



The English Update

A newsletter for English majors at BSC
Ann Brunjes, Editor



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English Education, Nineteenth Century American Literature Specialist Joins Faculty

Which writers interest you most, and why?

I taught high school for a number of years before pursuing my Ph.D., and I loved it. One of the things that attracted me to Bridgewater was the chance to pursue my scholarly interests while still being a part of secondary education. My research has focused on nineteenth century American literature; my most recent project explored how writers from different cultural perspectives used spiritualism to help bridge the cultural divides in American society. More recently, I've been interested in environmental literature and eco-criticism, and most recently, cross-cultural attitudes towards pedagogy.

Kucich Interview continued p. 4

The Comment: English Majors' Leadership Brings Positive Change

If you haven't picked up an issue of *The Comment* this year, you're missing out. You see, BSC's student-run newspaper has come a long way in the past two semesters. Indeed, the masthead and design are strikingly



Professor John Kucich

different from the relics of the past, but if you dare to actually read the material inside, you'll notice that the quality of writing and design have undergone drastic changes as well.

These improvements came last May when English/Political Science Major Jennifer Cunningham took over as Editor in Chief. Other English Majors on the staff include Managing Editor Geoffrey Oldmixon; Arts and Entertainment Editor Mike Haggerty; and Sports Editor John White (English/Communication Studies). I joined the staff as News Editor in October.

Although a skilled and dedicated team like ours can accomplish a great deal, a strong leader like Cunningham helps us to keep moving forward. Jennifer's enthusiasm was the spark that brought *The Comment* to its present stage, and it is that same passion that will keep us heading in the right direction. With Jennifer, Managing Editor Geoffrey Oldmixon contributes a weekly column called "My Writing Concentration." It provides valuable input on the staff's work, and perhaps most importantly, solves problems.

Back in November, it was hard to find a writer to cover an event. These days, people are asking me for stories to write every week, several of them English majors. Our work has paid off in the response we're getting from the community. It's great hearing students discussing articles, receiving email from faculty praising our efforts, or seeing someone stop by a newsstand to pick up a paper and actually read it.

~ Joseph Cutrufo

Comment continued p. 2

thebridge Publishes Inaugural Issue

Bridgewater State College's first student run and produced journal of fine arts, *thebridge*, debuted Wednesday night, April 21st at the 40th Annual Student Art Show.

There was a standing room only turnout for *thebridge*'s first

student reading, featuring senior English major Mandy Simoneau. President Mohler-Faria, many members of the faculty, staff, and student body all attended to hear her award-winning short story *Paper Fish*, and to pick up copies of the journal.

Eleven different majors are featured in the journal.

thebridge continued p. 4

The Comment (cont'd)

Jennifer Cunningham, Editor-in-Chief, discusses the Comment's revitalization:

This year, we've been striving for excellence in every way. When the new staff came together in September we saw that *The Comment* had a greater potential than had been filled in the past. As Editor in Chief, I wanted to improve the paper in every way possible. I wanted *The Comment* to be valued on campus and to become a newspaper that the campus community could appreciate and depend on.



The Comment staff doesn't mind working long hours, sleepless nights - we always push for more. This year, the average size of *The Comment* was twenty pages, whereas last year's was only twelve. Our smallest paper has been sixteen pages, and our largest (hitting a *Comment* record) was an impressively thick twenty-eight pages.

Our paper is student-run. None of us are professional journalists (yet), but we try to act like we are. Because it is student-run, it is a learning experience for all of us. With each issue and each mistake, we learn and grow.

I'm proud of the progress we've made in our 18 issues thus far. We will miss those who are leaving us and welcome those joining us. We look forward to another year of serving our community and enhancing the quality of *The Comment*.

~Jennifer Cunningham

Something Larger: English Majors Present Work at NCUR

Students sit next to each other every day in class, and in most cases they engage in small talk about parking issues, registration deadlines, reading assignments or what's for lunch.

Professors call the roll to assure that students are present before they begin their lectures: "Lauren Carter? Johanna Price? Christopher Haslam? Janessa Carvalho?"

Not many are aware that Bridgewater State College students are working on scholarly research. In fact, these students were four of twenty-two invited to the 18th National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) at IUPUI in Indianapolis. All travel expenses were paid for by ATP (the Adrian Tinsley Program); a total of eight English majors presented their work. They are **Robert Cannata, Teresa Hunter, Jennifer Dawson, Lauren Carter, Patricia Portanova, Glen dePontbriand, Sasha Link and Elizabeth Robbins.**

NCUR spans all academic disciplines, and gives over 1900 students nationwide (selected from 4000+ submissions) the opportunity to present their work to their peers.

