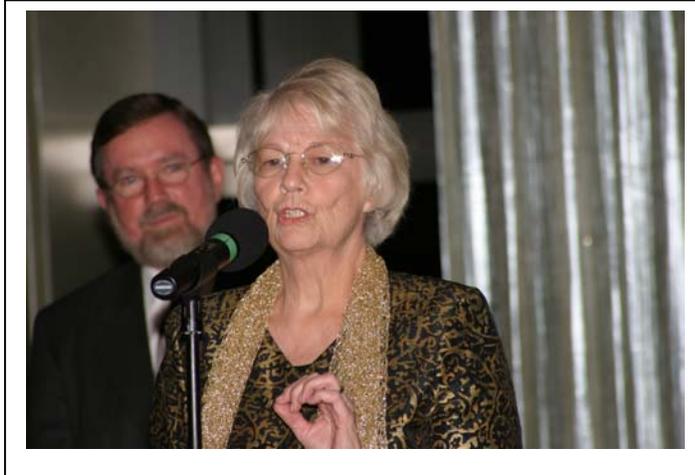


The Bibliophile

English and Communication Department @ La Sierra University

Winter 2004



Edna Maye Loveless addressing the audience, Larry Geraty, LSU President, listening.

Edna Maye Loveless—a most influential woman

Winona Howe

Prior to coming to La Sierra University in 1990, Edna Maye Loveless had taught English and journalism at Walla Walla College, Washington Missionary College, and Columbia Union College; in addition she was the editor/author of a textbook series produced by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to enhance SDA education. At LSU she taught children's and young adult literature as well as journalism and composition classes; in 1991 she became Director of the Freshman English Program. The latter involved mentoring the department's teaching assistants as they learned to teach composition classes under Edna Maye's able direction. From 1999-2001, Edna Maye was chair of the Department of English & Communication in addition to directing the Freshman English Program.

Between her teaching and administrative duties, Edna Maye's schedule was rather full. She found time, however, to present at many conferences, respond to publishers' requests to review writing textbooks, publish articles and book chapters, run workshops, and judge writing competitions. With this wealth of items to choose from, it is difficult to assess where her greatest contribution to LSU may lie. Is it that she guided a number of graduate students through revision of articles they wrote until those articles were accepted for publication? Or that the TAs she directed completed their master's degree as students who were already accomplished teachers? What about her enthusiastic recruitment for the MA Program in English, an activity which assured a steady stream

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Second Annual Fundraiser

Winona Howe

On the evening of December 6, 2003, a bus rolled towards Los Angeles. This was not just an ordinary bus, however; it was not carrying students on a field trip or athletes to a game. Edna Maye Loveless and her husband, Bill, were on board, along with a large number of relatives, friends, and well-wishers; all were on their way to the Second Annual Drama Fundraiser at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. One hundred and twenty people (not all of whom could fit on the bus) converged there for an excellent meal and an enjoyable evening of good conversation and terrific entertainment.

After spending time greeting old friends and meeting new ones, we sat down to a delicious dinner. Bruce Gilman introduced the four actors who performed the short play, *Overtones*, during dessert. Kira Leabow played a woman who had not married the love of her youth, an aspiring artist, because she was told he would never amount to anything; instead, she married a man with money whom she can barely tolerate. Katie Parsons' character married the artist who is truly talented, but is having trouble receiving enough commissions to remain financially solvent; she is hoping to persuade her old friend to sit for a portrait. Tracie Douglas and Vanessa Nelson, respectively, played the alter egos of the first two women, adding an amusing dimension to their somewhat stilted conversation. These alter egos are passionate, uninhibited, truthful, and even spiteful; they do not concern themselves with convention and manners but express themselves freely, urging their public selves to act as they truly feel.

Time after dinner was devoted to the honoree of the evening. Edna Maye Loveless has been the guiding spirit of the nascent drama program at La Sierra University, and proceeds from the fundraiser were designated for the establishment of the Edna Maye Loveless Drama Scholarship. Patti Pettis told how Dr. Loveless has been her mentor and teacher (although she never had the opportunity to actually

take a class from her). Dr. George Harding spoke of Dr. Loveless as a writer and her willingness to help others with their writing. Dr. Joan Coggin talked about the spirit of adventure her long-time friend possesses. And Marilynn Loveless recounted incidents from her childhood up to the present which demonstrated the inspiration Dr. Loveless provided her daughter, which has ultimately led to Marilynn's engagement with the stage, culminating in her current role as Director of Drama at Walla Walla College.

