



# The English Update



A newsletter for English majors at BSC.  
Faculty Advisor: D'Ann George

Volume II

Fall 2001

## What's new in the BSC English Department?

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## Job Market Tips From a Web Writer/Editor



*John Shanahan, a BSC English major who graduated in 1996, edits the web page for AJM Magazine, a jewelry trade publication.*

"Shut your mouth and open your mind," John Shanahan advises anyone seeking to enter his field of web-page writing and editing. Since graduating from BSC, Shanahan says he has been forced to look outside the writer's point of view. Getting into that mind frame is difficult, but worth the effort.

Shanahan has learned that web publishing is very different from traditional publishing. The writing needs to get right to the point, and has to be easy to access, because the average reader has a short attention span is looking to find helpful information quickly.

And web sites store much more

information than a regular magazine.

The best part of web publishing is that it is actually fun. Part of a four-person team dedicated to producing a quality magazine, Shanahan maintains the web site version, deciding what things to trim down and what material can stay. He is constantly editing articles so that the writing is short and concise. His position gives him the opportunity to be a writer, proofreader, and editor all at the same time.

Shanahan's ladder to his position seems climbable even to a student. While working part-time as a technical writer at Bank Boston, he noticed an ad for a full-time writer at AJM and decided to take a chance and apply. After landing the job, he started working on his own web site to showcase his writing. His boss noticed this, and selected him for the position of Associate Editor.

This new job was challenging and required a great deal more responsibility. It was also a chance for him to expand his computer skills and his résumé.

So what qualifications are necessary for web publishing? First of all, a BA and a basic understanding of the craft are essential. This means that you should be an experienced writer who is well grounded in spelling, punctuation, and the rules of grammar. For most jobs, you will be asked to read a writing sample and correct the mistakes.

Having an open mind is also a big factor. "Be painfully aware that you have not stopped learning," Shanahan emphasizes. Too many beginning writers aren't always open to criticism. In the work world, most will find that they are doing far more rewriting than writing.

Writing is a craft, explains Shanahan, and it's a good idea to work at your craft constantly, to continuously strive to improve your skills. While in school, you should always be looking for opportunities to get your writing seen and published, he says.

Software and internet skills are also a plus. "Play around on the computer to develop skills in graphics and web design," he suggests. These qualities will round out your résumé, and be an incentive to employers seeking qualified candidates.

Are there specific traits an individual should have to be successful at web publishing? According to Mr. Shanahan, you need a creative mind that is

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**—By Brian Colwell**

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explains Shanahan,  
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**Shanahan Interview**  
(continued)

capable of expanding information. You should be flexible, and able to come up with original concepts.

Think of yourself as the reader when trying to improve the magazine. What's being said in each sentence that could be extracted or expanded?

A wealth of information is available on most web sites, and the task for the publisher is to organize this material to hold the reader's attention. If the reader is instantly hooked, there is a good chance he or she will subscribe.

That is the ultimate goal behind the work.

Attitude has a lot to do with success, believes Shanahan. As Mr. Shanahan puts it, "*Your education begins after your education.*"



**Emily Dickinson, During a Momentary Lapse Into (Almost) Prose, Laments Her Non-existent Publishing Career**

The flying tidings lost—  
How much I give away, and yet abide this  
World—Whose smile Does not Fade!  
Green chill is now upon me—I know What I  
Have—Lost, Opinion is a flitting thing—But  
SASEs I have not. Excuses, my cloak  
Electric—I have—No—contributor copies—  
A strange dark Mob, my unseen poems—  
Unread, they might Be jalopies. Here—Good  
Angel, take this Poem—Ominous, it might be—  
But Truth, like Time, outlasts the Sun—  
Good Editor, Please publish me!

