writing. The class reads, analyzes, and spends time discussing what is working for the piece and what could be changed to make it stronger. *What is the piece about? Are there any underlying themes? What grabbed your attention, and which parts brought yawns midway down the page?*

To ensure the sensitive privacy of the students, each piece is handled with care and confidentiality. "Writing

workshops are a fabulous bouncing board that is created by students critically and respectfully reading each others' work," states Kassy Skoretz, a fellow workshopper. "The different view points created expose weaknesses and strengths in the stories that might have gone unnoticed otherwise. Plus, it's really fun to read others students' work and see them as artists that grow."

My classmates are able to detect errors and inconsistencies that even I miss when I have reread my piece. It's gratifying to listen to peers understand unspoken implications and get invested in your characters enough to complain when they die. Plot holes are filled in. New characters arrive. Old characters stopping at a fork in the road decide to go left instead of right. With the help of the workshop, new possibilities arise and the piece evolves into something deeper and more meaningful. ■

Donald Davenport Honored as CAS Alumnus of the Year for 2009

Don Davenport, who holds two degrees from this institution—BA in English (Magna cum laude – 1975 and MA in English 1977)—was selected as Alumnus of the year for the College of Arts and Sciences, based on his accomplishments and his demonstrated commitment to La Sierra University.

The nominating departmental letter stated, "This is an English graduate who has fully utilized his creativity, background in the classics, and English literature knowledge to make a living as a writer," and went on to cite his published manuscripts, his award-winning television scripts, and his role in bringing inspirational stories to the screen.

Davenport has maintained close ties with the Department of English and Communication, reading his work, making presentations to the campus and community, and talking informally to students about the craft of writing and how to break into the world of publishing. The letter concluded, "He is a good ambassador for our discipline and a wonderful representative of the best of our graduates."

Davenport accepted the award at the annual Alumni Homecoming Dinner. The following day, the department sponsored a screening of the Hallmark TV movie, *Expecting a Miracle*. At the conclusion of the screening, Davenport answered questions from the audience that covered a wide range of topics related both to the movie itself and, more generally, to working in Hollywood.

The following interview about *Expecting a Miracle* was originally published by Spectrum.

La Sierra English professor Robert Dunn interviews his former student, Don Davenport, who wrote the screenplay for Hallmark Channel feature *Expecting a Miracle*.

Question: Don, you were my student a number of years ago at what is now La Sierra University. Your success gladdens my heart. So far as I am aware, you were the first to write a novel in lieu of a thesis for a Master's degree in English. Then you began writing in earnest with *Faith for Today*. Later you went independent. A few years ago you produced a novel in cooperation with singer Kenny Rogers. I am delighted that you are willing to sit down for an interview with me on your present work as a writer for television. On Saturday night, January 10, the Hallmark Channel screened a premier of *Expecting a Miracle*, based on the novel *The Miracle of Dommatina* by Ira Avery. You wrote the screenplay for it. What did you see as the novel's intent and to what extent did you seek to bring that out in your television adaptation?

Answer: The book was really about how easy it is for couples to become worn down by the demands of modern life - almost to the point where they become emotionally anesthetized. Sometimes the best way to re-discover what you love about someone is to be forced to strip away all non-essentials. For Pete and Donna Stanhope, getting stranded in a primitive - albeit charming - Mexican town was the beginning of that re-discovery.

Question: The Mexican priest who presides over the annual fiesta depicted fascinates me. Did you do any research on clergy or religious festivals in Mexico?

Answer: To tell you the truth, the book was set in Tuscany in the early 1970s. When the Executive Producer told me that Hallmark wanted to move the setting to Mexico, I was initially concerned that the story might not translate. But then almost immediately got a picture of Chimayo, a very small New Mexico village about a 45-minute drive north of Santa Fe. Called the Lourdes of the West, it has a small church whose dirt is claimed to have miraculous healing powers. There is an anteroom filled with crutches from the people who have been healed. This was a place where the possibility of a miracle was very real and very palpable. So Chimayo became the new inspiration for the setting in the film.

Question: Much of the film is set in a small Mexican village and involves the desire of a young boy to walk normally and the desire of an

American couple to have a child of their own. The problem of the couple is solved when they eventually agree to adopt. But the crippled Mexican child gains the ability to walk in an accident. Do you know whether anyone has regained the ability to walk in such a way?

Answer: No, not personally. But that's a little of the question we're left with, and one that our characters - in their attempt to be rational - try to resolve. If the boy was simply suffering from a spinal injury — a compressed disc or slipped vertebra or similar — it certainly is possible that his condition could be "cured" by a similar trauma that set things right. A good chiropractor does that on a lesser scale dozens of times every day. Then, again, maybe it really was a miracle.

Question: You told me that Hallmark or the director made a number of changes to your script. To what extent do you regard these changes as contributing to the success of the film?

Answer: The script was pretty well shot as written. The director, Steve Gomer, did a really wonderful job and, when I saw the original cut of the film (the one he supervised), I was very pleased. The emotional beats hit in all the right places, and I really couldn't have asked for a better directorial interpretation of the script. It was obvious he got the material, understood the relationships and had a genuine feeling for the story. Unfortunately, it's not the writer or the director who has the final decision. Hallmark made additional changes and that was the version that aired. Now Hallmark is very successful at what it does. The channel is very clear on who its audience is and what ground its productions need to cover to serve that audience. So Hallmark cut several scenes, including scenes where we see Donna and Pete begin to build their emotional walls, virtually brick by brick. There were scenes where the growing trouble at home begins to affect work performance, and a scene where it becomes painfully obvious that the relationship has stalled. I truly felt we needed to go there in order to sense the hopeless feeling that comes from being stuck. But Hallmark clearly did not agree. My guess is that somehow it all got a little too dark for Hallmark and the channel opted to connect the emotional dots in a more linear way. That is certainly the company's prerogative - although it produced a somewhat less nuanced film, in my opinion. I take great solace in the fact that I am doubtless the first and only film writer who has ever felt that some of the best stuff was left on the editing room floor.

Question: How did you get the assignment to do this project?

Answer: A producer friend who felt this would make a great Hallmark movie gave me the book. The production company agreed, but when it came to trying to acquire the rights, things became complicated. The author had died, and it became very difficult sorting out various legal and financial issues with his widow. That was why it took a little over eight years to get this film made, and several times I truly believed it would never be made at all. But one does get points for tenacity in this business.

Question: What other significant television projects have you worked on before, including what you did for the Adventist Media Center?

Answer: I kind of cut my teeth writing *Faith for Today* "Westbrook Hospital" episodes and also had the opportunity to do some directing there as well. During that time we also produced a TV movie-esque project called "Lesson in Loving," which I also wrote. It was an ambitious project, and in retrospect one not particularly well thought out. We were operating a little in the "if we build it, they will come" mode. The whole experience was kind of sweetly naive, although extremely well intentioned. It was a great learning experience for me.

Question: I understand you are scheduled to do another script for Hallmark called "Love Finds A Home," based on the book by Janette Oke. This will air on May 10. How are you preparing for this assignment?

Answer: The film has been shot and edited, although I haven't seen it. It was actually quite an honor to be asked to work on a Janette Oke project. She is a well-loved, best-selling author, and films based on her books have done extremely well. In fact, "Love Comes Softly" is still the most successful film the Hallmark Channel has ever produced and has sold thousands and thousands — if not millions — of DVDs. It was also a personal thrill for me to have Patty Duke in the cast. Any time you have an Oscar-winning actress spouting lines you've written, it's a great feeling.

Question: Are you planning other projects you care to mention?

Answer: *Christmas in Canaan*, the novel I co-wrote with singer Kenny Rogers, is scheduled to go into production this spring for Christmas 2009. I have already done the screenplay version and we have a wonderful director, David Paymer, attached (another Oscar-nominee). Then, there is a little feature film

project titled "Calliope's Spell" that involves some of my experiences working with the members of the Cousteau Society. It has gotten some very good reads, and I'm hoping to nudge it along. ■

***Good Heart*—Writing a Play about the City Bus**

Patrick Garrett York

The city bus is filled with characters. The daily high school drama in the afternoons makes *The Hills* look like *Sesame Street*. No episode of *Golden Girls* could epitomize the grandmas' trips for morning grocery rides, talking about geriatric drama that trumps even that of the high schoolers.

The homeless, the suit-and-tied, the mothers with more children than seats on the bus: every day was a kaleidoscope of personality. I experienced this because of La Sierra. The Honors program at the university requires students to establish a community outreach project *and* complete a scholarship project. For our community outreach, a friend and I encouraged students to ride the bus to increase support for public transportation.

For my pre-med classmates, the scholarship project is research-based with a title resembling the active ingredients list on the back of a bottle of medication, but I am an English major and I was going to write a play. I combined bus riding with playwriting, and all I had to do was listen. I collected conversations and characters, but I had no story and no character development. I thought a little fiction could make my story real.

One character in particular kept walking through the bus in my imagination: a young, disgruntled man in a suit with a briefcase. His name was Nat Greenfield and he was a paralegal who failed the bar twice and got his license revoked by the state for getting two DUIs. He was forced to ride the bus to work. He hated it and everyone onboard because they were *those people*. Yet, every time *those* high schoolers, or *those* old women, or the mother with *those* many kids would get on board, he tolerated them more.

I wanted to represent more people in the play: Charles, a working man with mental illnesses, the bus driver, who (though unnamed) was the guardian of the play, and Penny, my charming young dream woman (ironically, my director cast my girlfriend for the part during production).

Gram, a homeless man with an affinity for the Beatles and for conversation, gave the play its title. I met him. On my way up town, he got on board, but couldn't pay for his ticket. The driver let him ride anyway.

He sat next to me and we talked about trains and music and heat. Half an hour passed and, on his way out the door, he turned and told the driver he wasn't feeling well. She told him to see a doctor. "I already did," he said. "It's my heart." The doctor had given him only a few weeks to live. "I told her that I was born with a good heart, but I couldn't make her change her mind," he said. With no one else to tell, he read his eulogy to a bus driver. Though society was telling him he was a bum and the doctor told him he was terminal, he knew otherwise.