We then viewed *The Phantom of the Opera*; this was the final performance of the play in Los Angeles and the house was packed. Although our seats were towards the rear of the auditorium, we knew we were fortunate to have secured such a large block of tickets for this popular play. And there was still the ride home--a ride that for those on the bus was merely a continuation of the evening's conversations and interactions, with comparison of various versions of *Phantom*, the high level of acting ability exhibited by the actors in *Overtones*, and the obvious rightness of the newly established scholarship fund bearing Dr. Loveless' name.

The Department of English & Communication's goal was for contributions from this evening to reach \$10,000, the amount required for a scholarship to be endowed. Although we did not quite reach the goal on December 6, contributions have continued to come in, and a generous donor provided the remaining funds so that the fund could be endowed immediately. We are delighted that we now have the Edna Maye Loveless Drama Scholarship to assist students who contribute their talents to the drama program on a regular basis, drama students typified by the ladies who performed so ably in *Overtones*. ♦



Fall Drama Production— Enemy of the People

Bruce Gilman

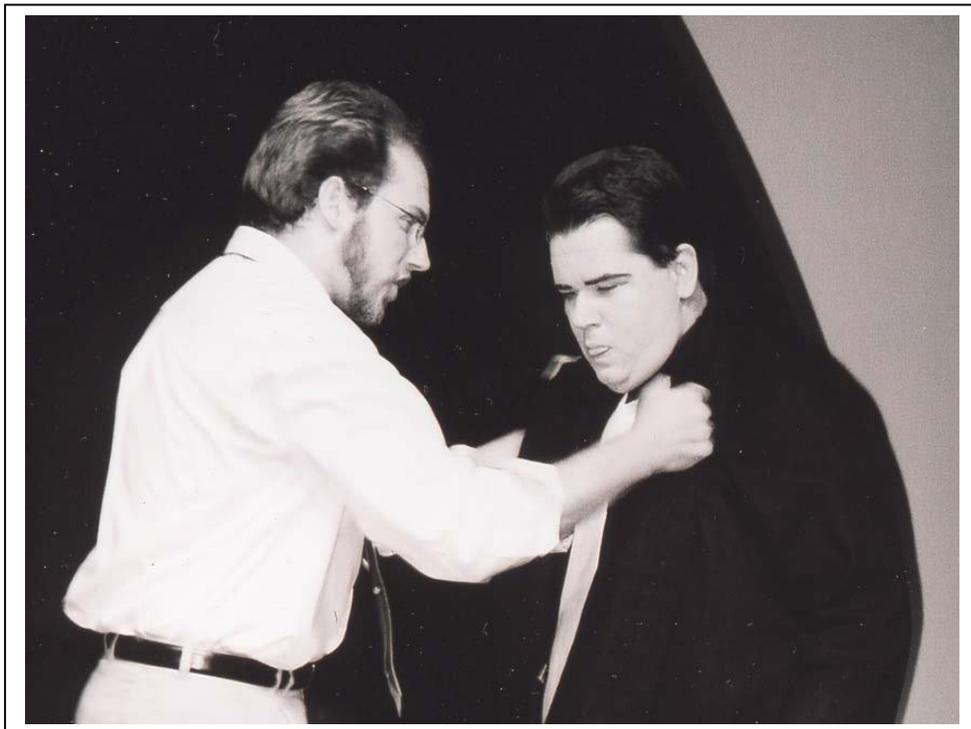
La Sierra alumna Andrea Geli returned to campus once again this fall, mounting a compelling interpretation of *Enemy of the People*, Henrik Ibsen's moral indictment of the residents of a small Scandinavian village set at the turn of the century. Geli, who has previously directed classics like *Othello*, *Antigone*, and *The Taming of the Shrew* in Matheson Chapel, updated Ibsen's script to the American 1950's. Her cast featured several well-known LSU actors in leading roles, including Rob Wolcott, Jennifer Davis, Jonathan Wilson, Tracie Douglas and Justin Turner. New faces included Jonathan and Ramon Crousett, Eric Reed and Andrea Poblete.

Director Geli's comments make clear why her choice of drama was appropriate to the La Sierra audience:

"This play, though it centers on an environmental issue a la Erin Brockovich, offers no Hollywood happy ending. Ibsen knew that easy choices are rare, and often insufficient to make people uncomfortable

enough to think deeply about right and wrong. In contrast to today's notion of 'go along to get along,' sometimes the truest loyalty to a community is the courage to hold it accountable to a higher standard. Ibsen's work reminds us that trailblazers must often walk the road less traveled. La Sierra University, like the small town depicted in this play, is a community profoundly affected by the actions of its members, presenting both a tantalizing challenge and a heavy responsibility. In *Enemy of the People*, Ibsen's characters struggle with moral choices of loyalty and idealism to which many students and faculty can relate. Yet as difficult as this struggle is, a dynamic learning environment requires a certain amount of discomfort to achieve growth. The audience will enjoy the play, but Ibsen's work may make a few people squirm. I believe he would have liked that."