Although many of us were relative strangers as we left Boston, the sense of support and encouragement among the group ran high. Our faculty advisers (Drs. Brunjes, Harris, Kimmer and Torda) darted to and fro across the IUPUI campus with packs of students in tow, trying to support as many of our presenters as possible, regardless of discipline or personal connection.

More valuable than the new friendships forged, we, the students, left NCUR with a realization of the depth and breadth of scholarly work, and truly felt ourselves a part of something larger than we'd imagined.

~ Rob Cannata, Sasha Link, and Jennifer Dawson



NCUR Students and Mentors at the end of an exhilarating trip

Letter from Dr. Evelyn Pezzulich, Department Chair

The last time I wrote to you in the Fall 2003 issue of *The English Update*, I mentioned that the English Department hoped to offer several new courses dependent upon approval by governance. I am happy to inform you that all eight courses have now been approved and should appear in the new edition of the college catalogue. As a reminder, they are:

- EN 233 Introduction to the African American Novel
- EN 315 Ethnic American Literature
- EN 317 African American Literature I
- EN 318 African American Literature II
- EN 354 Twentieth Century British Drama
- EN 357 Recent American Drama
- EN 372 Advanced Fiction Writing Workshop
- EN 378 Post-Colonial Literature and Theory
- EN 399 Topics in Literature (with changing topics of interest)

You will notice that some of the numbers have changed from my original list. This is due to a recent consultation with the Registrar's Office. The substance, however, remains the same.

With the completion of this segment of the Department's curriculum review, faculty members will now turn their attention to assessment of our English program. Members of the Committee on Curriculum Review and Assessment are in the process of devising questions for a senior exit survey on how well our program has met the needs of majors. If there are items you would like to bring to our attention, please e-mail them to me at epezzulich@bridgew.edu. As I mentioned last time, the English faculty continues to work diligently at strengthening our program for your benefit. Your input, therefore, will be greatly appreciated.

Finally, I would love to initiate more social occasions among faculty and majors. Unfortunately, the English Majors Picnic we hosted some years ago was a dismal failure in terms of attendance, perhaps because it was scheduled for 3:00 on a Friday afternoon. If you have any ideas about events and the best days and times of the week to host them for maximum participation, please e-mail me with those suggestions as well.

Until the next issue of *The English Update*, I wish you success on your final exams and a well earned summer vacation.

Sigma Tau Delta: Poetry Slam is Final Event of Busy Spring Semester

After a wonderful induction ceremony in January, the Alpha Iota Mu Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta was overflowing with enthusiasm and ideas for the coming semester. However, once we entered the planning phases of these ideas, we realized we had forgotten one thing: we're all students in one of Bridgewater's most competitive and difficult majors! However, we were able to put together some fun and relaxing evenings for our 43 members.



We hosted both an ice cream social and a night out to dinner for members to socialize, and enjoy ourselves off-campus for an evening. We held a Literary Open Mic, organized by Vice-President Kate Powers, on March 24, and we will be holding a **Poetry Slam at 7pm on Wednesday, May 5, One Park Ave in the Campus Center.** (That was a shameless plug- I hope to see you all there!)

The Alpha Iota Mu Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta wishes our graduating members all the best of luck in the future.

Faculty Notes and Announcements

Dr. Katherine Lee departs BSC for Indiana State University

Dr. Lee reports: "I'll be leaving Bridgewater in midsummer and starting a job as Assistant Professor of multicultural American literature at Indiana State University this fall. While crazed Red Sox fans and that wicked New England accent have their appeal, the students and colleagues here at Bridgewater have been, by far, the best part of working and living here. I feel incredibly lucky to have begun my career here at Bridgewater and encourage you all to keep in touch." We lose a fine colleague and dedicated teacher, and wish Dr. Lee all the best in her new position.

Dr. Phil Tabakow Publishes Volume of Poetry, gives reading at BSC's Davis Alumni Center on April 27

Dr. Tabakow's book, *The Mechanics of Submission* (\$11.25) is available for purchase from the author, BSC Bookstore, Scholars' Books, or online at Amazon.com.

Dr. Barbara Apstein publishes in Virginia Woolf Miscellany

"Ian McEwan's *Atonement* and 'The Techniques of Mrs. Woolf,'" *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, fall/winter 2003.