"I know I've got a good heart." ■

Two Students Channel (and Update) Walt Whitman . . .

Rebecca Barcelo

The early sun peeking over the horizon,
embracing the silhouettes of the palms,
streaming through the dirty glass,
falling on the reluctant eyelids
that shield the weary beneath.

The morning duties that await—
a mop stands here, a breakfast pan sizzles,
the grass flies, the machines roar.
Open are the books heavy with
future careers, above them some eager
and some not.

The inching clock, restless zippers,
a swarm heading out the door.
I brush off the green clippings
clinging wet to my Converse,
smiling at faces, avoiding eyes,
beautiful eyes whose gaze I seek,
parting lovers in my path
plucked apart by academia,
only to reunite in three quarters
of an hour.

Patrick York

When all my debts are paid

When all my debts are paid, I'll be a free man
When all my debts are paid, I'll take leave, grieve for
all the passages

Which I missed. I passed over, and over forsook my
lover
My roots stained to the earth-center, in my voice,
lost and never returned
Because my debts consumed me, and ruined me
They reminded me of slavery.
Not on the wrong side of a whip.
But my hands are chained by invisibility
Modern society runs on gears underground

I cannot fight my master, my dead president master
Franklin and Washington never under their own volition
would have enslaved me

But now, reborn, in the greasy hands of the men who
bought the sun, make it run
At other's expense. But they don't see it from 30,000
feet in the atmosphere

Oh, sky, shake them out!
How long will you let them nest above us?

I met one of the sky-men once and he told me
everything was alright.
He put his hand on my shoulder, he walked me through
the end of the world and
He never looked in my direction

He stands at a pulpit with a seal and a
microphone
The death toll and the weapons a wartime
clone
I swear it and I guarantee it and I live by it
Looking for young men to throw in the lions' pit

It fuels our cars and it hides our scars and it fills our
skies so we can see stars
Maybe we can learn to be interested in each other
again...but don't ask me. I don't know the day or time.

■

Living Poetry in Prague

Patrick Garrett York

I spent a month in Prague this summer, studying poetry
and screenwriting at Charles University under Dr.
James Ragan, the former director of Dramatic Writing at
USC. Dr. Ragan is a renowned poet, who often tours to
promote his books of verse, the most recent of which is
Too Long a Solitude. I met Dr. Ragan when he came to
La Sierra to read from this collection.

I was invited to a dinner in his honor preceding the
reading and I filled his car radiator with water afterward.
(Some hack of a mechanic had told him to keep his AC
on if the engine was overheating.) As I filled the
radiator, I asked him for advice from a successful writer
and professor: two titles that I hope I can one day claim.
"You're doing what you need to do," he reassured me.
After he pulled past the La Sierra front gate, radiator
full, I regretted not having asked more.

Dr. Wilson later mentioned something about Dr.
Ragan's summer program, a 4-week class in poetry and
screenwriting in Prague, the capital of the Czech
Republic, complete with opera and ballet outings and
"coffee shop chats" as Dr. Ragan would later write in an
email.

This was the first I had heard of the program, so I got his email address and wrote to him, calling myself his “on-call mechanic at La Sierra.” He responded by inviting me as a “prime candidate” to the program. I felt equal parts of joy and fear. He hadn’t read anything I had written and we had only spoken once. He couldn’t know anything about my “prime candidacy” as a writer, but I was willing to try and prove him right. After working out the finances, I got on a plane and headed towards the “city of a thousand spires” as they call Prague.

We studied in classes at Charles University, where Albert Einstein once taught, talking about 20th century American and Czech poetry. Later in the course, we devoted the majority of our time to workshopping our own poetry. I waited anxiously for Fridays because, not only did we write during the morning wherever in the city we felt drawn to, Dr. Ragan and I, along with his two charming daughters, spent the afternoons poring over a screenplay of mine in exacting detail.

We went to Czech operas and French ballets; we looked over the waters of the river Vltava from the windows of Café Slavia. I had the chance to write in a city with a professor and fellow writers, all of which made me feel like my writing was valuable. I found inspiration in Prague and the Czech people.

Jan Palach and Jan Zajíc, two students who were native-born Czech citizens, immolated themselves on the steps of Wenceslas Square in protest of the Russian occupation in the 1970s. With great care, Dr. Ragan walked us through the streets of this assaulted, yet resilient, city and told us about the power writing had on the lives of generations of Czech citizens, writing about people like these two, who sacrificed themselves for home and freedom. He told us to strive for that same power in our own writing.

“There are too many ‘B’ movies,” Dr. Ragan told me one Friday. “You have to write every movie with the intention of going to the Oscars.” I wrote for hours what I hope to be the beginnings of my literary career.

“To living poetry,” he would toast at dinner time in the second story cafés and in the crowded old town squares.

“To living poetry.” And we continue to. ■

“If it’s April, it must be PCA:” Graduate Students Participate in National Conferences

Our English graduate students have been crisscrossing the country during the past two years presenting papers at various national conferences.

In Spring 2009, Katherine Wagner presented at three different conferences: Sigma Tau Delta in Minneapolis, MN; (dis)junctions in Riverside, CA; and Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association Joint Conference in New Orleans. The topics of the papers Katherine has presented are as far flung as the conferences she attended: ranging from the theatricality of Hitchcock’s films, to Wilkie Collins’ treatment of India, to Lawrence Ferlinghetti’s poetry within a post-9/11 context, to the supernatural in Coleridge’s poetry, and female power in Arthurian legend.

Tiffany Hutabarat also presented at Sigma Tau Delta on Wilkie Collins’ “shattered” female characters and at PCA on the role of diversity in children’s literature. Tiffany Hutabarat has become something of a specialist in panel chairing recently, in addition to her two paper presentations. She chaired two panels at the Sigma Tau Delta 2008 conference in Louisville, KY, and another at the Sigma Tau Delta 2009 conference in Minneapolis. In addition to co-chairing the Natures Conference in February 2009 and 2010, she chaired individual panels on “Writing Natures” and “Filmic Natures,” respectively. Recently, she organized two children’s literature panels for the Pacific Ancient and Modern Languages Association meeting held in San Francisco in November 2009. The responsibilities of chairing so many panels, fielding paper submissions, contacting participants, and moderating the sessions at the conference, has exposed Tiffany to the inner workings of professional scholarly activity and allowed her to begin networking in a significant way.

Megan McDonough joined Tiffany and Katherine in Minneapolis for their 2009 Sigma Tau Delta roundtable discussion “The Ugly Duckling Stage: From Student to Scholar.” Steph Troyer, an undergraduate English major, also participated in the roundtable, which explored the difficulties students often face in transitioning between undergraduate and graduate status “over a single summer, between graduation in the spring and enrollment in the fall,” as the students put it.

In 2010, “The Ugly Duckling” panel at Sigma Tau Delta was reprised by popular demand. “We’ve become swans, now what?” was presented by Megan McDonough, Tresecka Campbell, and Kendra Kravig. In a separate panel Rebecca Renee Hess

presented on "Contradictions in Gender Roles in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*."

Megan McDonough has filled her 2010 calendar with conference activities: after chairing and presenting at Natures 2010, she made two presentations at Sigma Tau Delta in March. In April she participated in the Popular Culture Association conference in St. Louis with a paper on "An Exploration of Identity and Accessories."

"We couldn't be more proud of the way our graduate students performed at PCA; they were both polished and professional," said Dr. Winona Howe, who also presented at the Popular Culture Association conference in New Orleans this year. "I don't think anyone could tell that they were MA students."

Six of our graduate students were accepted to present papers in April at UCR's 2009 (dis)junctions Graduate Student Conference: Tresecka Campbell, Rebecca Renee Hess, Whitney Roche, Jinnie Zhao, Megan McDonough, and Katherine Wagner. These students had all been involved in the Natures Conference held at LSU just a few weeks earlier in February as either presenters or attendees. Their paper topics ranged from Aristotle's influence on medieval depictions of justice, to Emily Dickenson's public/private audience, to Langston Hughes' poetical and political spheres of activity.

The Conference on Christianity and Literature meeting held at California Baptist University in 2010 included an entire panel on C. S. Lewis by three LSU graduate students: Whitney Roche, Jennifer Donascimento, and Kassy Skoretz.

"Our students are doing themselves and our graduate program a great service with their conference participation. They are laying the ground work for their own academic careers while bolstering La Sierra University's reputation nationwide," said Dr. Melissa Brotton, Director of the College Writing Program, who supervises the graduate student College Writing Instructors.

"These students have often funded their own conference travel through Sigma Tau Delta fundraisers and personal resources," said Dr. Mary Wilson, chair of English and Communication. "So we were happy this year when we were able to sponsor their 2010 travels at least partially due to the generosity of a program supporter. But it is to the students' credit that they have accomplished so much on their own initiative." ■

Passions and Pursuits: Department Faculty Publication and Conference Activities

Though heavily invested in their classes, committees, and other commitments, the faculty of the English and Communication department are also busily engaged in research, which in turn serves to reinvigorate their teaching and gives broader meaning to their careers as academics. Recent accomplishments of the faculty include both publishing and presentation activities.

Melissa Brotton contributed to *The Works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, edited by Sandra Donaldson and published by Pickering and Chatto of London (2010). Dr. Brotton shared her work on this edition with the first year MA students during an invited lecture for the "Methods and Materials" class during Winter 2009 and 2010, allowing the students to catch her enthusiasm for working with original documents. She also presented two papers for the Conference on Christianity and Literature, one in October, 2008, applying ecocritical theory to Elizabeth Barrett Browning's relationship with her dog Flush, and the other in March, 2010, on the concept of "Irresistible Compassion" in the home lives of 18th-century public figures, Johnson and Wilberforce

Bob Dunn, though officially retired, continues to teach crucial classes for the department and had an interview with Donald Davenport, LSU's Alumnus of the year, published in 2009 in *Spectrum*.