Geli's production played to sold-out audiences for four nights in November. Coming departmental productions will feature *Celebration*, a new play written and directed by Bruce Gilman in winter quarter, and *Real Women Have Curves*, directed by Susan Gardner in the spring quarter. ♦



Rob Wolcott and Jonathan Wilson as Dr. Stockman and Mayor Stockman, protagonists in Gibson's Enemy of the People.

A Successful “Enemy” for La Sierra

Andrea Geli

La Sierra’s drama department took on yet another challenge in the recent production of Henrik Ibsen’s *An Enemy of the People* – a politically and morally charged drama about a doctor in a small town facing the ire of business interests when he discovers an environmental problem.

Rob Wolcott, who played the lead role of Dr. Stockman, took on a difficult role that included a scene that broke the metaphorical fourth wall of theater, where he spoke directly to the audience as if they were characters in the play. Some audience members were so moved that they responded, spontaneously calling out remarks. One audience member remarked, “I forgot that I was watching a play. It felt real.

Cast as Ms. Stockman, a woman who struggles with her fear for her family and the desire to stand by her husband, Tracie Douglas thought the experience was unique. “I felt that this play opened La Sierra’s society to a large range of serious drama. I think *Enemy* was a first for La Sierra, and it was well accepted.”

The sleepy small town seems innocent at the start of the play; with the doctor’s own brother as mayor and only one local paper. The director chose to set the play in the fifties, believing that this was in some ways a good match for the original setting of the play, the Victorian Era, which was very proper on the surface, though many problems were just lurking nearby. Jonathan Wilson played Mayor Stockman, adding to the many roles he has performed in for La Sierra. He commented that the mayor and his brother are not so different in their desires to help the town, but that they have very different ways of doing so.

Two brothers in real life, Ramon and Jonathan Crousset, newcomers to La Sierra, played town characters that affect the politics of the town. Director Andrea Geli pointed out that most people

watching recognized in the characters people they actually know who would behave the same way under those circumstances. “The writing is very real because Ibsen wrote about a similar experience. He knew people like this in his own life. We all know people like this – sometimes we are people like this.”

Yet the show wasn’t all politics – a little romance involving Dr. Stockman’s daughter, Petra, played by Andrea Poblete, and Hovstad, played by Justin Turner – showed how loyalties can affect relationships. In a classic case of how the show must go on, Andrea Poblete was one of two cast members to sprain an ankle during the run, but she soldiered on through the pain.

The director believes that every play has unsung heroes. “Though she was cast to understudy only Mrs. Stockman, Katie Wagner played many of the roles during rehearsal – whenever we needed her. Becca Lemasters never spoke a word in her role as Becky the maid, but her acting was still very effective. Our tech, Chris Welker, set up the lights and music to create the right mood for each scene.”

An Enemy of the People was emblematic of the opportunity the drama department offers students in acting, stagecraft and directing. Several students were even able to join the production late into the process. Some were cast as townspeople, others assisted costume designer Linda Herlingher in creating the look for the show, while others sold tickets. Assistant Director Patricia Poblete is an example of a versatile drama “nut”, as they are often affectionately termed. She has written and directed her own show on campus, as well as often served as an assistant director or stage manager.

La Sierra drama was largely founded on the efforts of students, with timely support from key faculty. A veteran of those early days, Andrea Geli is glad to see the progress that has been made. “The lights, the scholarships, the degree – these are all important and key steps. But the biggest impact is

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still affecting the audience. I'm proud of all our work on *Enemy of the People* because I think we did that. The character Jen Davis plays, Mrs. Kiil, really surprised people. She seems like a harmless old lady, but she's tough."

Those types of surprises and character development might be why La Sierra's production is, in Prof. Bruce Gilman's words, "... still provoking discussion."

Tracie Douglas adds that while she still isn't sure the audience understood the point of the fifties setting, that the production was an intense experience. "I will forever miss this play." ♦



Andrea Geli—Director



Tracie Douglas and Rob Wolcott

As Dr. & Mrs. Stockman

of students for a small but excellent program? Perhaps the scholarship she set up for graduate students who needed financial assistance? Or is it the universally high regard in which she was held by both students and colleagues? Although Edna Maye's contributions in all these areas are stellar, the focus at the second annual fundraiser for the Drama Program is her ongoing support of drama at La Sierra University.