Dr. Evelyn Pezzulich Elected Department Chair for second, three-year term

Two Faculty Members Earn Spring '04 CART Grants

Prof. Gregory Chaplin, *British Poetry: 1603-1660, A Norton Critical Edition*; Dr. Kathleen Vejvoda, *The Brontes and Victorian Religious Culture: Research and Pedagogy*

Dr. Ann Brunjes becomes Co-Coordinator of Adrian Tinsley Program

Four Faculty Members Honored for Publications

Dr. Arnold Girdharry, Dr. Evelyn Pezzulich, Dr. Jadwiga Smith and Dr. Kathleen Vejvoda were honored for their publications at the first Academic Awards for Excellence Ceremony.

Congratulations to Julie Adams, Greg Bancroft, Alayna Brinkley, Annie Coffman, John Connolly, Kelly Cutner, Glen dePontbriand, Coree Dibble, Karen Fisher, Pamela Godsoe, Jennifer Griffith, Cheryl Hastings, Jennifer Hickney, Jennifer Hubbard, Kristen Iworsky, Susan Kelliher, Abby Lesniak, Theary May, Kristen Milewski, Sharrel Paul, Mary Reardon, Amanda Simoneau,

Courtney Smith, Paula Stohr, Linda Tryder and Alexandria Zemanovic!

Sigma Tau Delta would also like to express our deep gratitude and appreciation to Dr. Arnold Girdharry. His generous donation to our Chapter will help make our future endeavors possible.

~Beth Robbins

thebridge Inaugural Issue

(continued from page 1)

The English Department is well represented by 18 students, ranging from freshmen through alumni, whose works include literature and art. Publication as an undergrad, in a journal of fine arts such as **thebridge**, is a great resume builder and an invaluable opportunity, particularly for any aspiring artist or writer.

Copies of **thebridge** are available outside the English department or by request at:

thebridgejournal@bridgew.edu.

Works for the 2nd issue are now being accepted and submission guidelines are included in this issue.

~Courtney Smith

Writing Studio News

This September the Writing Studio will greet a **new director, Professor Kathryn Evans**. Professor Evans will be greeted by a passionate, committed group of consultants.

The Writing Studio is comprised of very work-oriented, helpful consultants and hardworking, eager clients. In addition, the Studio has an easygoing, relaxing atmosphere that makes both consultants and clients feel very comfortable.

If you are a writer, the Writing Studio is excellent experience. If you are a student who would like to interact with consultants in a friendly atmosphere, the Writing Studio is an effective tool for you to build confidence in your writing. If you have yet to experience the Writing Studio, consider this an open invitation!

~Ben Cafardo

John Kucich Joins English Faculty

(continued from page 1)

The excitement that comes with discovering new literatures and new ways of understanding the world is what drives my research and my teaching, and the reason I love working with adolescents is the sheer delight they often have in discovering and exploring new ideas.

Can you say a little about your approach to teaching the Strategies class?

The real joy of teaching is finding ever new ways of cultivating that excitement. The challenge is finding the right techniques to meet a certain group of students. I have a couple of guiding philosophies. The first is that you can't teach one way and hope to reach all of your students, so one focus of my Strategies course is to practice a wide variety of teaching techniques that can work together to engage a diverse group of teenagers. The real art of teaching is to quickly read a group of students, assessing their learning styles, interests and backgrounds, then finding mix of approaches to engage them all. The second is to keep the ideas that make English exciting at the forefront of curriculum. I've seen too many English classes that bore students with empty drills or activities, especially in our brave new MCAS-driven world. The writing and reading skills crucial to the discipline need to be connected to larger issues and ideas, woven into the study of powerful, compelling texts that have a clear impact on students' lives.

An important part of our department's mission has always been the training of high school English teachers. Can you say something about that mission, and how you would like to influence our department's training of teachers?

I was especially struck in coming to Bridgewater by how firmly the department and the college as a whole embraced the training of English teachers. I've been amazed, in my visits to area high schools, by how many area teachers speak enthusiastically about their favorite professors and courses at BSC. Bridgewater is clearly tightly woven into the fabric of secondary education in southeastern Massachusetts, and an important part of my job is to keep it that way. One aspect of this is to make sure our prospective teachers get the best education possible by, for example, continually ensuring that our degree requirements offer a broad and deep familiarity with English literature, and, for another, to offer help to students preparing for the licensure exams. Another aspect is to work closely with area high schools, finding ways to partner with local English teachers around issues of concern. I would very much like Bridgewater to be a resource for area schools, with our department offering a forum to explore curricula and share ideas. I've also been very interested in the summer school offered by the science department here; I can imagine a similar English program that would bring together local students, pre-service teachers, area high school teachers and Bridgewater professors.

What do you do after work? I parent, mostly – we have two small boys who keep us busy. Otherwise, we ski, hike, canoe and camp. I cycle, and I have a strong attraction to the investment banker sports – fly fishing and golf. And I write poetry when I have to.