The department's creative writing specialist, **Sari Fordham**, spent a month honing her craft at the "Soaring Gardens Artists' Retreat" during July 2008. Ms. Fordham continues to work on her creative non-fiction book project based on her experiences growing up as a missionary child in Uganda. Due in part to the demands of this project, in December 2008, Ms. Fordham wrote her 60th and final column, "Beyond Searching Eyes," for the *Adventist Review*, after a five-year stint as a featured columnist. She also published an article, "What is an Adventist?" in *Adventist Today*, which is part of a series also contributed to by Charles Scriven, Larry Christoffell, and Larry Kirkpatrick. In 2009 she spend her third summer serving as a writing tutor for the "Writing and the Pastoral Life" seminar conducted by Eugene Peterson in Colledgeville, MN.

Lora Geriguis published "Monarchs, Morality, and English Nationalism in the Comedies of Etherege, Steele, and Sheridan" in *Restoration and Eighteenth Century Theatre Research* (Summer

2009) and an article John Donne's "Batter My Heart" sonnet in *The Explicator* (Summer 2010). She presented papers applying post colonial and ecocritical readings of various Daniel Defoe novels at the Southwestern Conference on Christianity and Literature (October 2008), the Daniel Defoe Society (September 2009), the Pacific and Modern Languages Association (November 2009), and the Western Conference on Christianity and Literature (March 2010).

Winona Howe made three conference presentations during the 2008-2009 school year: first, at the Film & History Conference in October 2008 for which she compared filmic and historic accounts of women involved in the "Enigma" project during WWII; then at the Pacific and Modern Language Association in November 2008 when she considered "Attributes of the Heroine" in the children's literature of Amy Bell Marlowe; and finally for the Popular Cultural Association/American Cultural Association Joint Conference in April 2009 on the topic of Hitchcock's film adaptation of *Under Capricorn*. In addition, a number of graduate conference presentations were developed out of papers her students wrote during her Fall 2008 Seminar in Wilkie Collins. In March 2010, Dr. Howe discussed the issues when a child must live with relatives he does not know (as presented by C. A. Stephens in the Old Farm series); the following month at the Popular Culture Association/American Cultural Association Joint Conference, she examined a number of neo-Victorian novels, identifying treatments and approaches that did or did not display a Victorian sensibility.

Christine Law completed her dissertation on the topic of the communication challenges facing the Asian immigrant deaf community in 2010. Her time has been severely stretched between her dissertating, her teaching assignments, and her major commitment to the Speech and Debate Club, for which she serves as the sponsor. Her leadership of the 'Faculty Writing Group,' an informal occasional gathering dedicated to mutual support of the members' individual writing projects, has served to foster the research of other faculty members in the department.

Marilynn Loveless' article, "At Once Cowardly and Absurd," an examination of fictocriticism as applied to the question of the authorship of the works attributed to William Shakespeare, was published in *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences* (vol. 3, 2009). Dr. Loveless gave an informative guest lecture presentation about her article to a group of literary criticism students in the department during Winter 2009, effectively

demonstrating the application of critical theory to writing, and faculty research to classroom use.

Sam McBride has been actively pursuing his interests in J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis studies, while carrying a heavy load as director of the Pre-Foundational Writing Program ever since his hire in 2007. He made presentations at two conferences during 2009: The Mythopoeic Society conference held at UCLA in July and the "Sirens" conference on women in fantasy literature in Vail, CO in October. The first of those presentations, assessing C. S. Lewis's collaborations with women, will be published in Fall 2010 in *Mythlore*. Dr. McBride generously shares his considerable experience in academic publication with the department's first-year graduate students during invited lectures for the "Methods and Materials of Literary Study" each Winter quarter.

Dan Tinianow spent spring break 2009 giving a presentation, entitled "Blogging and the Classroom," at an Educational Technology conference held in Los Angeles. Dr. Tinianow is involved with a number of film projects at any given time, including most recently the development of a video about the department to be used for recruitment purposes. He is working with a student to conduct interviews with faculty members and collect film footage of classes. Dr. Tinianow is also a regular contributor to the department's spring quarter "Festival of Original Works." He submitted a film spoof of Monty Python's *Circus* to the festival in 2009.



The rich variety of research interests pursued by the department's faculty serve to strength the program both in content and reputation. Students continually benefit from the passion that faculty members hold for their individual research areas. ■

Alumni Notes

Sandra Alagona (BA in English 1996, MA in English 1998) has completed her PhD at Claremont Graduate University; her dissertation was titled, "Revolution and Improvement in the Writings of Jane Austen and Margaret Fuller." Sandra will be teaching graduate courses in transatlantic studies as a visiting lecture at the Universidad Nacional de San Martin in Buenos Aires, Argentina, this coming spring.

Danelle Taylor (MA in English 2004) and **Flint Johnston** (MA in English 2004) were married on June 27, 2010 at San Moritz Lodge in Crestline, California. Danelle teaches English, photography and videography at Loma Linda Academy and Flint is employed in Academic Publications at Loma Linda University. Danelle and Flint continue to demonstrate their interest in staying fit—each has run a number of marathons.



Jill (Walker) Gonzales (MA in English 2006) began working in December 2006 for the Adventist Volunteer Center as an AVS Associate Coordinator and an Editorial Assistant for the Center's journal, *Missionpost*; her job included soliciting, selecting, and copy editing the stories

for *Missionpost*. She also contributed articles to *Adventist Review*. Jill and her husband, Javier Gonzalez, moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico this summer to continue their education. Jill will be working on a PhD in American Literary Studies, which includes the areas of Southwestern Regional Literature, Chicano Literature and Native American Literature. Jill loves the Southwest, and one of her interests is learning about other cultures, so this program truly fits her interests.

James Felix (MA in English 2007) has taught English at San Gabriel Academy and North Dallas Adventist Academy since he left LSU. He is currently at Holbrook Indian School where he serves as Holbrook's Learning Specialist. He loves basketball, baseball, hiking and traveling.

Darcy Smith (MA in English 2007) has completed a successful first year of PhD studies at the University of Nebraska. She reports absolutely loving the school, after initially hesitating to make the move from sunny So Cal to the bracing winters of Nebraska. She is pleased with the department's program and the challenging, research-oriented nature of her classes. Her accomplishments so far include designing an outstanding research website on "The Corvey Poets Project" (just Google the terms to find it), which is digitizing UN's considerable collection of Romantic era poetry. In addition, Darcy has found her future husband, Miles, a doctoral student in 19th century American military history at UN. The couple was married in July 2010. Congratulations, Darcy!

Katherine Wagner (BA in English 2007, MA in English 2009) is in her second year of a PhD program in Humanities at the University of Louisville, in Louisville, Kentucky. (Read her assessment of the experience—"Transitions: From LSU to UofL"—in this issue.) She particularly enjoys the broad nature of the program. Katherine continues her involvement with drama in Louisville, although, sadly, we are no longer privileged to view the productions that she is a part of.

Tiffany Hutabarat (BA in English 2007, MA in English 2009) has moved to Louisville, Kentucky, where she is also enrolled in a PhD program in Humanities at the University of Louisville. Although she finds the humidity levels are very different in Kentucky than they are in Southern California, Tiffany reports that everything is going well; she has survived orientation and is looking forward to classes. ■

Alumna Publishes Important Scholarship

Lora Geriguis

Lina Geriguis (BA 2005, MA 2007) has had an article published in *Lituanus: The Lithuanian Quarterly* (Winter 2008) on a subject that she first began researching while an MA in English student at La Sierra University. During spring quarter 2007, Lina was enrolled in my seminar on eighteenth century literature, which introduced her to Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). For her final project in the course, Lina discovered and researched a previously forgotten Lithuanian robinsonade, Joachim Campe's *The Life of Rubinaitis Peliuze* (1846).

Lina was only able to access the text through the heroic assistance of her father, who lives in Lithuania and scoured scores of bookstores and libraries searching for a copy of the rare text for Lina to read. Upon receiving it through the mail, Lina discovered that the neglect of the text was related to its suppression during the Russian and Soviet domination of Lithuania during the 19th and 20th centuries, which systematically sought to eliminate nationalistic cultural expression. Lina argued that Campe's text, following the contours of Defoe's original *Robinson Crusoe*, was just such a nationalistic text. Needless to say, the final paper Lina produced for the class went far beyond, in terms of its originality and significance, what any teacher could dare to hope for from a class assignment.

After enrolling as a PhD student at Claremont Graduate University in 2007, Lina continued to work on her Lithuanian robinsonade project, and her proposal to present a paper on it at a national Baltic Studies conference was accepted. While at that conference, the editor of *Lituanus* approached Lina and requested that she submit an expanded version of her conference paper to the journal. The editors were pleased with her revisions and Lina's article, "Discovering the Lithuanian Reinscription of *Robinson Crusoe*: A Literary Construct of Nineteenth Century Cultural, Political and Historical Discourses in Lithuania," appeared in *Lituanus* during December 2008. I look forward to adding Lina's article to my future course syllabi and to the bibliographies of my own research. In terms of the thrills we experience as teachers, it just doesn't get any better.

Following this early success, Lina has had two articles (on Charles Dickens and W. B. DuBois)

published in *The Explicator* (Winter 2010, two book reviews published in *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* (December 2009 and March 2010), and has three other articles forthcoming on ethnic and women's studies, and travel literature of 19th century America. Lina is currently serving as the book review editor for *Women's Studies* and plans to complete her PhD in Literature in June 2011. ■



Scholarly Natures: Graduate Humanities Conference Held On Campus

What do Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Victorian detective novels, Caribbean poetry, Hindi cinema, and Disney's Animal Kingdom have in common? They were all the subject of papers presented at the inaugural Natures Conference held on the La Sierra University campus on February 19, 2009, which attracted participation from twenty-three MA and PhD students from across the Inland Empire, including eight of LSU's own MA in English students.