Drama, as a regularly scheduled activity at LSU, began in the spring of 1998 with a production of *As You Like It*, directed by graduate student Andrea Geli. From the first, Edna Maye was extremely supportive--she attended all the plays, mentored the young actors and directors, and quietly made up the difference when productions exceeded the minimal amount of funds that could be eked out of the department's budget. When she became chair, she negotiated with President Geraty for a separate budget for drama, a move which regularized the program and placed it on a solid footing. In addition, the program became an academic one, offering a drama minor.

It is entirely appropriate that the first scholarship set aside for drama students should be named the Edna Maye Loveless Drama Scholarship. It is the goal of the Department of English and Communication for this scholarship to be quickly endowed; we want to see Edna Maye's influence on the Drama Program continue to offer support to both the program and its students. Your contributions in the name of Edna Maye Loveless will help ensure a bright future for drama at La Sierra University. ♦



Loveless Family

La Sierra's President's Award 2003

Winona Howe

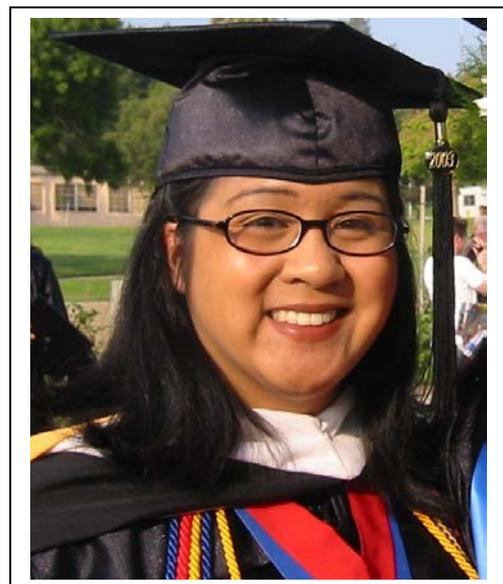
The announcement of the President's award read: Dahlie Conferido, a graduating English major, has been an honors scholar since 1999 and has played a significant part in many English and Communication Department productions during her time at La Sierra. Along with acting credits in seven plays, she wrote and directed the play *The Home Front* in Fall 2002. Her ministry participation includes service in Feat of Clay Christian drama, and Homebase Ministries. Ms. Conferido has received the Marie Barber Marchus and Harry Schriilo Scholarships and is featured in The National Deans' List and *Who's Who Among College Students*.

Although this statement may have summed up some of Dahlie's accomplishments, letters of support from department faculty detailed the many ways in which she has contributed to the department and La Sierra University. "She is the consummate 'professional' as an actress—dedicated, hardworking, dependable." "What impresses me is how she is able to keep so many balls in the air, performing exquisitely all the time." "She has been an absolute delight to work with. Not only is she cheerful and conscientious in her work, she finds no task too small to pay attention to nor too large that it is insurmountable." "Dahlie Conferido is one of those students who comes along every few years that makes teaching an experience of pure pleasure. Her writing was witty and clever, reflective and insightful." "Her examinations and the paper she wrote for the class demonstrated a level of both excellence and creativity that was limited to her alone." "You could find no better candidate than Dahlie Conferido to receive the Dean's Award."

Departmental support was augmented by other professors and staff who have worked with Dahlie, and by student response to the play she wrote and directed. "This play helped me to understand the stories that my grandparents would tell me about their experience in the war, and why they said that times were rough for them when the war was going on,"

said one, while another commented, "Great stories are ones which appeal to many different emotions. This play had comedy, drama, anger, sympathy and learning. Learning is usually not seen as an emotion, but it can be very valuable to the experience of watching a play. The learning that took place was the realization of every character's own place in society." A third student referred to the main characters, saying, "These three women accepted the challenge that came with the war, and used it to make meaning out of their lives. This marked the beginning of women having a voice. Something good came out of something as ugly as war," while another remarked simply, *The Home Front* is a truly remarkable and unforgettable play. Undeniably my favorite production out of all the plays I've seen at La Sierra University."