**Ryan G. Van Cleave**

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**BSC Student Starts Poetry Quarterly**



When BSC English major Cynthia Bracket-Vincent started a poetry quarterly five years ago, she had to beg fellow students at Quincy CC for submissions. And the money for the new publication came out of her own pocket. Today, *The Aurean* has 200 subscribers, a budget in the black, and a proud founder whom *Poet's Market* recently interviewed as one of 12 featured editors and poets, alongside such notables as Robert Pensky.

The well-known publication featured Bracket-V. because of her unique editorial philosophy. Unlike most editors, Bracket-V. treats submitters—even those who don't follow the rules—with the utmost care and respect. "I acknowledge everyone's submission with a postcard, even for those who don't

send a self-addressed stamped envelope," says Bracket-V. A postcard may seem like a small gesture, but in an industry where most writers never receive a response to their work, it makes an impression. "A quick response is unheard of," she says.

When it comes to choosing among submissions, Bracket-V. welcomes New England regional, meditational, and inspirational poetry, though she stays away from overtly religious works. *The Aurean* also encourages new poets who have never seen their words in print—"assuming their work is good," she adds.

Asked about advice for aspiring poets, Bracket-V. emphasizes attitude and perseverance. "Don't keep telling yourself you want to be a writer. If you write, you are a writer," she says. "There is a market out there for your writing; keep looking for it and you will find it."

To order *The Aurean*, send \$5 for a single issue, or \$17 for a subscription, to Encircle Publications, PO Box 219, Sagamore Beach, MA 02562. Send submissions to the same address.

**Spring 2002 Special Course Offerings**

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| EN496   | American Women of Color in the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century |
| EN385   | Irish Drama   |
| EN389   | Topics in Writing: Writing Across the Curriculum        |
| EN495   | Novel of Manners  |
| EN495   | Comedy and Fantasy: Beerbohm and Waugh                  |
| EN497   | Modern European Fiction and Literary Theory             |
| EN251M1 | Marketing and Literature                                |
| EN232H  | Major American Writers                                  |

### Letter from the New Chair of the English Department



As the new Chair of the English Department, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to those of you whom I have not had in class.

I first came to Bridgewater State College in 1979 as a visiting lecturer. At that time, the college was nearing the end of what I've been told was an eleven year hiring freeze. Once it was over, I was employed in 1983 as a full time tenure track instructor. Clifford Wood was the Chair of the department at that time, and as the years progressed it was served by Charlie Angell, Hal DeLisle, and Iain Crawford. My special areas of interest are women's literature, English education, and writing, with a recent interest in the literature of aging.

I have seen the English department from both the perspective of a new, young junior faculty member and a more seasoned senior faculty member. In the interim, I have come to have a deep and enduring regard for the department, and I hope you will come to share in this genuine affection and pride.

And we do have a lot to feel proud about. We are the largest department on campus with many responsibilities such as evaluating the writing placement exams of incoming freshmen and transfer students. Also, the Director of the Honors Center and the Writing Center hail from the department. We have a very active English honor society, a new departmental newsletter, and a listserv for majors. And our talented faculty work hard to create a quality learning experience for students pursuing a B.A., M.A., or M.A.T. And, of course, we have wonderful majors!

In order to get to know majors even better, the English Department is hosting its very **first opening year picnic for faculty, staff, graduate, and undergraduate majors on Friday, September 21<sup>st</sup> from 3-5:00 pm in the Stearns/McNamara Memorial Garden** between Pope Hall and the Conant Science Building. Our list serve will send a detailed announcement to all registered majors in early September.

I, too, would like to know majors better to acquire a student perspective on the department. I'm envisioning a monthly social hour with the Chair when students could casually drop by to express their concerns or delight with the English program or just to chat about the discipline we both love. I might even try to scare up some refreshments. If this sounds like something you would be interested in, please drop me an e-mail at [epezzulich@bridgew.edu](mailto:epezzulich@bridgew.edu).

On a final note, the English department wants it students to have a voice. In a survey conducted recently, majors expressed their opinions about our program, such as the need for expanded course offerings. My letter in the spring issue will address what you had to say in the survey and the department's response to it, so please pick up an *English Update* next spring in front of the departmental office.