The Natures Conference is a graduate humanities conference sponsored by the English and Communication department and the College of Arts and Sciences, and organized by the department's MA in English graduate students. The second Natures

conference was held in February 2010, with a larger number of schools represented, including three out of state presenters, and one international participant from Canada's McGill University. Local universities represented by graduate presenters included Claremont Graduate University, University of California, Riverside, California State University, Fullerton, California Baptist University, and University of California, Irvine. The graduate student conference co-chairs for Natures 2009 were Tiffany Hutabarat, the conference logo designer; Damaris Saenz, who also presented a paper on Wilkie Collin's female characters; and Katherine Wagner, whose presentation examined traces of Coleridge's drug addiction in "Christabel."

The Natures 2010 organizing committee included Megan McDonough, chair, Tresecka Campbell Dawes, and Whitney Roche, with Tiffany returning to help out, while working as a contract teacher following her graduation in 2009. These busy students also presented papers on topics related to *Frankenstein*, ecocritical readings of 18th travel narratives, Emily Dickenson, and Japanese Mongo.

While the majority of participants were MA students, roughly a third each year were PhD students, some already at the dissertating stage. While the participants were largely English students, history, French and American studies were also represented.

"This is what a university should be doing," said Dr. Fritz Guy, one of the many LSU faculty members and administrators who attended the Natures Conference events. Several faculty members have served as panel chairs, Drs. Andrew Howe and Ken Crane (History, Politics, and Society) and Drs. Bob Dunn, Winona Howe,

Melissa Brotton and Sam McBride (English and Communication), helping to guide the graduate student participants through their presentations and moderating the question and answer periods afterwards. The LSU graduate students who also served as panel chairs were Sarah Hoffman, Tiffany Hutabarat, Damaris Saenz, Katherine Wagner, Diana Wheeler, Tresecka Campbell, and Whitney Roche.

The theme of the 2009 conference, "Natures: Authenticity, Artificiality, and Authorship," tied the disparate papers together in a shared interest in the nature of authorship, and the authoring of nature, across the disciplines of the humanities, in such panels as "Wild Natures," "Writing Nature," and "Nature's Destruction." Natures 2010's theme "The Life of the Text: Creation, Reception, Explication" prompted panels including "From Text to Film," "Reading the Landscape," "Reading Texts/Reading Culture," "Textual Reception," and "Producing the Reading Experience."

The daylong event included four concurrent sessions, of two panels each, a plenary address, keynote speech, and lunch, held in various venues across campus, the Cactus Room in the Commons, the board room in the Administration building, and Cossentine Hall 100. The plenary address attracted between 100-150 students, faculty, staff, and administrators from across campus each year.

A central part of each Natures conference is the plenary speech by an invited faculty scholar working in area of environmental studies. In 2009, two speakers were invited to participate, both from the history department of UC Riverside.

Catherine Gudis' plenary address, "Mobility: Through the Windshield," examined the way the American landscape was created as a commodity for consumption by the concurrent rise of the automobile, the freeway system, and outdoor advertising throughout the 20th century. Dr. Gudis is the author of *Buyways: Billboards, Automobiles, and the American Landscape* (Routledge 2004); she has served as a curator for many important public history projects across the country and is currently an Associate Professor of History at UCR.

Jonthan Eacott's keynote speech, delivered during lunch, effectively addressed two subjects of interest to the conference participants. His topic, "The Nature of Naturalization: Jungle Animals, Colonial Categories, and Academic Disciplines," combined discussion of his recent dissertation (University of Michigan 2008), on English and American views of India held during the 18th and 19th centuries vis-a-vis colonialism and the subcontinent's animal life, with an examination of the academic job market. Dr. Eacott's success as a recent hire by the University of California, Riverside as an Assistant Professor of History was of great interest to the graduate students present who are anticipating their own job search in the next few years. He provided encouragement to those with aspirations towards an academic career, sharing his own strategies for overcoming the difficulties of defining oneself effectively within the competitive academic job market.

For Natures 2010, Professor Char Miller, Director of the Environmental Analysis program at Pomona College, gave a plenary address on "Streetscape Environmentalism: Flood Control and Social Justice in the American Southwest." Many participants commented afterwards about how

intrigued they were with Professor Miller's analysis of how powerful environmental analysis can be when applied to politics, specifically to the way marginalized groups are disproportionately impacted by natural and man-made disasters. Later, after lunch, Professor Miller spoke on the processes of academic publishing, focusing on the writing process and how metaphor can be harnessed as a powerful tool of organization and argument. The conference participants expressed appreciation for the practical nature of Dr. Miller's presentation, some predicting that they would be applying his techniques to their own writing immediately. These comments reflect the ideals that drove the original idea behind organizing the Natures conference on campus.

"I really *can* do this!" thought Sarah Hoffman during the lively question and answer portion of her *Frankenstein* panel during Natures 2009. Her positive feelings were shared by many of our department's participants who also felt validated as scholars by their experiences at the Natures Conference. Since 2009, many graduate students have begun participating in other conferences off campus, having first 'cut their teeth' at a Natures conference at LSU.

"We want to make conference participation a regular part of the experience of being a graduate student in English at La Sierra University," said Dr. Lora Geriguis, Director of Graduate Studies for the MA in English program. "By doing so our graduate students will find that the research they do for their courses has a wider purpose within the large scholarly community. Further, the Natures Conference has already proven to be an effective recruitment tool. Several of our undergraduate English majors who attended the conference were inspired by the experience to consider graduate school for themselves." ■

Natures Participants



Speech & Debate Excels

Christine Law

The La Sierra University Speech & Debate team began the 2009-2010 school year with a number of events and achievements. First, the team welcomed Matt Grisat as a new head coach to the Speech & Debate Team. Grisat is a national award winner at the American Forensics Association and National Forensics Association tournaments. He also has a degree in theater and has recently aired on television on *Scrubs* and *The Mentalist*. Due to Grisat's experience and involvement with the team this year, the LSU team has excelled.

Daniel Evans and Laura-Shay Adams won the bronze medal at the Griffin Invitational in parliamentary debate. At the same tournament, Laura-Shay Adams won the 2nd place top novice speaker award beating out 82 other novice competitors. Rebecca Barcelo, Janelle James, Ronald Wong, and Laura-Shay Adams qualified for the National Forensics Association Tournament by winning awards in Dramatic Interpretation, Persuasive Speaking, and Impromptu Speaking at the Pacific Southwest Collegiate Forensics Association Fall and Spring Championships, Golden Cowboy Swing, and Watson-Lancer Invitational. Additionally, the Speech & Debate Team won the 1st place Sweepstakes award for 4-year colleges at the Watson-Lancer Invitational.

Last year, the team traveled to Montreal, Quebec to represent LSU at the 19th Annual International Forensics Association Tournament. Competitors came from all over the United States including George Mason University (Fairfax, Virginia), Suffolk University (Boston, Massachusetts), Texas Southern University (Houston, Texas), and Pacific University (Forest Grove, Oregon). Highlights of pieces by La Sierra University Communication majors included Rebecca Barcelo's dramatic interpretation of cross-cultural relationships, including excerpts from *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* and Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*, and Adwoah Asamoah's dramatic interpretation of Mary Miller's *Ferris Wheel*.

Each quarter the LSU speech and debate team also presents on-campus Debate Challenges and a Festival of Speeches. In Fall 2008, students debated on the LSU Admission process, and whether or not Sarah Palin was ready to be Vice President. With the recent interest and challenges facing Obama's decision to close the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, the team examined the topic in a full-length Lincoln-Douglas debate in the winter. Most recently in Spring 2010, the Speech and Debate team debated the impact of psychology on current economics in the United States. Upcoming developments include the inclusion of the Speech and Debate Team as an elective within the new Legal Studies minor in the Department of History, Politics, and Society.

Christine Law is the Director of Forensics of the Speech & Debate Team. The LSU Speech & Debate Team has been presenting debate challenges since its inception in 2006 and continues to speak on current issues at Pacific Southwest Collegiate Forensics Association tournaments. ■

News from Sigma Tau Delta

2008-09 – Katherine Wagner, President

This year, the Sigma Tau Delta chapter at La Sierra University, has been quite busy. In addition to gaining new members and socializing amongst ourselves, the chapter has engaged in a number of fundraising events. In addition to the usual practice of selling books online, we also held the 2nd annual Barnes and Noble Bookfair.

Quite a number of our friends attended and purchased books; our portion of the proceeds went to two important causes. The first cause was a non-profit charity called "First Book," whose mission is to provide children with books of their very own. The second avenue for the bookfair funds was to help fund the several chapter members who were accepted at the 2009 Sigma Tau Delta 'Reflections' Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Tiffany Hutabarat's paper, "Shattered Mirrors: Or Why Wilkie Collins' Independent Women Aren't Always What They're Cracked Up To Be," was accepted, as was Katherine Wagner's piece, "Reflecting on Two Worlds: The Poetry of Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Pre-/Post-September 11, 2001."

All members of our chapter attending the convention (Tiffany Hutabarat, Megan McDonough, Steph Troyer, and Katherine Wagner), have volunteered to act as chairs of various panels. In addition, the four members will be orchestrating and running a round table, entitled "The Ugly Duckling Stage: From Student to Scholar."

The purpose of this panel is to discuss the often awkward transitions from undergraduate to graduate and graduate to scholar. The members hope to offer some insights they've gained, as well as engage in dialogue with students from other universities about possible solutions to this problem.

At the end of the year, another important event will occur for our Sigma Tau Delta chapter: elections. Several of our members are graduating and it will be up to remaining members to keep up the good work!