Dahlie has demonstrated excellence in so many areas—the classroom, her creative endeavors, her work, etc.—that the department was delighted, but not entirely surprised, when she was selected to be the recipient of the President's Award. Her undergraduate career can be summed up in the following words: "She is a student who has taken full advantage of the opportunities for growth that are present but often ignored; in consequence, she has not only grown herself, but also has contributed to many different levels of campus life." ♦



Dahlie Conferido



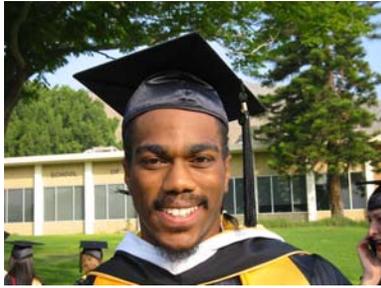
Thomas Michael Bell



Emily Kay Thornton



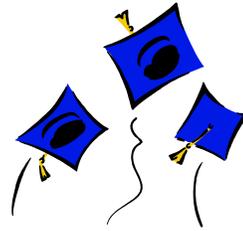
Linda Polly Biswas



Donovan Childs



Jessica G. Fong



2003 Graduates



Erin Michelle Grall



Vanessa Marie Nelson



Heidi Saenz



Megan Alane McCombs



Liz Lan Nguyen



Ashleigh Marie Lamberton



Michael Soliven



Danelle Taylor



Sheryl Gruentler

The Poetry of 405/505

Bruce Gilman

Last spring, the better part of 30 undergraduate and graduate students took part in ENGL/COMM 405/505 – a Creative Writing course entitled “Poetry.”

Our nation had just begun the war in Iraq; sentiment in the class over the latest news ranged from pride to anxiety to horror. As the war continued, our assembled group of fledgling and experienced poets undertook a project that was notable for the range and depth of its aesthetic inquiry. What emerged, over the course of ten weeks, was a compendium of reflections, which considered the experience of living in the United States in our new century.

These examples touch on the meaning of friendship, love, patriotism, and history to one group of “American” students.

THE SHY PATRIOT

Brandon Herrmann

I love the flag that sits in my attic
When I remember to consider it
Or have occasion to find it beside
The box of cloth baby diapers
When I browse the museum of me
And my wife under rafter ceiling

I tug the chain hanging from the bulb
To wake up the box of crayon art
And my grandfathers purple heart
He earned for the night inside the fox hole
When the bullet made his arm shake
Until last winter marked 94 years

Emily’s wedding dress hangs in front
Still touching my tuxedo and beside
Are the gowns that dressed us for diplomas
I imagine that your attic is much of the same
Store for autobiographical relics
And nostalgia that defines the name on your mailbox

So on June 14 when I dig up the banner
I reflect on the flag in its proper context
A member of my intimate treasures
That I am hesitant to undress
Outside on my lawn exposed
The same threads that shape us all



When the voice is “American.”

Rebekah Rustad

I speak:

Polished English burnished by birth.

My ideas, like yours
Sparkle in our eyes,
Jems we tuck into our pockets –
Roll around in our brains
When no one is looking.

You speak:

Fractured English fumbling
Fractures forward splitting subject-verb
Agreement
Pronoun and antecedent
Modifies

Misplaced
Disjunction
Of adverb

Or maybe, just an accent,
just a halt between words.

Your ideas, like mine
Heat our palms
At night, clutched
They shape and are shaped
By our hands.

I speak:

And the face smiles.
“Sure...with your communication skills
...always an asset.”

You speak:

And the face turns
“Sorry...we don’t have a place...someone
of your skills
...your qualifications.”

“PARTED SISTERS”

Jennifer Park

The playground of my childhood
with its squeaky swings and hanging tires
are skeletons that remain
of a battlefield
where “King of the Mountain”
was more than just a game

I was different.
Slanted almonds-of-eyes
Face small and brown
My last name looked strange
Next to theirs: A-H-N.

*“Chinese, Japanese! Dirty Knees! Look at these!”
What did that have to do with me?*

But then my spirits cheered
the day Amanda Moore
became my friend.
Object of boys’ attention
and eyes of sparkling blue,
She was Amanda—
Amanda Moore to me.

She was different.
Never joining in
chants of *ching, chong, and chang*
nor pulling at the
corners of her eyes,
She was Amanda—
Amanda Moore to me.

So with their voices rising
The young kings of the playground
Hurled their jeers into the air:

*“There go the Moore-Ahn sisters!
A chink and a white,
Sitting in a tree,
K-I-S-S-I-N-G!”*

day after day.

Her face grew pale.
My heart sank—
And so did her reserve.
Sadly, slowly she turned away
And I haven’t seen her since.

The Poetry Project

Annemarie Hamlin

Graduate students sponsored a campus-wide poetry reading that attracted a vibrant audience to the Eagle's Nest on Wednesday, November 5, 2003. Titled "The Poetry Project," the program featured students and faculty reading or reciting their favorite published poems.