In closing, let me welcome you back and extend my very best wishes for a successful 2001-2002 academic year.

Cordially,

Evelyn Pezzulich  
Professor and Chair of English

**English Majors Win Honors**

**Deirdre Smith**

Robert Daniel Scholar, Schoolman Award, Writing Consultant

**Christine Mavrelion**

Elementary Key Award, Ruth Lawton Scholar, Kappa Delta Pi

**Julie Mackinnon**

Omicron Delta Kappa

**Sonia Dobbins**

College and Departmental Honors, Writing Fellow

**Meredith Stoughton**

Ridlon Scholar, Writing Consultant, Departmental Honors

**Randall Livingstone**

College and Departmental Honors, Writing Consultant

**Robert Hicks**

College and Departmental Honors

**Katherine Deshaies**

Nicole Prince Award

**2001-02 Writing Center Staff**

**Consultants**

Denise Blandin  
 Adam Blunt  
 Alayna Brinkley  
 Jennifer Bunton  
 Nancy Byrne  
 Lauren Dowd  
 Leanne Malfa  
 Bethany Michalski  
 Megan Mulligan  
 AnnaLee Nurmenniemi  
 Maria Perez  
 Erin Reilly  
 Kate Ring  
 Corinne Sirianos  
 Rebecca Stoneham  
 Kimberly Souza

**Fellows**

Tara-Jean Palopoli  
 Leanne Santos  
 Jamie White

**Graduate Assistant**

Jamie White

**Faculty Directors**

Lee Torda (Fall)  
 D'Ann George (Spring)

**Specialist in Irish, Postcolonial literature Joins Faculty**



*Professor Garland Kimmer*

**You specialize in postcolonial literature. What does that mean?**

I study people and cultures that are writing in the English language in the aftermath of the English empire. My "major" in graduate school was 20th century British and American literature, and I always found the most stimulating writing to be coming from the places that used to be colonies in the empire. For me, the MOST stimulating place of writing has always been Ireland, and I tend to look at Irish writers as sharing key traits with writers in other countries that were once colonial.

**Who are your favorite Irish writers, and what do you like about each?**

That's tough. W. B. Yeats is at the top of the list, and James Joyce won't make it. I love Yeats for too many reasons. When I read him for the first time in college, I knew that I would spend my life with his poetry. I love the sound of it and the feel of it. On top of that, I feel like his work is crucial to understanding the 20th century. A few other quick favorites would be Seamus Heaney, Ciaran Carson, Paula Meehan, Roddy Doyle, Brian Friel, and Anne Devlin. They give us pictures of Ireland that form an interesting and uneasy image of the present and how it got to be that way.

**You've been here for a year now. What class have you enjoyed teaching the most, and why?**

If I have to pick one, it would be my seminar in post-colonial literature. I was really nervous about teaching it, especially since there was a mistake in course numbering so that everyone thought they were taking an American Lit. seminar. None of the students knew quite what they were getting into, and they did a superlative job reading a number of difficult works. I found the discussion to be lively, interesting, and challenging. On top of that, I think that many of the students surprised themselves with the kind of writing that they were doing by the end of the term. There were several papers that I hope will be revisited next year when the undergraduate research symposium comes up.

**How would you describe your personality as a teacher?**

There's a passage in MASH where Hawkeye Pierce describes why the people in his shift call him Hawkeye while others refer to their chief surgeon as Major Burns. I'm like Hawkeye. I want an informal environment where people can think and learn without the added pressure of trying to act like something we're not. I will do whatever I have to do to make sure that anyone in my class is thinking and being intellectually adventurous.

**What's your favorite way to take a break from work?**

Aside from banging my head on my office walls, my favorite way to unwind is to play tennis. If I get something beyond tennis, it's hiking with my dogs. I have three Irish Setters named Fergus, Christy, and Deirdre who love to get out in the woods whenever they can.