2009-10 – Rebecca Renee Hess, Current President

The 2009-2010 school year brought about a season of growth for the Alpha Iota Upsilon Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta at La Sierra University. In 2009, ΣΤΔ obtained "club status" at LSU, allowing our activities to be more widely attended and advertised across campus. The society recruited six undergraduate inductees, three of whom have taken on officer positions for the 2010-2011 school year. In a club of twelve members, one undergraduate and three graduate student members represented La Sierra at the Spring 2010 ΣΤΔ International Convention in St. Louis, Missouri. Other activities for the chapter included a popular Sidewalk Chalk Poetry event, in which students and faculty were invited to express themselves creatively with chalk on the sidewalks in front of the English and Communication department on campus. The poems, haikus, and artwork that graced the walkways of the literature and composition classes gave ΣΤΔ members a chance to reach out to students across the majors and share original work with peers.

For the past five years, Sigma Tau Delta at LSU has organized a Barnes & Noble fundraiser and Winter Showcase. The fundraiser is aimed at students, faculty and friends interested in purchasing B&N books in-store and online. A percentage of the proceeds go to the convention travel fund and is used by members to supplement travel costs to the annual ΣΤΔ Convention. At the end of the week long book buying event, members organize a Winter Showcase at the local bookstore and invite the community to come and listen to members perform music, read poetry and children's books. This interactive showcase allows local residents exposure to the eclectic talents of the members of ΣΤΔ Alpha Iota Upsilon Chapter, while allowing our members to connect with the community and express themselves creatively. While the values of "Sincerity, Truth, Design" do not shift, the Alpha Iota Upsilon Chapter at La Sierra University is committed to progress. Our members strive for excellence in the crafts of literature and composition, while continuing to grow in knowledge and distinction. ■

Transitions: From LSU to U of L

Katherine Wagner

Why would you ever move to Louisville, Kentucky from sunny California? That was the question posed to me countless times by strangers and friends alike. The answer was short—only three letters in fact—but important, nevertheless: PhD. I had moved across country because I had been accepted into a PhD program in Humanities at the University of Louisville.

I've now completed my first year in the program and am about to start year two. I have an idea for my dissertation, this year I have a departmental teaching assistantship, and I've been teaching for an ESL program at a community college.

This past year has not been without its trials and tribulations. I've struggled to pay my bills, something I resigned myself to on that day I switched my undergraduate major from chemistry to English. I've accepted hearing about all the fun my family and friends are having without me on the other side of the country. And the numerous challenges of adulthood, like getting electricity for my apartment or transferring my car's state registration when I still have a lien on my title, have often kept me up at night.

Yet though some things have been difficult, there is one area that I've felt amply prepared for: the academic and pedagogical work. In these two areas, I feel that my time at La Sierra, in the undergraduate and graduate English programs, created a complete and firm foundation for my studies and teaching in Louisville.

Being in a Humanities program, as opposed to a program strictly focused on literature, can be daunting at times. Instead of everyone having the same academic background, students join the program from every imaginable non-science field. Our program has students who've completed MFAs in creative writing, received MDivs in Religious Studies, and earned MAs in subjects ranging from music to philosophy, literature to theater.

Although I only majored in programs offered through the English Department while at LSU, I walked away with a well-rounded education. My English teachers often suggested teachers and courses in other departments that they felt

would be of benefit. My time in the drama program helped solidify a working knowledge of theater as not just a literature, but as an art. The University Studies program filled in all the gaps. In other words, LSU prepared me to join a program focused on the ways in which all humanities-based subjects intersect and relate to one another.

The courses I took at La Sierra have been comparable to the ones I'm currently engaged in, especially in terms of content, student involvement, and information received. Yet even the best school can not provide all needed knowledge in all possible subjects. What the best schools can do, however, is encourage students to understand that the academic world is more about the process of learning and sharing information than about simply hoarding it. La Sierra did this for me. Thus, though I may feel overwhelmed at times by what I don't know, and what my fellow PhD students do know, I rest secure in this LSU-provided realization.

I also benefited in areas other than my academic studies during my time at LSU. I taught ESL composition last year and felt secure in doing so, not only because of my teaching experience while in the MA program, but also because of my interaction with LSU's diverse student population. My teachers' examples have also helped me become the type of teacher that I've enjoyed having.

My time at La Sierra has enabled me to enter a large university with confidence and ease. I do miss the familial atmosphere of the department and faculty at LSU as well as other things, like having a shared Christian background with the majority of my fellow students. These things, I've learned, are unique to LSU and I've learned to cherish them as such. Nevertheless, I have found a new place where I am comfortable—and LSU helped make it possible. Furthermore, another LSU English department alumna has also been accepted into the Humanities PhD program at University of Louisville. I'm sure she too will find the transition eased because of her time at La Sierra University. ■

Solusi Skies

Winona Howe

As I walk to class at Solusi University in the spring of 2008, I can't help noticing the sky. It is a beautiful shade of blue, although I'd have trouble describing the exact shade. Is it azure? Sapphire? Cerulean? No matter—it's beautiful. It was beautiful last night too. Rich, dark, and velvety, with more stars visible than I could ever have imagined, after years of living in a city with headlights and streetlights and motion lights everywhere that dim the scintillating effect of the brilliant lights above.

When I walk into the classroom, I know that the day is not starting well, after all. There are only twelve desks in the room, although there are at least thirty-five students in the class. There were plenty of desks last evening. Where did they go, and where will the students sit? I shouldn't have worried. As students swarm into the room, some of them are carrying rows of desks (4 desks that are connected to form a short row). We are only a couple of minutes late in starting class.

This small incident tells so much about what life at Solusi University is like. The lack of resources is indicated by the fact that there are not enough desks for each classroom. Instead the desks float from classroom to classroom, depending on which class has more or fewer students at a given hour. It demonstrates the resourcefulness of the students—if there isn't a desk for me, I will find one. And finally, it shows the students' determination to learn, to take advantage of the opportunity, denied to so many in Zimbabwe—the chance to get an education.

My husband, Vernon, had already been at Solusi for over a month when I arrived. He already knew about the lack of library resources, the electricity blackouts that could last for days, the nearly-empty grocery stores in Bulawayo. Neither of us foresaw, however, that I would have a hard time clearing customs because of the books for my African American Literature class that I had stuffed into my suitcases.

"Why are you bringing all these books?" the customs inspector asked suspiciously.

"I'm teaching a class at Solusi, and these are books I will use for my class." The word "Solusi" is often like saying "Open Sesame" in Zimbabwe. Solusi is a source of pride for the country; everyone knows Solusi. Everyone knows or is related to someone who went to college there.

Everyone would like to go there, send their child there, etc. However, on this occasion, the word "Solusi" did nothing at all, as my interrogator continued to scowl.

"Are they good books? Have they been banned?" By now, she had opened and sifted through everything I had brought. The conversation went on and on—repetitive and accomplishing nothing. I noticed that everyone else on my plane had already moved out of the customs area. Finally, the inspector decided to take my word that the books in my possession dealt only with American topics and issues and had nothing to do with current politics in Zimbabwe, and waved me on. There were no textbooks for the class; there was simply no way to obtain them. I brought three copies of the assigned readings and put them on reserve at the library. Clearly, three copies were totally insufficient for a class that eventually forty students had registered for, but to bring more would have upped the overweight charges I paid when I flew out of Johannesburg even farther. When I walked by the library, I would sometimes see a few students sitting outside with a folder of readings. One would be reading aloud to the others. That way, two, or three, or four could read/hear the assignment at the same time. The students took copious notes. They came to class prepared, even though they sometimes found the material a little baffling. Why did I spend so much time talking about slavery and slave narratives? Why did not all African Americans choose to return to Africa when they were no longer slaves? Why did African American authors continue to focus on the issue of race in America?

I was sometimes baffled, too. I found it hard to learn students' names when over half of the class had surnames that began with the letter M. First names were often easier. Henry was perceptive and offered thoughtful analyses. Keith had definite opinions and spoke eloquently in defense of them; he was often, however, challenged by Cynthia, who believed that he tended to overlook obvious feminist readings and concerns. I was proud of everyone the day the class gave group reports on a variety of African American texts, including *Pink and Say*, *Black Boy*, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, and *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. In spite of the obvious cultural differences, students demonstrated an understanding of the works and made perceptive comments; the reports were creative and engaging.

All too soon, it was time to leave Solusi University and return to my teaching responsibilities at LSU. But I won't soon forget my students who, lacking

textbooks, had to wait their turn for reserve materials, who examined the issues in spirited discussions, and who stayed after class to seek clarification of something I'd said. I was both touched and inspired by the obvious value they placed on education. The time I spent with them was an education for me.

And there are so many things I miss. I miss Tapson's smile as he brought us our rice and relish twice a day. I miss the singing—the easy harmonizing that might occur at any time, but primarily happened at worship. I miss seeing students with their cell phones, clustered at the best spot on campus for reception. I miss seeing young Vervet Monkeys playing in the back yard while I eat my breakfast. And of course I miss the sky—a clear, translucent blue in the morning (with a few puffy clouds added in the afternoon), and the contrast of dark sky and brilliant stars at night. There was never any smog. ■



Dollars for Scholars

Each year, the Department of English & Communication distributes money from four scholarship funds, founded and named by donors. Each scholarship fund has different criteria. The Richard Guy Memorial Scholarship is awarded to students who display talent in writing. The criterion for the Edna Maye Loveless Scholarship is involvement in the Drama Program. Recipients of the Marie Barber Marchus Scholarship have a demonstrated interest in teaching. Although all students must have good grades to receive these scholarships, this is especially true of the Neff Lewis Scholarship, which is often awarded to graduate students.