The light banter of August Champlin and Dahlie Conferido, graduate student emcees, entertained the crowd as much as the poetry itself. Twenty-three participants presented works ranging from classic crowd pleasers by Robert Frost ("The Road Not Taken") to spoken word poetry by Taylor Mali ("What Teachers Make") to modern feminist poets like Maya Angelou ("Phenomenal Woman") and Marge Piercy ("What Big Girls Are Made Of").

Second year MA student Kelly Reed's performance of "Jabberwocky" by Lewis Carroll elicited howls of delight from the crowd, and Patti Pettis's rendition of "La Migra" by Pat Mora sent chills through much of the audience. Faculty members Bruce Gilman and Winona Howe also recited, as did many undergraduates as well.

The graduate students staged the event in response to a class assignment that required they develop, organize, and participate in an event that engaged the campus community in the world of poetry. Danielle Belisle, a second-year graduate student and poetry lover, suggested that the class explore and adapt the format of the Favorite Poem Project developed by former poet laureate Robert Pinsky (<http://www.favoritepoem.org/>). The class quickly adopted this format and asked the campus community to submit their favorite poems along with a paragraph explaining why it is their favorite poem. A committee of graduate students then invited some of those who submitted poems to participate in the program.

While the work of developing and organizing the program stemmed from the class, several students who weren't students in the class also contributed organizational help to the program, including Rohini Thomas, Rob Wolcott, and Aarika Chilson.

Their help was most generous and much appreciated.

Students and faculty alike felt The Poetry Project succeeded in its goal of engaging the campus in the world of poetry and have indicated they would like to schedule at least one more event this year. ♦

New Communication Faculty Member

We would like to introduce Dan Tinianow, Ph.D. Syracuse University, specializing in Mass Communication, Television, Radio, and Film.

Dan Tinianow studied Mass Communication, with minors in Psychology and Art at Oberlin College. After living in Japan for a year, he began graduate studies at The S. I. Newhouse School of Public Communication at Syracuse University. First completing a Master of Science degree in Television/Radio/Film, he later completed a Doctorate in Mass Communication. His dissertation examined the technology of virtual reality from a Mass Communication disciplinary perspective.

After teaching for seven years at Austin College in Texas, Dr. Tinianow moved to Los Angeles to take a break from academia while renewing ties in the entertainment industry and catching up on the state of the media art. During this time, he served as senior researcher for a History Channel series, "Secret Passages," wrote numerous TV and radio advertisements, wrote and directed a short film, and actively developed two television series, which, unfortunately, were never picked up for production.

Dr. Tinianow has a special interest in technology that stretches back to his childhood - his older brothers nicknamed him "the electronic brain," and his mother says it may be genetic, since her father was also a gadget fan, as well as the first physician in Berlin to own a fluoroscope in a private practice. In particular, his interest lies in human factors in technology: how do people use technology, and how does technology influence culture (and vice-versa).

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A strong interest in creative pursuits is the other side of his coin. Dr. Tinianow likes writing short and long form teleplays, mostly tending toward comedy. He has also acted in over a dozen stage productions from his teen years onward.

Specialized areas of interest include Asian film (in particular, Akira Kurosawa), comic books and science fiction. ♦

NCTE Convention

Susan Gardner

Two current graduate students, August Champlin and Julie Cook, and one recent graduate of the M.A. program, Heidi Saenz, now English teacher at La Sierra Academy Junior High, and Susan Gardner presented at the first College Colloquium sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English national meeting in San Francisco on November 20, 2003. Their theme was taken from La Sierra's

motto—From Diversity, Community—and their presentations centered on creating a teaching community from diverse perspectives. Their presentations were titled "The Historian Supports her Writers" (Cook), "The Musician Conducts an English Class" (Champlin), "The L2 Student Becomes the L1 Teacher" (Saenz), and "The Mentor Learns from the Mentored" (Gardner). The group was able to meet other professional English teachers, take in stimulating workshops, and listen to nationally recognized figures and authors like Robert McNeil, Maxine Hong Kingston, and Adrienne Rich.