The total amounts for the years 2007/08 – 2009/10 and the students who have shared these scholarships are as follows:

Richard Guy Memorial Scholarship

2007/08 -	Tabitha Bunch and Jacquie Weischadle
\$3,895	
2008/09 -	Tabitha Bunch, Kristin Peek, Jacquie Weischadle, and Keith Ybanez
\$3,800	
2009-10 -	Rebecca Barcelo, Renee Hess, Megan McDonough, and Keith Ybanez
\$2,630	

Edna Maye Loveless Scholarship

2007/08 -	Patrick York
\$940	
2008/09 -	Violette Kjeldgaard
\$850	
2009/10 -	Patrick York
\$415	

Marie Barber Marchus Scholarship

2007/08 -	Tiffany Hutabarat and Tori Muir
\$4,280	
2008/09 -	Mona Bascoy, Lynsey Holm, Edgar Perez and Kassy Skoretz
\$4,164	
2009/10 -	Tresecka Campbell, Tori Muir, Whitney Roche, and Natalie Romero
\$2,875	

Neff-Lewis Scholarship

2007/08 –	Katherine Wagner
\$1,150	
2008/09 –	Megan McDonough and Tori Muir
\$1120	
2009/10 –	Megan McDonough
\$500	

Two other scholarships are funded by Recruitment. The total amount of the Drama Scholarship is \$6,000, payable over four years; one scholarship is awarded, through an application process, to an incoming student each year. The scholarship is renewable if the recipient is heavily involved in the Drama Program. Recipients of this scholarship have been Mike Tyler, Kyle Dever and Daniel Skoretz.

Writing Scholarships are awarded through the annual Writing Competition, sponsored by the Department of English and Communication each spring. Award amounts are \$10,000 (grand prize), \$5,000 (first runner-up) and \$2,000 (second runner-up) and are awarded to incoming

students. These scholarships are also payable over four years, renewable if the awardees continue as departmental majors and maintain a GPA of at least 3.00.

2007/08	\$10,000	Hae-Lim Lee, La Sierra Academy
	\$5,000	Alexia Clark, Thunderbird Adventist Academy
	\$2,000	Torin Borrowdale, Sacramento Adventist Academy
2008/09	\$10,000	Neil Gravino, La Sierra Academy
	\$5,000	Lonnie Kotanko, Sacramento Adventist Academy
	\$2,000	Suzanne Spence, La Sierra Academy
2009/10	\$10,000	Keither Alvord, Sacramento Adventist Academy
	\$5,000	Justyne Marin, Loma Linda Academy
	\$2,000	Maggie Matye, La Sierra Academy

We want to add a note of special appreciation to our partners in the Writing Competition—the academy English teachers who first encourage their students to write, and then urge them to apply for this scholarship. ■

Writing Center News

Sam McBride

While English and Communication majors are typically the best writers on campus, the department serves the entire student body, including those who struggle with college success because of limited writing skills. Two of the department's most important contributions to the university at large are the Writing Center and the Pre-Foundational English program.

The Writing Center was established in Fall of 2007 with a staff of six and the mission to serve as a resource to all La Sierra students, with a special emphasis on those in Pre-Foundational English classes. At the Writing Center students receive one-on-one conferences with a Writing Coach, a fellow student who is usually an English major. Pre-

Foundational English students can also write test essays that prepare them for the end-of-term Writing Placement Exam. More than 700 visits to the Writing Center were recorded during its first quarter of existence, primarily from students in Pre-Foundational English.

This year the number of student visits increased to more than 1000 during Fall quarter. Just as important, more than 10% of those visits came from students in College Writing classes with another 5% from non-English classes. The Writing Center is becoming established as a campus resource providing significant benefits to students. Furthermore, this year the Writing Center offered workshops on writing. More than 130 students attended the following communication skills workshops:

Using Commas Correctly	Tori Muir
Focusing a Thesis Statement	Diana Wheeler
Essay Test Strategies	Stephanie Troyer
Finding Your Voice in College Writing	Renee Hess
Avoiding Plagiarism through In-Text Citations	Diana Wheeler
Groundhog Writing: Sentence Variety	Michelle Lumban-Gaol
Writing Medical School Application Letters	Sam McBride

One sign of the Writing Center's impact is the test scores on the Department's Writing Placement Exam. This test is required each quarter of students in the Pre-Foundational English program, which is designed for students whose writing skills are not yet at the level required for success in the University's Foundational Writing program, the Engl-111, Engl-112, and Engl-113 sequence of College Writing. Pre-Foundational English focuses on effective reading strategies, basic paragraph and essay construction, and resolving sentence problems.

In order for students to leave the Pre-Foundational English program, they must earn a passing score on the Writing Placement

Exam, an essay composed during 2.5 hours in Week 9 of the quarter. English and Communication Department faculty grade the essay holistically using a six-point scale (with six as the highest score). Historically the pass rate has been about 70%; over the past 18 months the rate has increased to 76%. More importantly, the pass rate for students who have completed Engl-005 (the Pre-Foundational English class focusing on paragraph and essay composition) reached 97% in Fall 2008 (compared with 75% the prior year).

The Department is currently exploring funding options to hire a full-time Writing Center supervisor and to establish its own facilities. ■

CWI Orientation

In 2008, the College Writing Instructor orientation was expanded in order to help our graduate students feel more comfortable about stepping into their classrooms. “We went from a day and a half to a full week,” explains Dr. Melissa Brotton, the new program director. “There is an overwhelming amount of information for new teachers to have aside from the new textbooks and materials.” The program continues to be grateful to former director, Dr. Susan Gardner, who developed the highly valued resource notebook given to students each year. This inclusive notebook contains over 200 resources for teachers, including articles, netlink lists, activity ideas, and even fun cartoons. “Dr. Gardner has bestowed on us a very practical gift, and we don’t take it for granted,” adds Brotton.

In addition to the valorized notebook, the program has added the input of all of the members of the Department of English and Communication. “Everyone plays a part. We have faculty members sharing practical teaching tips for sessions on grading, policies, using websources, teaching public discourse, lecturing, facilitating discussions, and teaching personal/creative writing,” says Brotton. With so many faculty members taking part, there was occasionally repetition in the advice, but this merely reaffirmed the value of the information.

Brotton states, “We wanted to take care of the practical aspects of teaching first, and allow the theory to follow it. Then our CWIs can feel assured they can be confident and successful when they step into their classrooms for the first time.” So far the expanded orientation has worked well. The first-year CWIs were able to

function quite independently through their first two quarters even as they were guided with the continued Monday noon meetings. “I am delighted with the way the orientation went this year, and we are definitely planning to do it again next year.”

The week ended with the first field trip of the fall quarter . . . before the quarter had even begun. Department faculty and CWIs drove to San Diego, and watched a rollicking version of Shakespeare’s *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, set in the Wild West. Under the umbrella of the San Diego night, the group spent a pleasant evening watching the toe-tapping singing and dancing, hearing Shakespearean lines uttered (or roared) in a Western drawl, and joining in belly laughs with the comic characters. Faculty and new CWIs discovered that relaxing and laughing together was a great way to get acquainted and begin the new year.

The expanded orientation was continued in 2009, and the faculty again shared insights, experience, and practical suggestion with the CWIs. The 2009 orientation ended with a relaxing evening—first a few games of miniature golf, followed by a dessert party at the home of the department chair, Dr. Mary Wilson. More than one individual was heard to remark it was an excellent thing that such a calorie-rich event had been preceded by at least a certain amount of exercise! ■

College Writing Instructors

Some of the 2008 CWIs are old friends, while others have just arrived in Riverside. Some live just down the street from LSU, while others have come from as far away as Tennessee and even Jamaica. Here they are . . . in their own words.

Rebecca Renee Hess

Renee likes to go by her full name, Rebecca Renee Hess, because it confuses people. She graduated from LSU with a bachelor’s degree in English Writing in 2008 and now teaches college freshmen the joys of the College Writing Sequence. Rebecca is taking graduate courses toward a master’s degree in literature at LSU, and balances teaching, taking classes, tutoring in the Writing Center, and being a wife and

mother, by watching *The Daily Show* reruns and never sleeping. She recently put her degree to work and published creative stories in the Adventist periodicals *Our Little Friend* and *Insight Magazine*. Renee hopes to one day rule the world, emphasizing the need for proper grammar and concise writing in her subjects all across the globe.

Tori Muir

Tori graduated from LSU with a bachelor's degree in English Writing and a minor in Psychology, so that she can use Freudian theories to psychoanalyze students and understand their ridiculousness. While pursuing her master's degree in literature, Tori works to assist students at the LSU Writing Center. She also teaches College Writing, keeping students in line by feeding them cupcakes at least twice a quarter. Tori plans on teaching high school English in the near future so that she can mold teen minds before they come, comma crazy, to college. For now, she puts all of her creative energy into making calendars that feature pictures of her dog, Bently, dressed in holiday attire. Anyone interested in purchasing a "Bently For All Seasons" calendar can see Tori in the Annex.

Megan McDonough

Once upon a time in the magical land of the library there was a bookworm named Megan. Though she did love her sciences, the literature across the aisle whispered to her at night. Realizing she could teach these wonderful books to other bookworms like herself, she ventured out of the library and into the classroom. And now she can impress upon her students that reading and writing can be fun.

Tresecka Campbell-Dawes

A Jamaican with a long and prevailing interest in education and the study of English Literature. What will she be when she grows up? Well, she still has no specific blueprint, but knows she will either be teaching English or training teachers in curriculum development and instruction with specific interest in the discipline of English. She acknowledges that she owes this interest in English literature to the many hours spent reading as a young child and teenager; this she says ended up "defining" her life. Tresecka is married to the handsome Paul Dawes and has one daughter, delightful Arielle.

Whitni Roche

The Speckled Roche Butterfly is new to the Riverside flowers, having just flown in this year from the fields and forests of Nashville, TN. She is currently enjoying the colors of La Sierra University's English MA program, especially the teaching aspect that allows her to share her passion for horticultural and literary delights with other young insects. She loves teaching and has been fortunate to gain recent experience with high school dragonflies, middle school moths, second grade honeybees, and now college freshmen composition caterpillars ready to transform into the wide variety of butterflies Southern California is so famous for. She finds it exciting to have the chance to really immerse herself in the nectar and pollen of ongoing dialogue about finding new angles on old ideas. After finishing graduate school she plans to flutter northeast with her husband butterfly toward the rooftop gardens of New York City, where she will continue her writing and educational pursuits in whatever field suits her fancy.



Megan McDonough, Tresecka Campbell-Dawes, and Whitni Roche

And in 2009 . . .