In addition, Dr. Gardner, who chaired the Paul and Kate Farmer Writing Awards Selection Committee, presented those awards at the Secondary Section luncheon. The two winners and two honorable mention designees were selected for writing the best articles in the 2002-2003 issues of English Journal, the primary NCTE journal for secondary English teachers and university teachers of English education in the country. ♦



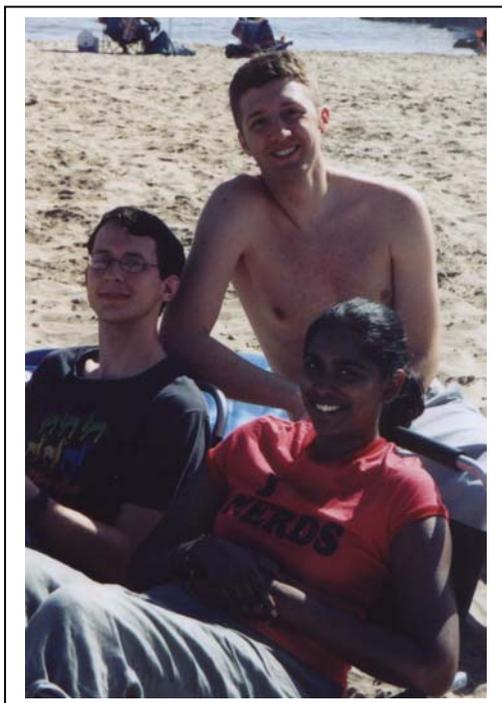
Heidi Saenz, Julie Cook, and August Champlin listen intently to other speakers as Patricia Harkin, University of Illinois, chair of the College Colloquium section, oversees the session.

Beach or Big Bear? Which? When? Who?

Susan Gardner, Aarika Chilson, August Champlin, Dahlie Conferido

Despite rigorous intellectual pursuits, demands of teaching freshmen, and busy lives of classes and work, LSU graduate students take time for getting together and just hanging out. Often they head out for lunch together—Chinese? Mexican? Thai? Italian? Indian? Sometimes they carpool to concerts or to hear authors like Alice Walker or Sherman Alexie who are speaking in the area. Or, it may be an afternoon at Disneyland.

The beach beckoned a group of 15 on an 80-degree day in mid-October. Grad students, their friends, two faculty (Dr. Gardner and Dr. Hamlin) spent a fun afternoon at Corona del Mar eating and lounging, strolling and singing, roasting hot dogs and vegelinks, eating Dr. G's mac and cheese, and just getting to know each other on a perfect day. The warm weather even enticed Rusty Perez and Jill Walker into the ocean for a swim, and Deidre Howson to put her toes in the Pacific Ocean for the first time ever since she arrived from New York.



Bob Beckett, Jake Jackson, Rohini Thomas

Others who found an afternoon at the beach especially enticing were Aarika Chilson, August Champlin, Kelly Reed, Bob Beckett, Michelle Ask, Jake Jackson, Rohini Thomas, Julie Cook, Tracy Dawes (already graduated but still very much one of us), and assorted friends.

In chilly November, 14 grad students packed their gear and headed to a cabin in Big Bear. Eight women. Six guys. One bathroom. Closed highways and dizzying detours left from ravaging wildfires. Key to the cabin given to the last person to arrive. Sound like the recipe for disaster? Far from it. A truly bonding experience of cooking, sleeping, fighting over the bathroom, singing and storytelling brought the group even closer together.

Besides the adventure of getting to the cabin and vying for hot showers, the trip's highlight was an outing to Big Bear Village where the group scouted for artwork, antiques, caramel apples, fudge, and hot coffee, played aggressive games of air hockey, and enjoyed live music at a local restaurant. A light snowfall and a safe trip back to Riverside ended another fun social event for this year's group of grad students. ♦



Rusty Perez, Bob Beckett, Flint Johnston, Jake Jackson, Danielle Belisle, Michelle Ask, Kelly Reed, Rohini Thomas, August Champlin, Dahlie Conferido, Julie Cook, Aarika Chilson, Jill Walker

Students enthusiastically read True Notebooks

Rosalie Lynn

Never before have students in my Reading Improvement class responded so positively to a book assigned as “required reading.” Quite serendipitously, I heard about the recent release of Mark Salzman’s *True Notebooks* at the time that I was ordering books for this winter quarter. Because Salzman had been a guest lecturer and entertainer on campus November 13, 2001 and had talked about his experiences volunteering at LA Central, I was hopeful that the students in my class would be drawn into the story. My hope was rewarded.

Salzman’s “notebook” first details his resistance to, and then his seduction into becoming a volunteer writing instructor of high risk juvenile offenders at Los Angeles County’s Central Juvenile Hall. It chronicles his early experiences in a self-deprecating style and with a tone of gentle humor and pathos. This style and tone stand in piercing contrast to the harsh realities that he describes. Yet, Salzman refrains from strident calls for reform of our juvenile justice system, and as the result, he is able to bring to life the humanity and the complex feelings of those behind the incarcerating walls.

On these pages Salzman underscores the complex relationships among the inmates as well as the guards. He does this by careful observation, vivid description, and by a generous use of dialogue. He highlights the individuality of the young men by including samples of their writing. While they share a common denominator, all been arrested and are waiting trial for armed robbery and murder, it’s in their writing that the diversity sparkles. Salzman has left this writing “unaltered,” so that from these pages the distinctive characteristics of individual voices can be heard clearly.

Each time Salzman comes to Central, he brings paper, pencils, and writing folders; each time he leaves, he takes with him the paper, pencils, and writing folders with new writing which he’ll type before returning. Genuine pride comes when the young men see their writing typed: “It looks more professional.” It encourages them to value themselves as writers and to write more.

Under a guard’s ever-watching eye, Salzman is available to the young men twice a week. They talk; Salzman listens. They talk; Salzman asks questions. They talk. But talk is easy compared to writing, so he encourages them to write. After they write, they read aloud to the group. He will not leave without at least one person reading.

By reading aloud, the solo act of writing becomes a shared experience, inconceivable if they had been on the outside and within a gang. Reading aloud to the group is an act of profound risk, because they are exposing their individuality and feelings. But reading aloud becomes the catalyst for building a sense of community behind bars. During one of the early sessions, Francisco Javier read,

I know in here sometimes I have to put a mask on and become somebody that I am really not, but that’s how you survive in here. I might seem like if I’m big and tough, as if I’m hard as a stone on the outside, but deep inside of me, I am a person with fear, anger, and hurt.

True Notebooks surprised my students in several ways. Repeatedly, I heard comments from my students about how well “the guys” wrote, about how smart they were, and about how they could understand the feelings. One student reflected, “The book is interesting to me because it’s about people like me.” Another wrote,

Some of the stories were very interesting and made you think. Some of them made me realize that there are many worlds out there. Some contain wealth and love but some have hate and poorness. This book helped me realize that even though we’re all different we’re still all the same.

Before the class began reading the book, I explained that it contained profanity, that Salzman had not sanitized the words actually used. I said, though, that I would assign another of Salzman’s books if this were a problem. No one took the offer. Instead, a number of students completed the book ahead of schedule.

One of the class assignments based on the book was to choose, develop, and present one of the chapters as

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“reader’s theater.” This they did entirely on their own, and I enjoyed a superb reading of “Send in the Clowns.” The student who read Ibrahim’s essay was especially expressive.

People look at the outside of a person and judge them on that. When society look upon me they see a hoodsta and a madman, lost in the street with no shoes on his feet, but am I really lost and mad or am I free?....

At the beginning, I asked the students to choose one of the young men to get to know particularly well through his behavior, dialogue and his writing samples. The last assignment required a letter be written to a hypothetical “Honorable Judge Allpower,” asking for consideration in sentencing the young man chosen by the student. They took this assignment seriously, as evidenced by this conclusion of one student’s letter. It stands out for its blunt eloquence.

Being in juvenile hall does not make a person an animal. Those kids are just humans with feelings, who are looking at society to give them a second chance....Francisco has recently graduated from high school which is one goal he wanted to accomplish before being sentenced.

Faced with the sentencing, I appeal to you Honorable Judge Allpower to grant this young gentleman a light sentence, so that he has an opportunity in the future to live life as a changed man. Francisco Javier certainly deserves a second chance.

Sincerely yours,

Merilyn Makamure

In reality, Francisco received a sentence of “52 years to life” for two attempted murder convictions and the judge denied a request that the two sentences run concurrently.

Mark Salzman still gives his time to high risk juvenile offenders. He is actively involved in InsideOut Writers and the Alethos Foundation

which each week reaches about 120 incarcerated young people at six different locations. To learn more, go to www.insideoutwriters.org. His name is listed as a “writing teacher,” along with 27 other professional writers, and he wrote the website’s Introduction. But Salzman’s encouragement isn’t limited to those behind physical walls, it includes my students. Listen to the voice of appreciation from one young woman.

I am the eldest of eight kids and trying to be a good role model for those who look up to me. I am not locked up like these guys or have a criminal record but at times I feel like I am. At times in life I wanted to quit and go far away as I can because as I was trying to accomplish something it seem like it was all coming down on me as I was trying, but I have great faith that I am going to overcome these negative feelings....I enjoyed this book very much. At the beginning I thought I would have to read another book instead, but at the end it was very rewarding. ♦



Larry Geraty, Edna Maye Loveless, Winona Howe, Jeff Kaatz
At the Second Annual Fundraiser

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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, Mary E. Wilson, Editor.



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