Katherine Skoretz

After completing a BA in English at LSU, Katherine is a first year graduate student in the English MA program. She loves the work she is doing, both teaching students to think and express themselves in writing and engaging in academic research and conversation. Katherine is active in the Theatre community and hopes to continue to find ways to combine her passions for theatre, writing, literature, and learning after she graduates.

Jennifer P. DoNascimento made California her home, almost 12 years ago, when her parents decided to leave Brazil. She went to UCR for her undergraduate English studies, and now enjoys her English graduate studies at Lsu. After graduating from La Sierra, she hopes to continue her studies at the doctorate level. When she is not studying, she loves going to the beach and spending time with family and friends. ■

LSU Drama—2008-09

Fall Quarter

Improv

Ten students who successfully auditioned for the LSUImprov team each earned a \$1,000 performance scholarship this year. Led by Kyle Dever, team members met weekly and performed for a wide-range of events including the first LSUDrama show of the year on October 18, *Theater Sports: Whose Verb is it Anyway?* the Welcome Back Bash, and Friday evening worship services in the University church.

Thanks to generous financial support from the School of Religion and the Spiritual Life office, team members and other interested students were able to enroll in a brand-new course teaching Improvisational skills, co-taught by graduate students, Will Frei and Tina Guldhammer Frei, who are currently studying at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena. Students who enrolled in the interdisciplinary class, were able to earn English, Communication or Religion credit, depending on their academic needs.

Although she was initially apprehensive about the class, graduate religion student, Mabel P. Duncan followed her advisor Bailey Gillespie's suggestion to take the class because of Duncan's interest in youth ministry. "I didn't feel that I would fit in or be able to relax enough to do it," Duncan admitted. "At the end of the class I felt that I had grown and developed another aspect of me that I didn't know was there. I'm not the kind of person who tries to be funny or entertaining, so I was surprised to find that I could do it and actually have fun!"

Duncan also learned that there are no limits to transmitting the good news of the gospel, even with Improv. "I found that, especially at the end of a performance, when we would make a statement, the audience was usually in such a relaxed mode that presenting a message at that time enabled them to more readily accept the gospel."

The Crucible

More than 170 local high school and academy students attended the fall quarter production of Arthur Miller's award-winning play, *The Crucible*, swelling the audience to full-capacity and disappointing up to 50 people each night, who had not made a reservation to see the show. The compelling drama about the Puritan purge of witchcraft in old Salem, serves as both a gripping historical play and a timely parable of contemporary society.

The twenty-three cast members represented a wide-range of disciplines including, biology, chemistry, psychology, history, liberal studies, pre-nursing, accounting, religion, English and communication majors. The cast was also joined by faculty members, a professor from Riverside Community College, Michael Cluff, and the Provost of the University, Dr. Warren Trenchard, who distinguished himself in the role of Francis Nurse. Featuring two choreographed dance sequences, arranged by guest artist and nationally recognized expert on mime, movement, and theater, Vicky Silva, this production was also entered in competition for the Kennedy Center American Colleges Theater Festival—an organization devoted to the promotion of quality in college-level theater production involving a nation-wide network of universities and colleges.

Three students were subsequently nominated to compete for scholarships at the 2009 festival held at Cal State Fullerton in February. Patrick Garrett York (Rev. Parris), Katherine Skoretz (Elizabeth Proctor), and Violette Kjelgaard (Mary Warren) together with their chosen scene partners--Will Appiah, Rebecca Waring-Crane, and Mara Fimbras--worked closely with their coach, Larry Herron, a two-time winner of the national competition, to prepare for their performance at the festival in competition with more than 200,000 students nationwide.

Eleven LSU students attended the festival that features the best productions from the seven-state region, workshops and special events. Asked what he thought of the festival, current recipient of the Edna Maye Loveless Drama Scholarship, Daniel Skoretz replied, "The whole thing was the best thing about it! Every workshop was useful to me and I enjoyed it immensely. It was just awesome, the entire thing was just awesome."

Winter Quarter

The One Acts

Five students directed thirty actors, supported by a technical crew of twelve, for the 2nd Annual Festival of One Acts during winter quarter—a show where student talent is showcased in an evening of one-act plays. Each director was limited to one 20-minute act with a simple set and few props.

The audience was treated to the world premiere of a G-rated play about R-rated stuff, directed by Rebecca Kern and written by LSU MA student Violette Kjeldgaard, ensuring that Christian drama will never be the same—“Heaven Cheers!” Matt Huston directed a piece by Edna St. Vincent Millay about a rhyming king who acts on a whim and the silly women who wanted to marry him, entitled “Two Slatterns and a King.”

Daniel Skoretz directed, “Surprise” which explored the notion of what it would be like to fall in love with someone who can see two minutes into the future, while Kyle Dever directed “The Romancers” by Edmond Rostand, which featured a man in tights leaping over a tall wall in a single bound.

Winner of the audience favorite award featured cyberspace-crossed lovers. “CP I Love You,” was directed by Adwoa Asamoah-Boadu and starred LSU freshman Anita Abdul-Karim and Carl Canwell, a graduate of Walla Walla University where he was a drama minor.

Spring Quarter

Much Ado About Nothing

Was Shakespeare a Woman? “Yes!” according to Marilyn Loveless whose 2004 dissertation offered a plausible explanation for how Mrs. Shakespeare was able to acquire the necessary education and experience to write the works long attributed to her husband.

The production of *Much Ado About Nothing* was the first time that the play was presented with attribution to the true author, according to Loveless who has already directed award-winning productions of Mrs. Shakespeare’s *Othello* and *The Taming of the Shrew*.

“There will be no bardolotry allowed,” announced Loveless at the first rehearsal for the show which

featured thirty-four actors comprised of La Sierra University students, faculty, and guest artists from Riverside Community College. “One of the

beauties of these texts, is that they invite multiple interpretations,” according to Loveless who admits, “Traditional Shakespeare scholars and bardolators, can have problems with my approach.” She focuses, however, on creating an accessible and relevant experience for the audience leading her to produce this version of *Much Ado* in war-torn Iraq.

Loveless also wanted to do something to acknowledge a 21st century cultural phenomenon where the written or spoken word has been replaced by the visual, “Many audience members find the Elizabethan language, albeit beautiful, inaccessible” according to Loveless. She finds that the shift from word to image in our mass media era encourages her to provide the audience with an eye-intense spectacle that engages this newfound sensibility for reading visual images as text. “The vibrant traditions and mosaic extravagance of Arabic culture enhance this timeless story of boy hates girl, girl hates boy—so you *know* they’re going to end up together! The shortened script and choreography that move the story forward acknowledge the power of the eye in Western culture, a power that we are only beginning to analyze and appreciate,” says Loveless.

Audiences seemed to appreciate this approach, with sold-out performances and a feature article on the front page of the entertainment section of the local newspaper, *The Press Enterprise*, along with a photograph of the lead actors, Patrick Garrett York (Benedick) and Violette Kjeldgaard (Beatrice). For the second year in a row, the Loma Linda University Medical School Auxiliary, coordinated its spring luncheon on the LSU campus, followed by attendance at a special matinee performance of *Much Ado*.

Loveless acknowledges that, “Appropriating another culture is a venture fraught with peril. The decision to place this story in Iraq was driven in part by my desire to better understand the people of this proud country and offer our audience an opportunity to look beyond the media pictures of a country ravaged by war, and discover shared human experiences of love, laughter, betrayal and redemption.”

Festival of New Works: Stage and Screen

The goal of this year's festival was to present the world premieres of a several original short works, no longer than 10 pages each. The "10-Minutes Max" festival was a unique event, showcasing short dramatic writing for both stage and screen. Nine writers and filmmakers entered the competition, which challenged them to rely on metaphor and the economy of language. The theme was "Global Warming" and all plays had to be related in a direct, indirect or oblique way to this theme.

Winner of the \$300 1st prize for best play was Marcus Chapman for *Our Story*. In the category of audience favorite, first prize went to Kendra Nicole Kravig for *One Hot Night in Frisco*, second prize was awarded to Carl Canwell for *Reality*, while third prize was collected by Marcus Chapman, also for *Our Story*. ■

LSU Drama—2009-2010

Fall Quarter

Steven Sabel

Artistic director of the Redland's Shakespeare Festival, Steven Sabel, presented a workshop, entitled "How to Prepare for an Audition," during the first week of fall quarter 2009. The workshop covered a range of subjects including the importance of having a clear concept of what parts you are best suited for and understanding the hints and tips given by casting directors during an audition.

At the conclusion of his presentation, Sabel gave students the opportunity to perform and receive immediate feedback. He also encouraged students to audition for the Redlands festival and following a successful audition, LSU graduate student, Katherine Skoretz was awarded the title role in the RSF production of *Romeo and Juliet*. Former graduate student, Violette Kjeldgaard was also hired as a stage manager for the festival.

Improv

Again this year, ten students who successfully auditioned for the LSUImprov team each received a \$1,000 performance scholarship. Team members, and their leader, Kyle Dever, met weekly and performed for a wide-range of events, including the Ignite Welcome Back Bash, Friday evening worship services in the University church, and the first LSUDrama show of the year, *Theater Sports: Whose Dangling Modifier is it Anyway?*



Probably the most successful aspect of the team's efforts involves the semi-secret word-of-mouth event simply known as, "The Red Pill." If you want to know more you'll have to request the secret password from a team member or a member of the audience!

Later in the year, six Improv players participated in a pre-show university lecture/performance at the Redlands Shakespeare Festival in May 2010 entitled, *Mrs. Shakespeare's 15-Minute Midsummer Night's Dream with Apologies to Tom Stoppard*, during which they told the entire story of the play in under 3 minutes!

Hollywood comes to La Sierra!

Veteran Hollywood producer, writer, and director Lee David Zlotoff was a special guest on the La Sierra University campus on November 16. The creator of the television series, *McGyver*, Zlotoff is currently working on a big budget movie version of his popular 1980s television show. In the afternoon, students from the Introduction to Acting class, along with drama minors, participated in a workshop with Zlotoff entitled, "How to Perform for the Camera."

Winter Quarter

Zlotoff's film, *The Spitfire Grill*, was screened at 7 p.m. in Matheson Hall. Academy award-winning actresses Ellen Burstyn and Marcia Gay Hardin starred in the film that won the Sundance Film Festival Audience Award in 1996. *The Spitfire Grill* tells the story of a young woman named Percy (Alison Elliot), who was recently released from prison. She travels to the small town of Gillead in search of a new start. She is taken in by Hannah (Burstyn) and given a job in her diner, the eponymous *Spitfire Grill*. The town is transformed by the presence of a newcomer, stirring resentment and fear in some, growth in others and redemption in the end.

The screening was followed by a question and answer session with Zlotoff, who shared Hollywood insider stories, including the details of how *McGyver* got his name.

A Tuna Christmas

Two consummate actors, Daniel Skoretz and Ariel Loredo provided a tour de force of performance in their portrayal of all 24 citizens of Texas' smallest town. *A Tuna Christmas* (by Jaston Williams, Joe Sears and Ed Howard), takes place 24 hours before Christmas; comic chaos breaks loose at this point as the delightfully eccentric characters attempt to cope with seasonal traumas such as a disaster-prone little theater production of *A Christmas Carol*, and the mysterious Christmas Phantom. The hilarious sequel to the hit comedy, *Greater Tuna*, the play also features an important sub-textual message about the dangers of stereotyping, the acceptance of diversity, and redemption while, at the same time, exposing the ugly underbelly of greed, competition and racism.

At the first read through for the play, the actors and crew struggled to get through many of the passages because everyone was laughing. These difficulties continued throughout the rehearsal process but, during performances, the function of laughter was taken over by an enthusiastic audience who found *A Tuna Christmas* highly entertaining.

The One Acts

Eight students directed more than forty actors for the 3rd Annual Festival of One Acts during winter quarter. Each of the directors earned a scholarship for their efforts; they included Edgar Hernandez (*The Prodigal Son*), Darren Thomas (*Creation*), Rebecca Kern (*Listen Lord-A Prayer*), Daniel Skoretz (*Go Down Death*), Patrick Garrett York (*The Crucifixion*), Will Appiah (*The Judgment Day*), Will Williams (*Let My People Go*), and Denby Rasmussen (*Noah Built the Ark*).



Featuring James Weldon Johnson's 1927 book of poetry, *God's Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse*, each director provided a unique, artistic interpretation of an individual poem; the poems were united by a central theme—Christianity. Adam and Eve, grave diggers, dancers, and even mobs appeared on stage as each poem was brought to life.

As a tribute to *God's Trombones*, guest artist and trombonist Art Kharns performed a series of Negro spirituals between each act. His past accomplishments include playing with "Big Gospel," teaching music, and directing community groups, orchestras and a brass ensemble. He currently performs with the Ventura jazz orchestra and serves as an alternate in the Gold Coast Wind Ensemble. As this production of *God's Trombones* was produced during alumni weekend 2010, it also featured a choir of gospel singers, comprised of LSU alumni.

Spring Quarter

The Miracle Worker

This stirring dramatization of the story of Helen Keller is one of the most successful and warmly admired plays of the modern stage. Blind and mute, nobody knows what Helen's fate might have been had she not come under the tutelage of Annie Sullivan, an Irish girl who had been born blind. Only Annie realizes that there is a mind waiting to be rescued from that dark, tortured silence.

Starring Krista Curtis—spotted in a Yucaipa production of *Little Women* two years ago—the play co-starred LSU graduate Heather VanDeventer St. Clair, who returned to the stage after a long absence, in the leading role of Annie Sullivan, the nearly blind 20-year-old woman who lifted Helen Keller out of her dark and silent world, enabling Keller to become one of the most inspiring women of her generation.



Scott Ray, last seen as John Proctor in LSUDrama's *The Crucible*, returned to the LSUDrama stage as Captain Keller in William Gibson's award-winning play. This was Scott's final performance before moving to Boston as a graduate student in Harvard's prestigious Master of Fine Arts program in acting. Scott's wife was played by his real-life wife, Wendy Chaffee-Ray, while the role of Aunt Ev was played by Wendy's mother, Sharen Drachenberg. Also returning to the stage for a brief cameo appearance was Dr. Warren Trenchard, university provost.

The rest of the eclectic cast was drawn from members of the community, including Kayla Curtis (Krista's sister), who played one of the blind children at Annie Sullivan's school. Joining Kayla were Hannah McBride, daughter of English professor Dr. Sam McBride, and Julia Geriguis,

daughter of Dr. Lora Geriguis, also a professor in the Department of English. Other performers included current La Sierra students, Francisco Grant, Rebecca Kern, and Adwoa Asamoah-Boadu and the voices of Tori Muir, Renee Hess, Katharine Huffman, Dr. Sam McBride, Dr. Winona Howe, and of Samuel Arthur Manne. Samuel is quite a trouper. The son of Heather Corona (BA in English, 2009), he had already performed in the Lobster and Lime DNA festival and *Much Ado About Nothing*, and shared the stage with Corona in *The Crucible*, drama productions that preceded *The Miracle Worker*.

The set was designed and constructed by guest artist, Kyle Goldsberry, Production Manager of the Redlands Shakespeare Festival. The lights were designed by guest artist Carl Canwell, who also played the role of Helen Keller's brother, James. Kevin Jobe and Jay Wilson designed the sound for the production.

The production was also viewed by the Loma Linda University Medical School Auxiliary. This was the third year in a row this group elected to hold their spring luncheon on the LSU campus in order to attend the LSUDrama spring quarter production. ■

From the Dark Ages to the Renaissance: Drama at LSU

Heather VanDeventer St. Clair

I can remember when I came to La Sierra University during the mid 1990s, how much I enjoyed the small theatre experience when I went to see several Shakespeare plays in Matheson. Though I can't remember the first play I saw there, I can remember the first play I was in—*Othello*. I had always wanted to be in a play, but previously had been too shy to try out. La Sierra decided to set *Othello* during WW2. It was so much fun to be a dancer in the wedding celebration swing scene and work as stage crew. The teachers and actors were so professional on stage, and a blast to get to know during rehearsal and the creative processes. I enjoyed my participation so much that I decided to face my fears and audition for the next production for a main role. I researched the character and had a friend

coach me on my monologue; somehow I managed to earn the lead in *Antigone*. I learned during the course of rehearsals and the play's run how thrilling and cathartic the theatre can be.

Back then tickets were only a couple of bucks for students and staff, and I think they were less than \$5 for general admission. Our curtains were made from either bed sheets or whatever material could be found that we could use. Every play required the building of a rough stage made out of huge sheets of plywood painted black; underneath were supports made from 2x4 and 4x4 boards. We had to cut out shapes from cardboard or black construction paper/butcher paper to tape to the windows for daytime performances. There were no professional lighting or sound systems. The budgets for plays were miniscule—costumes were obtained through begging, borrowing, and remaking clothes from Goodwill or Community Services. Although there were minimal budgets and few supplies, there was a vast creative excitement among the students and faculty. Those involved all had a passion to present plays to the community.

Fast forward a few years and, again, I decided to audition for a production at LSU—this time the play was *The Miracle Worker*. I researched the different roles in the play, the history behind the characters, and did the best that I could in my audition. I was sure the only role I might get was Aunt Ev (as I am quite a few years older than the role I auditioned for), but somehow I was presented with the honor of playing Annie Sullivan. When I started rehearsals, I was amazed how much had changed since I was last in a play at La Sierra. Matheson is now completely devoted to the theatre arts (we had to share it with others in my day); there is a real stage, professional lighting, professional-looking window covers, and a sound system. La Sierra University now offers a Drama Minor, where students actually get credit for participating in plays, whether on stage or behind the scenes. Classes are offered not only in acting, but also in playwriting, directing, stage building, etc.

It is amazing how far things have come in the last 15 or so years; however, although ticket prices have gone up, and there are actual budgets for play directors to work with, one thing has not changed—the amazing creative spirit presented to the community by those involved in the production and presentation of theatrical arts. I am so grateful I had the opportunity to participate in a production at La Sierra and thrilled to see how far the drama program has come. I can only imagine what wonders the future holds for the LSU drama program. ■

Congratulations 2010 Graduates

Communication Majors:



Alexandra Poblete and Carrie Patrick

English Majors:



Patrick York



Megan McDonough and Kendra Kravig



Erica Szilagyi

Stay connected!

Dear Alumni,

You can be sure that many of your former English and Communication classmates would love to know what you are doing and where you live. We welcome letters; if you are moving, please send us your new address information. Please tell us what you are doing, and where you are doing it. If you are writing literary gems, or exhibiting any work, let us share your news with your classmates. The Bibliophile is an easy way to keep in touch with La Sierra acquaintances. Share recent accomplishments and other news and include clippings and/or photos; email us or write notes on extra sheets:..... Thank you, Winona Howe, Editor.

Name	Name under which you attended, if different	Class Year
------	---	------------

New Address	Degree
-------------	--------

City	State	Zip Code
------	-------	----------

E-mail Address	Place of Employment	Job Title
----------------	---------------------	-----------

Home Telephone	Work Telephone
----------------	----------------

COMMENTS:

La Sierra University
English/Communication Department
PO Box 8247, 4500 Riverwalk Parkway
Riverside, CA 92515-8247

NONPROFIT
US POSTAGE
PAID
RIVERSIDE, CA
PERMIT No. 206

Phone: (951) 785-2241
FAX: (951) 785-2443
E-Mail: Undergraduate English, english@lasierra.edu
Undergraduate Communication, communication@lasierra.edu
Drama, drama@lasierra.edu
Graduate English, gradengl@lasierra.edu
Web site: <http://www.lasierra.edu/departments/englcomm/>

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED