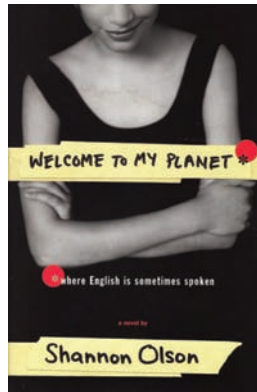
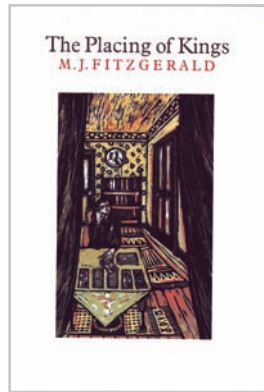
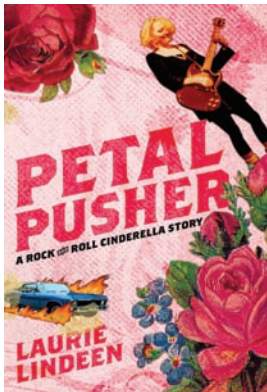
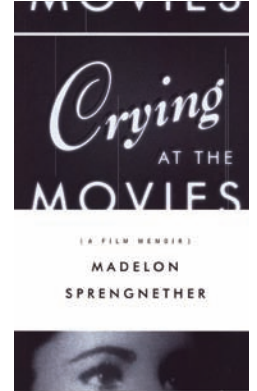
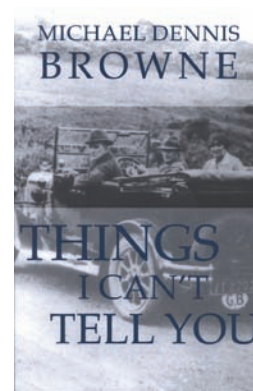
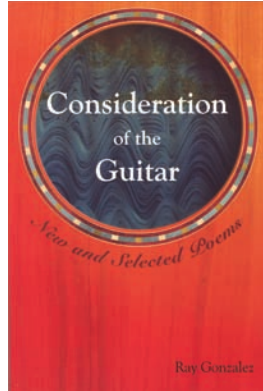


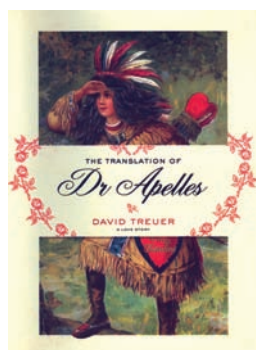
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Department of English
College of Liberal Arts
University of Minnesota

SPRING
2007



**Celebrating 10
years of the
MFA in creative
writing**



Since July when I took over the Chair from Michael Hancher, I have been breathless, busier than even as an assistant professor with two small children. To give you an idea of the pace, I've listed the highlights of just three weeks in the life of Department of English faculty, students, and staff, as we strive through our words to bring the world to Lind Hall and Lind Hall to the world:

The October 29 Sunday *New York Times Book Review* praised Patricia Hampl's new memoir, *Blue Arabesque*, and a couple weeks later Hampl guided us on a literary tour *Just a Stop on the Circuit: Great Artists Visit Old St. Paul* from the stage of the Fitzgerald Theater, recorded on Minnesota Public Radio.

October 30 saw the visit of Canadian-Jamaican poet Pamela Mordecai. The reading was sponsored by our lecture series *ENow!*, the Morton Zabel Fund and *VG/Voices from the Gaps*, which marks its tenth anniversary this year. In addition to being a poet, children's book author, scholar and anthologist, Mordecai is the mother of graduate student Rachel Mordecai, whose syllabus featured on the

FROM THE CHAIR

By Paula Rabinowitz



Photo by Richard G. Anderson

VG website contributed to its being awarded the "Best Educational Resource on the Web" this fall by StudySphere.

Two emerging novelists, Heidi Julavits and Ben Marcus, read November 1 as Edelstein-Keller visiting writers. The audience was welcomed by Julie Schumacher, the current director of Creative Writing, which this year celebrates the tenth anniversary of its MFA (see page 3). Creative Writing faculty published five books this fall: Hampl's *Blue Arabesque*; Schumacher's third preteen novel *The Book of One Hundred Truths*; Madelon Sprengnether's collection of prose poems *The Angel of Duluth*; and David Treuer's novel *The Translation of Dr. Apelles* and critical collection *Native American Fiction: A User's Manual*.

An ethnographer and linguist, Treuer was last summer honored with a McKnight Presidential Fellow Award—and profiled in the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. This March, Treuer was named a Guggenheim Fellow.

Friday November 3, novelist Bharati Mukherjee gave the Esther Freier Endowed Lecture at the McNamara Alumni Center. She was introduced by Charles Sugnet, one of the founders of the Creative Writing Program and the first English Department faculty member to introduce postcolonial literatures into our curriculum; he now chairs the Curriculum Committee with an eye to innovating our course offerings to better represent the multidisciplinary approaches of our faculty.

During the Freier lecture, I was presenting a paper at the DocuLens Asia Symposium co-sponsored with the Institute for Advanced Study and the Asian Film Collaborative. This festival/conference brought together noted documentary filmmakers and scholars from Taiwan, PRC, Japan, India and the U.S. and was organized, in part, by Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies professor and English alumna, Jigna Desai (PhD '99).

On November 5, novelist Charles Baxter, on leave from teaching in Creative Writing this year, weighed in on "Divorce-Court Politics" overtaking the usual "Minnesota nice" campaign styles for the *New York Times* op-ed page. Elsewhere that incredible week, Michael Dennis Browne, on sabbatical, was a Fellow in residence at the prestigious MacDowell Colony. African-American literary historian John Wright was enjoying the publication of his long-awaited study *Shadowing Ralph Ellison*. And Ray Gonzalez, 2006–09 Scholar of the College of Liberal Arts, was

continued on page 23

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When English chair Kent Bales named associate professor Charles Sugnet director of the Creative Writing Program in the fall of 1986, it had been a year since the creative writing endowment crafted by University of Minnesota President Ken Keller and Minneapolis lawyer Thomas Keller, III, was formally established (see sidebar, page 7). The David E. Edelstein-Thomas A. Keller, Jr. endowment, born of a generous gift by Edelstein sister and longtime Keller friend Ruth Easton, would transform the Creative Writing Program at the University of Minnesota. As would, in a humbler fashion, Professor Sugnet.

That fall of '86, the first Edelstein-Keller resident writer, novelist Eva Figes, was arriving to give a talk and teach a three week seminar. (The first Edelstein-Keller visiting writer was Isaac Bashevis Singer, who addressed a large crowd at Willey Hall in March of 1985.) Edelstein-Keller funds had already allowed the hiring of adjunct lecturers Carol Bly and Kate Green, among others, in 1985–86; a burgeoning relationship with Continuing Education and Extension (CEE) was expanding the number of creative writing courses offered by English. “I intend to build a nationally visible writing program,” Sugnet declared to Tom Keller in a letter that October.

High hopes, for a program pretty much unknown outside Minnesota. But a short twenty years later, the Creative Writing Program is celebrating both the tenth year anniversary of its Masters of Fine Arts degree and a startling crop of published work from MFA alumni. Indeed, the ranks of published alumni are increasing at such a rate that *Minnesota Monthly* spotlighted the CWP in their November issue (see pages 10 and 11 for a roundup). “We have a display case outside the office,” says professor Julie Schumacher, current CWP director, “and we’re going to fill that space with books by MFA grads. For a program that’s only ten years old, to be able to fill an entire case with books published by Random House, Scribner’s, Graywolf, and Milkweed is amazing.”

According to legend, Sugnet’s predecessor as CWP director, fiction writer Pierre Delattre, was assigned an office in a hallway. An adjunct lecturer, Delattre administered the creative writing MA in English with the help of only three permanent faculty: Michael Dennis Browne (poetry), Alan Burns (fiction), and Patricia Hampl (nonfiction).

The degree was meant to be earned in two years, although lack of financial support too often put that achievement out of reach.

The Department of English granted Sugnet an office with a door that closed in 223 Lind, as well as two half-time research assistants. A tenured professor, Sugnet had sixteen years experience at the University and a “liberal” idea of how Creative Writing might fulfill the endowment’s directives. Sugnet is quick to credit Tom Keller for allowing flexibility in the endowment’s use and for being a stalwart supporter of the CWP. In their three years working together, many of the salient features of the Program were established.

Sugnet continued hiring notable local writers as adjunct lecturers, while fighting to reserve the permanent CW faculty for graduate students who needed reliable mentorship to finish their creative manuscripts. Then, to balance CWP offerings, he received a grant to develop an undergraduate creative writing class. Chair Bales and the CWP faculty had been working on the idea of a team-taught undergraduate lecture course to better meet the vast demand for creative writing

10 YEARS

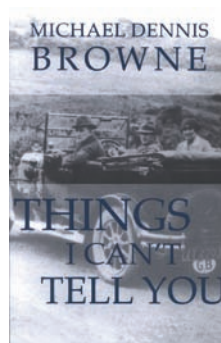
The MFA Program in Creative Writing celebrates its birthday with a flurry of publications and prizes

Recent & Forthcoming CW Faculty Publications



- *Saul and Patsy* (Pantheon, 2003)
- *The Art of Subtext: Beyond Plot* (forthcoming on Graywolf, 2007; first in a series he’s also editing)

Charles Baxter



- *Things I Can't Tell You* (Carnegie Mellon, 2005)
- *Give Her the River* (Atheneum, 2004)
- *Greatest Hits 1965-2000* (Pudding House, 2001)

Michael Dennis Browne

instruction. Sugnet and his assistants (Rose Johnstone and Steve Wilbers, among others) fashioned ENGW1101, with its revolving door of speakers. “What was wonderful,” Sugnet recalls, “was that half the people in it were civil service workers who had been waiting all their lives for a creative writing course. I’d call up to do some business with the Registrar or whatever, and it would be, ‘Oh Charlie, that class is great!’ It did us a lot of good with the people who actually run the University.”

Sugnet also invented Reading as Writers classes, in which CW graduate students looked at literature from a writer’s perspective. Perhaps most lastingly, he lobbied for the integrity of the Program within a department just getting used to this new academic animal, creative writing instruction. “The thing had to be separate,” he stresses now. “We had to have our own offices, our own front desk, our own accounting and finance, and our own course numbers—because that was the only way we could have autonomy to operate.”

Carolyn Forché, Nuruddin Farah, and Grace Paley did residencies in those years; at the end of his directorship, Sugnet

accepted an invitation from Farah to visit Dakar, and rediscovered himself as a scholar of postcolonial African film and literature (Sugnet still teaches the occasional CW course; and Farah again visited the department this winter, for a fascinating March 4 dialogue with Louise Erdrich at Cowles Auditorium). Meanwhile, Professor Michael Dennis Browne shepherded the Program through the retirement of Alan Burns and the hiring of fiction writers Valerie Miner and M. J. Fitzgerald. Professor Madelon Sprengnether began to teach creative nonfiction courses, supplementing Professor Hampl’s offerings.

Browne worked on creating a feeling of community amongst the students, hosting a weekly breakfast at the Seward Café and continuing to invite students to a fall retreat up north, a tradition he initiated in 1974. But the Program still lacked a center. “When we had the MA degree,” notes Browne, “and I went to AWP [the Associated Writers Program conference], people would say, ‘Fantastic community, wrong degree.’ It was the disparity between the diversity of literary possibilities here, and the fact that we had this little pinhead of an MA degree.” Browne pauses, smiles gently. “I think I even used that phrase in faculty meetings.”

In 1993, the CW faculty started to work on obtaining the “right” degree for a Twin Cities community rife with authors, small presses, literary magazines and organizations, and active libraries. “Through many discussions,” Sprengnether describes, “we formulated the design of the MFA, a three-year program offering concentrations in poetry, fiction and nonfiction, oriented toward the development of a book-length manuscript suitable for publication.” Sprengnether wrote the proposal with assists from the faculty and guided it through a lengthy approval process involving various University and State bodies. Students already in the Program could choose to fulfill new requirements to receive the new MFA, or complete the MA as before. In the fall of 1996, eleven years after the Edelstein-Keller Endowment began transforming the Program, the first MFA class entered the required multi-genre introductory class ENGW8101.

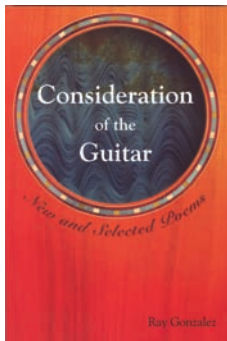
That same year, fiction writer Julie Schumacher joined the faculty, followed in 1998

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“Everyone I worked with at the U was basically invested in the create something original”

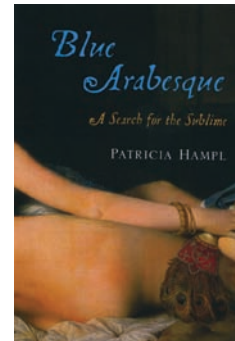
- “Limpid, Blue, Poppy” in *The Genius of Language*, edited by Wendy Lesser (Pantheon, 2004)
- “The Invention of Greek Statues” in *Literary Imagination*, 2001

M. J. Fitzgerald



- *Consideration of the Guitar: New and Selected Poems* (BOA Editions, 2005)
- *The Religion of Hands: Prose Poems and Short Fictions* (Arizona, 2005)

Ray Gonzalez



- *The Florist’s Daughter* (Harcourt, forthcoming)
- *Blue Arabesque: A Search for the Sublime* (Harcourt, 2006)

Patricia Hampl

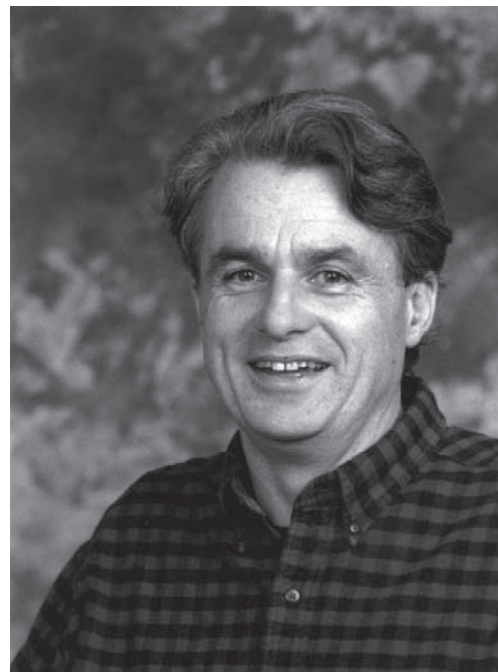
by poet Ray Gonzalez and in 2000 by novelist David Treuer. As a unit, the CW faculty has an outstanding record of publication: In the past two years alone, the seven current permanent faculty have together published eight books. (See below.)

Professors Sprengnether, Fitzgerald, and Schumacher have served significant time as directors of the Program since the inception of the MFA. With the other faculty, they have made the Program a vital part of that Twin Cities literary scene through co-sponsorships with organizations such as the Loft, SASE, and the Minnesota Center for Book Arts, and presses such as Coffee House, Graywolf, and Milkweed. They have likewise invited that thriving literary community into the Program through the establishment of the Edelstein-Keller Minnesota Writer of Distinction appointment, which has honored Sandra Benitez, Carol Bly, Deborah Keenan, Jim Moore, and Wang Ping, among others. Recently, fiction writer Charles Baxter has contributed greatly as an Edelstein-Keller writer-in-residence.

In response, applications to the MFA Program have increased nearly five-fold. “Between San Francisco and New York,” observes Schumacher, “there is nothing else to compare with what we can offer students in terms of not just [local] literary arts, but theater, music, visual arts, all that stuff. It’s not beatable.

“And [the Program] attracts people who are not solely interested in writing,” Schumacher enthuses. “Because of the Twin Cities arts scene, we also find people like Laurie Lindeen, like Andrew Luckham, who are rock and rollers and DJs; Wendy Fernstrum who graduated doing visual arts; people who are doing dance as part of their MFA defenses. I think we attract people who are talented and interesting in a lot of different ways.”

Partly because of the time built into a three year program, and partly due to the CW faculty’s foresight, MFA students are actually required to explore different ways of expressing themselves. One, they must take a writing workshop outside their genre; and two, they must take a class outside English. Poets are required to try their hand at fiction or nonfiction, and vice versa. MFA students have taken classes at the Veterinary school, in Rhetoric, in other languages, in the performing and visual arts. The published alumni on pages 10 and 11 testify to the importance of these creative



Professor Charles Sugnet

explorations in a literary world where genre is mutating rapidly.

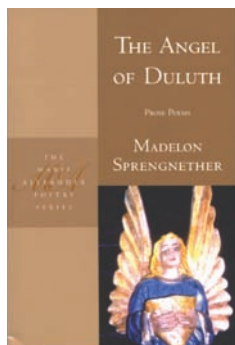
These alumni also rate their peer relationships here as significant and lasting. Their sense of the program as a writers’ community is encouraged by the CWP philosophy of support. “We fully fund everybody who comes in,” Schumacher notes, “so the students don’t

FAS, 29 B

same project—helping each other turn out good work, improve our skills, and and valuable.” — Lauren Fox (MFA ‘98), author of *Still Life with Husband*

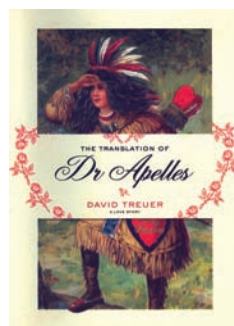
- *The Book of One Hundred Truths* (Delacorte, 2006)
- *The Chain Letter* (Delacorte, 2005)
- *Grass Angel* (Delacorte, 2004)

Julie Schumacher



- *The Angel of Duluth: Prose Poems* (White Pine Press, 2006)
- *Crying at the Movies: A Film Memoir* (Graywolf Press, 2001)

Madelon Sprengnether



- *The Translation of Dr. Apelles* (Graywolf Press, 2006)
- *Native American Fiction: A User’s Manual* (Graywolf Press, 2006)

David Treuer

feel that they have to compete or stab each other in the back to be funded. There's a kind of egalitarianism that pervades the program and allows everybody to flourish in their own way."

Of course, the establishment and rising popularity of the MFA in Creative Writing degree here parallels a national trend. From 1984 to 2004, the number of institutions offering an MFA grew from 31 to 109, setting off a backlash questioning the need for such programs: Should creative writing be, in effect, professionalized? Given the paucity of professorships in the field and the difficulty of being published, are MFA graduates set up for failure? What are applicants expecting from MFA programs? Can or should creative writing be taught?

Schumacher sniffs. "Personally, I don't think mathematics can be taught. And I don't see that there's much of a difference. . . . You bring a gift of your own to a discipline, including a willingness to work very hard and an open mind, and you combine that with mentorship and a community of writers, readers, critics. I think that's what most MFA programs have to offer."

UM creative writing graduates, Schumacher points out, have gone on or back to a variety of careers, including publishing, elementary school teaching, grant writing, graphic design, massage, and mental health. The point for these graduates, she says, was not to obtain a professional degree but to dedicate time to a discipline: "We've got people who are close to retirement deciding, 'I have put this off my whole life, and now I want to build it into my life in a really integral, fundamental way.' To take three years out of your life to get the kind of enrichment you can't get anywhere else is always worthwhile.

"I think going hugely into debt to do it is another question," Schumacher adds wryly. "That's why we try to offer everybody enough money so that doesn't happen. You can go into debt to go to med school; going to debt in the arts is pretty hard."

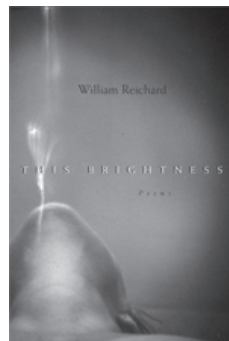
In an effort to ensure that MFA students don't find their study an economic hardship, the Creative Writing Program has set as its next goal the continued support of its graduate students in financial as well as intellectual terms. A decade from now, CWP director Schumacher asserts, "I would want to have accomplished increased funding for all grad students, first and foremost. We do manage to cover their tuition, their health care, etc. But it's gotten more expensive to live in the Twin Cities. Some of them end up on the job market in addition, and that was not originally the idea."

As Professor Sugnet promised Tom Keller, the Creative Writing Program has attained national visibility, and how. There are sure to be bumps on the road ahead, most notably the fall 2007 transfer of Composition courses (which CW graduate students often teach) to a new University department, Writing Studies. Yet, as Professor Browne likes to say, "Good people have gathered here." And those people have created a momentum that looks to keep the Minnesota MFA in the news and thriving. ■

The Creative Writing Program marks its tenth anniversary with "Writers at Work: MFA Showcase and Celebration," April 13, 7 pm, at Campus Club West, Coffman Union. Raffles, give-a-ways, and readings! Four afternoon panels concerning the MFA and life after it are also scheduled that week. See <http://english.cla.umn.edu/>.

BOOKS*

*Not counting literary books by MA and PhD alumni who graduated before the MFA!



Published MFA alumni include Mark Anderson, Joe Hart, Sherry Quan Lee, Anna Cypra Oliver, Shannon Olson, Elissa Raffa, Anna Reckin, Karen Rigby, Michael Walsh, and Mary Winstead. Among published English PhD and MA alumni are novelists Mick Cochran (PhD '85), Norah Labiner (MA '96), and Allison McGhee (MA '92), fantasy writers Ruth Berman (PhD '79) and P. C. Hodgell (PhD '87), memoirists Gretchen Legler (PhD '94) and Susan Allen Toth (PhD '69), and poets Roland Flint (PhD '68), Margaret Hasse (MA '84), Marilyn Nelson (PhD '79), William Reichard (PhD '97), Robert Schuler (PhD '89), and Joyce Sutphen (MA '96).

Ken Keller knew that my father and David Edelstein [long-time owner of sugar brokerage C.D. Robinson Company, Inc., and founder of the Edelstein Family Foundation] were best friends throughout their adult lives, having met at the University of Minnesota. Both my father and David had passed away at that time. Ken's idea was that I approach David's surviving sibling, Ruth Easton, to see if she would pledge \$500,000 for this purpose [of establishing a University chair in creative writing]. I then flew to California, where Ruth, a successful stage actress, lived, and talked to her about it, and she quickly agreed to endow this chair in memory of her brother David E. Edelstein and her brother's best friend Thomas A. Keller, Jr., whom she knew and loved for many years.

David was one of the brightest students in his class at the University of Minnesota. The word got around that he was not going to be invited to Phi Beta Kappa, because he was a Jew. At that time, the University was shot through with virulent anti-Semitism. My father and some of his friends, who were not particularly close to Dave but knew him and liked him, were offended. They went and talked to whoever the advisor of Phi Beta Kappa was, and they didn't get anywhere. They talked to the Dean and didn't get anywhere. They talked to a bunch of administrators, didn't get anywhere. Tried to get in to the President of the University, and he wouldn't see them. The bottom line was Dave was never invited to Phi Beta, but Dad got to know him, and they became from that time on best friends.

My father was a salesman all his life, and for the last 20 years or so of his working life he was a salesman for Kimberly-Clark. His real love was creative writing. As a young man he wrote reviews of poetry books for the St. Paul paper; he was part of the literary scene in St. Paul at that time. He knew Fitzgerald quite well. My father saw to it that I had put in my hand great literature. He was particularly fond of English poetry, and his greatest love was the 17th century lyricists. They are *my* greatest love in poetry, although I read a great deal of contemporary poetry.

David Edelstein grew up in North Branch, Minnesota. He was a very successful businessman, as was his older brother Jacob. David would come out to our house Sundays and have dinner. My father was what people today would call a lefty Democrat. David was a conservative Republican. My father and David loved to have discussions, *intense* discussions, about politics and social justice and so on. I learned a great deal just being around as these two great friends, polar opposites politically, communicated with each other about their views. They were always



Ruth Easton

Thomas Keller III is an attorney and shareholder with Moss & Barnett in Minneapolis—and he serves as the chair of the Department of English's Advisory Board. Keller also was, as he puts it, “the conduit” between then University of Minnesota president Ken Keller (no relation) and David Edelstein's sister Ruth Easton in the creation of the Edelstein-Keller Endowment for Creative Writing. In 1984 the University president decided he wanted to free up interest from the Permanent University Fund endowment to attract matching private grants for the establishment of University chairs. Before he went to the legislature for approval, he sought to have a matching grant already in hand, as an example of what could be done. Keller relates the rest of the story (edited from an interview).

...AND THE ENDOWMENT THAT KEEPS GIVING

By Thomas Keller III

respectful, never mean-spirited.

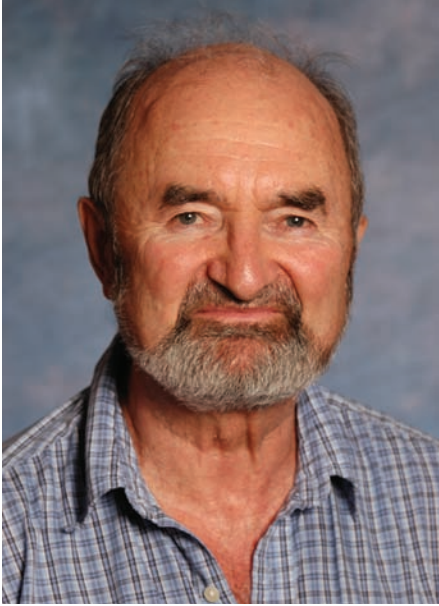
From David [who did not have children], I absorbed some of the practical knowledge of how the world works. It turned out that his retirement office, which he occupied for some years, just happened to be in the same building as my law firm's office. So Dave liked to invite me to have a cup of tea in the afternoon. He would always begin the conversation by saying, “Well, young man, account for your self.”

David by the way was during his lifetime very generous to the University, and when he formed the Edelstein Family Foundation, he directed two large annual gifts be given to the University after his death. They are still being made today. I asked Dave one time, “Why'd you do that, after what happened?” And he said, “Ah, your father's been talking. Well, let me tell you something, young man,” he said, “I got an excellent education at the University of Minnesota, and that has made everything possible for me.”

It was of course a model of how to address bigotry: not with hatred or bitterness but in a much more positive way. I always admired Dave for that. Although I must say, if that had been me, I'm not sure I could've quite gotten out my checkbook. But he was a big man. ■



David Edelstein and Thomas Keller, Jr.



Michael Dennis Browne is the avuncular dean of the Creative Writing Program. He joined the English faculty at Minnesota in 1971, a fledgling poet in a lion's den of literary scholars and grand old men (Unger, Monk, Berryman). In the fall of 2007, after 26 years, seven poetry collections, two Minnesota Book Awards, three excellence in teaching citations, various fellowships, a Pulitzer Prize-nominated oratorio, more than 20 autumn student retreats "up North" at his cabin, and a couple stints as director of CWP, the mellifluous-voiced professor will begin phased retirement. Recognizing this long career of enthusiastic instruction and empathic inspiration, the Department of English has established a new graduate

Wright and Other Essays for publication by Carnegie Mellon in 2008 (it was Wright's poetry, Browne says, that first drew him to those beloved North woods). In addition, he's writing a memoir, putting together a new libretto with his musical collaborator, composer Stephen Paulus, and composing poetry for a new collection. He recently wrote the text for *Requiem* by James Eakin, which will be performed with the Dallas Symphony in June, 2007. "I'm just grateful [inspiration is] around, waking me up in the night, saying, 'Write this down,'" Browne enthuses cheerfully. "I like to work!"

And he has enjoyed helping others to do so. In the last two years, undergraduate poets under Browne's tutelage won major College of Liberal Arts prizes. Kai Carlson-Wee won a CLA Selmer Birkelo Scholarship (and publication in the revived undergraduate literary magazine *The Ivory Tower*) and Zachary Cody Carlsen won the John Turner Thesis Award for best honors thesis by a CLA student.

"When directing my thesis, 'Ragboy & the Spoonmender,'" Carlsen (BA '05) relates, "instead of squashing the idea at first sight—as most did—he allowed me to wallow in the absurdity of the project, in its ramshackle conception and construction, suffering inarticulately, until the idea petaled out into a concrete work and was at once meaningful and accessible to others: he saw me before I did. His gifts of a keen observant eye and a modest curiosity, which are so present in his poetry, are also his most profound pedagogical strengths."

"In the case of Zachary and Kai," reflects Browne, "there's a wide-open sensibility there, and the world is coming in so freshly and strangely. I like that combination of wide-openness and daringness, and in the case of both those two young men, real depths of soul and spirit. I saw them both *grow* tremendously to their final theses."

When he speaks to undergraduate writers, as he has regularly through the long life of EngW1101, Intro to Creative Writing, Browne emphasizes the poetic necessity of bringing disparate parts together to discover satisfying, if inchoate, connections. So it shouldn't be surprising that when asked what he likes about teaching, Browne begins talking about family, whether the Irish-Anglo one he was born to in Surrey, England, or the one here that with his wife Lisa McLean he helped create. "I think I have a paradigm there of a collectivity of people who are going to have a good time together," he explains, expatriate accent still putting a song to his speech.

"I noticed once when I did a reading at AWP [the Associated Writers' Programs Conference] that a lot of my 'better known' poems have been about groups of people," Browne continues, citing "Handicapped Children Swimming," "Lamb," and "Hide and

MICHAEL DENNIS BROWNE REGIF

A new fellowship honors the inspired—and

fellowship for student poets in the name of Professor Browne.

"It's a great honor," Browne says, interviewed last fall during a sabbatical that allowed him to be a MacDowell Colony Fellow, where he wrote in the same studio in which Thornton Wilder wrote *Our Town*. "I'm very grateful—grateful and humbled."

Such an award will allow a student of poetry to concentrate on honing his or her craft in the manner of the man who inspired it. Browne, at age 66, reports that "the pot is bubbling right now." He is preparing the collection *My James*

Seek": "To be simplistic about it, I like getting people together. And I love young people more and more, feel more tender toward them. I listen better than I used to."

With the tenderness has come a bit more distance, or vice versa, says the man who has won the CLA Distinguished Teacher Award, the College of Continuing Education Distinguished Teacher Award, and the Morse-Alumni Association Award for Outstanding Contributions to Undergraduate Education. "I don't know as much about their lives as I used to. My son has a My Space page, and you read those, and it makes the air stand up on the back of my neck." He grimaces playfully. "Between My Space, YouTube, and Ipod, I think there's an inclination to be more inward. I recently judged a poetry contest [for the University of Michigan], and *my Lord* was that writing interior! I was pulling what's left of my hair out." Browne laughs. "But at the same time there's all the performance and hip hop-influenced stuff going on. I think the constituencies are diverse."

Browne may have more of an understanding of music-related texts than most poetry professors. His parents modeled their love of music: his businessman father

an organist, choirmaster, and pianist in his spare time, and his mother a singer. He grew up singing in choirs and began collaborating with composers while a student teacher at Oxford. When he arrived at Minnesota, he went looking for a musical partner and was directed to Paulus, then a PhD student in music. Together they have built up a body of work that includes the repertory standard “Pilgrim’s Hymn” and the celebrated Holocaust oratorio *To Be Certain of the Dawn* (which will be recorded by the Minnesota Orchestra in early 2008).

“When you’re the poet, you’re Napoleon,” Browne jokes. “But when you’re in rehearsal, it’s like that family dynamic: you have to shift, adjust. I like being around musicians; I’m in heaven at rehearsals.”

Perhaps it’s the more interdependent discipline of providing words for music that has shifted the nature of Browne’s solitary pursuit, poetry. This spring, Browne will publish *Panthers*, an art book of poems, with Indulgence Press. The poems, as Browne notes, are “little, little things,” potent shards engulfed in white space. “In Christian theology, there’s via positiva and via negativa,” Browne describes. “‘Positiva’ means you say God is a judge, or Heaven is a garden. ‘Negativa’ is like Buddhism, no images. The space behind, around, between words, is more

ITS A LEGACY
inspiring—professor poet

interesting to me. Less blather, more silence. It’s probably an age-typical thing. More mystery behind and around the language, less obvious language.

“I’ve always been a little bit earnest as a writer,” Browne confides, with a twinkle, “but I think I’m more oblique than I was. I like that.” ■

Contributions to the Michael Dennis Browne Fellowship may be made through development officer Emily Paulson at paulsone@umn.edu or 612-626-5141.



Creative Writing Program director and professor Julie Schumacher

Julie Schumacher, current director of the Creative Writing Program, in fall 2006 published her third novel for preteens, *The Book of One Hundred Truths* (Delacorte). Her first children’s novel, *Grass Angel* (2004), was nominated for the PEN/Fiction Award. Schumacher’s books for adults include a short story collection, *An Explanation for Chaos*, and a novel, *The Body Is Water*. Schumacher’s writing for children features generous, true blue characterization, compelling situations, and a terrific understanding of life’s absurdity (that is, the books are extremely funny—and slyly cathartic). We cornered her in her office for an interview.

Why did you start writing books for “tweenies”?

My younger daughter had a lot of trouble learning to read. I was reading aloud a lot of books for this sixth to eighth grade audience. Some of them were great, and others I thought were just terrible. At the same time, I was trying to write a novel: I could not figure out the plot and the structure, and it made me crazy. And I thought, “I’m going to teach myself to plot by writing something short and structurally direct.” I wrote the first one and thought, “Okay I’ve done that; that’s my experiment.” But I found I really loved it. It made me remember why I wanted to write in the first place: I loved putting two people in a room who maybe should not be there and finding out what might happen between them.

What books inspired you?

I read *Charlotte’s Web* over about ten times before I started doing my kid books. That and *Stuart Little*. There’s nothing limiting about them.

The latest book has this ferocious sense of imminent doom to it, even though it’s mainly a story about a girl hanging out with her oddball relations at a beach house.

I was working hard on plot on those second two. I thought, “I’m going to make something dramatic happen.” [Laughs.] There’s a lot that’s intense and horrible about that age. Maybe this has something to do with the fact that there’s a blurred line between adult lit and kid lit. Adolescence used to be a three or four year period before someone became an adult and went to college or got married. And now adolescence begins about nine and a half and it goes until thirty, as far as I can tell.

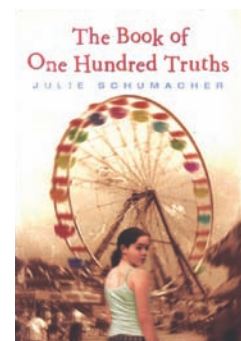
That is sort of the age where everything seems to happen: emotionally, [it’s] earthquakes, volcanoes. You stop automatically being who your parents assumed you were. Basically all literary fiction addresses the question “Who am I and what am I doing here?” But I think adolescent lit can do so really directly and dramatically.

What have you found surprising about entering the children’s book field?

I get emails occasionally from kids. Which is great fun. They’re very frank. [Laughs.] Somebody will say, “I really liked your first book, but I thought the second one was stupid.” And then they’ll write, “Respectfully yours.”

What are your daughters reading now?

The older one reads scifi, and the younger one reads these pink girlie books with double covers—they’re just horrifying. ■



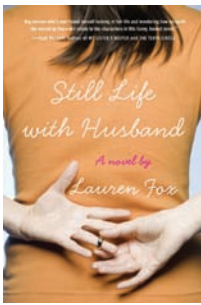
Lauren Fox (MFA 1998) publishes her debut novel this winter with Simon & Schuster. *Still Life with Husband* depicts, with finely articulated wit and tension, a 30-year-old woman who can't break herself out of an unsuitable married life without sending splinters everywhere. After writing a nonfiction thesis for her MFA, Fox moved to Milwaukee with her husband, took a half-time job, and started a novel. "Then we had a baby," writes Fox, "and, of course, everything fell by the wayside for a couple of years. But as things settled down (sort of), I returned to the novel." From her current vantage point, the most amazing part of her time at Minnesota was the luxury of being able to think and write "without having to worry about too much else." Fox notes the significant mentorship of adjunct professor Jim Moore; the varying perspectives of Charles Sugnet, Madelon Sprengnether, and Patricia Hampl also proved helpful, as did those of her peers: "Everyone I worked with at the U was basically invested in the same project—helping each other turn out good work, improve our skills, and create something original and valuable. Some of my best friends and smartest editors are people I met in the MFA program."

Alex Lemon (MFA 2004) published two books this year, a chapbook called *At Last Unfolding Congo* (Narwhal) and his full-length poetry collection *Mosquito* (Tin House Books). The latter has come out to no small amount of fanfare, with a prominent review in *Publisher's Weekly* naming Lemon "a rising star of the Midwest." *Mosquito* chronicles Lemon's experiences with brain surgery, but through the poems' startlingly vivid style the book becomes a no-holds-barred and, as Mark Doty writes, "undeceived" depiction of living large. Lemon, who

came into the MFA program with a background in political science, read like a fiend and made the most of the three year program. "I'm not sure I would have been where I needed to be," he writes, "as both a writer and a teacher, had the program ended after two years. I had great relationships with my professors, made friends that I'll have the rest of my life, enjoyed the Twin Cities, and most importantly became a much better writer." Lemon, on leave from Macalester, where he has taught since he graduated, is at work on a book of poems, a collection of fiction, and a memoir. "I did take classes in other genres—a fiction workshop with Steven Polansky and a nonfiction course with Hampl. I have a number of friends who have gone to MFA programs that are locked into one genre, and I think this limits them. As youngish writers, I think it only makes sense to be reading and writing as much of everything as possible."

Laurie Lindeen (MFA 2003) publishes her debut memoir *Petal Pusher: The Life and Times of Zuzu's Petals* with Atria/Simon & Schuster this spring. Lindeen was guitarist and singer for the all-female band Zuzu's Petals in the Nineties. Before entering the program, she had sent around a novel based on her adolescence. Lindeen remembers: "Everybody was like, 'This isn't quite there. I think you're a nonfiction writer. If you ever write about the band, give me a call.'" The memoir splits the difference, moving elegantly and heatedly between the band's creative arc and Lindeen's experiences with parental divorce, Seventies and Eighties rock and roll culture, and her Multiple Sclerosis diagnosis. Lindeen wrote many of the book's vignettes in weekly response papers for Madelon Sprengnether. She also

GREAT H

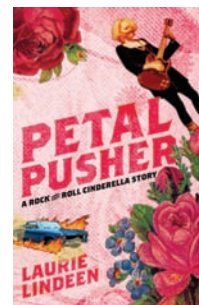
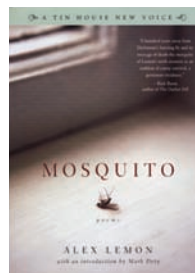


As I mused uncomfortably on Amy and Marcus's crazy love, the impossible depth of their connection, I thought about what Kevin would say if I told him. He would argue against her claim that such an enviable state of love could exist. And that would make

me feel better. So did that mean we were soul mates after all? Soul mates who were too analytical to believe in the idea?

Anesthesia dumb, scalpel-paste
Rawing my tongue, I found
Myself starfished in sky
Spinning days. I stared into my eyelids'

Bustling magic, the black
Of my hands. Oh, how darkness
Swaggered, dealt fluorescent-blurs
& the choke of the seas. This is my
everything—



I hate how much hatred there is amongst us, how each of us has someone on the outside whispering in our ears about how under-appreciated we are. . . . On our last drive home from Wisconsin on 94 West after our last out of town gig, Co and I say nothing as we pass the burnt-out patch where

there was once birch and pine trees, the remains of the forest fire we once had the courage and stupidity to drive through.

discovered a love of teaching here: she's now involved with Writers and Artists in the Schools. And Hampl's Manuscript Prep class pressed her to think about the future: "For a lot of writers, it's really hard to get self-propelled. I promised myself when I graduated I was going to go to one writers' conference a year; the second one I went to I got the agent. You just have to keep schlepping."

Éireann Lorsung (MFA 2006) will publish her debut book of poems, *Music For Landing Planes By*, with Milkweed Editions in 2007. As the CWP encourages, Lorsung took Art Department courses while earning the MFA. "I wouldn't be writing like I am writing if not for those classes," she writes. "Taking printmaking created a shift in subject, voice, image, metaphor, line; almost everything." The influence of this hand work is readily apparent in the quiet weight and elegance of her poems, which look for earthly grace even as they speak to or of the world of spirit and religion. Lorsung credits Maria Fitzgerald, adjunct instructors William Reichard and Jon Minczeski, and Art professor Jan Estep for challenging her to question her work and look for deeper connections. At the same time, Lorsung was energized by the act of instruction: "Teaching helped me break down language," she stresses, "made me re-imagine how things could work. It brought me back to the level of really thinking about what, exactly, a comma does, and how to explain it." Beyond teaching undergraduates, working with her peers represented the heart of the program for Lorsung. "I would say that what made my writing grow and expand, more than any class, was watching what my peers were doing, talking to them about it, and then learning from it."

Brian Malloy (MFA 2006), interviewed in the winter 2006 English at Minnesota, published the coming-of-age novel *The Year of Ice* before he entered the MFA program. His thesis, *Brendan Wolf*, is scheduled for a April 2007 release by St. Martin's Press. In addition Malloy will publish the young adult novel *12 Long Months* with Scholastic. Malloy teaches fiction and literature at Emerson College in Boston.

Yuko Taniguchi (MFA 2001) is on her second book with Coffee House Press. The poetry collection *Foreign Wife Elegy* (2001), grew from her MFA thesis and is an eloquent meditation on personal dislocation (whether of culture, emotion, or illness) and the compassion that can grow out of it. With her novel *The Ocean in the Closet* (spring '07), the Japanese native has taken up those themes from the perspective of a nine-year-old girl in mid-Seventies California. Helen is the daughter of a Vietnam vet and a mixed-race woman adopted from post-war Japan. It is Helen's brave choice to seek out and try to understand her troubled parents' stories. "The image of war is that there is this immediate damage, and when it's over, that's how we say the war is over," says Taniguchi from her home in Rochester. "But the damage is much larger than we can imagine. I was thinking about what it takes for someone to turn it around." The novel began in Julie Schumacher's Child Narrators class, which Taniguchi chose to fulfill her "out of genre" requirement. "I wouldn't have ever thought of writing from a child's perspective if I hadn't taken that class. The chance to work with Julie was also beneficial for my poetry. Michael Dennis Browne's prose poem class and Julie's fiction class [taught me] how storytelling can be done with intensity." □

HARVEST

Six recent MFA alumni celebrate publication in 2006–07

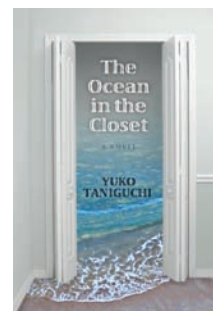
No one waking remembers
what has been put asunder by their hand:
thank you, that I can still trust the body
to press on, not knowing why, just breathing
and beating until dark comes, or sleep, or
sense, or light.

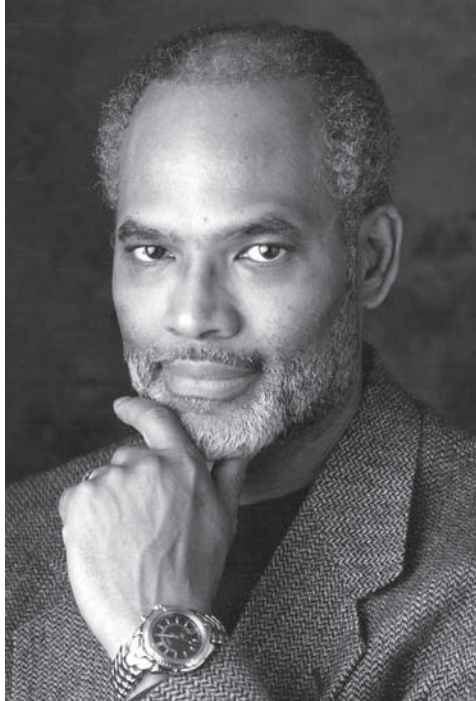


There were moments—mostly in the early evenings when his mother was in the cabin, mixing cocktails for his father and herself—when the lake seemed as smooth as carved marble. It was those times, when he would test the surface of the water with feet dangling off the dock, that he thought he might, like Jesus, step onto the lake and walk across it to the far shore.



I hated being alone upstairs at night. The house was alive at night, making all kinds of noises. A clock ticking sounded like someone's heart beating. I could hear Ken's sobbing from the closet. I wanted to let Ken out before Shizuka came and ate him alive, but Mom put the rope around the door knob so tight.





Associate professor John Wright's fine new book *Shadowing Ralph Ellison* sets off to provide context for Ellison's *Invisible Man*—"a first novel so masterly," as Wright describes in his preface, "that its seemingly unprecedented precociousness continues to baffle many readers." In accomplishing that goal, Wright establishes Ellison's nonfiction, especially the work collected in *Shadow and Act*, as coequal to *Invisible Man* in its achievement—and inextricable from it. He locates Ellison the man of letters within a variety of intellectual traditions and circles.

"I think too much of the criticism on Ellison has separated his critical

Wright wrote the first draft of this book's first chapter as a talk about the intellectual underpinnings of *Shadow and Act* for that Ralph Ellison Festival, which took place at Brown University. Then teaching at Carlton College, Wright revised "Dedicated Dreamer, Consecrated Acts: Shadowing Ellison" for the special issue of the *Carlton Miscellany* about the festival. Recalls Wright: "Ralph and Fanny requested box after box of the book of the issue which they then sent around to all these friends. I ended up getting feedback from some of the friends, and it wasn't always . . ."—Wright breaks up laughing—"it wasn't always affirming."

"Dedicated Dreamer" traces the multivarious intellectual influences on Ellison's "conscious" writing, from philosopher-critic Kenneth Burke to Russian novelists to African American folklore, including thinkers he was reacting against. "I was dealing with these adversaries, folks with whom he sparred and battled along the way," Wright explains. "So there were reverberations that in part spurred me to decide that I needed to move from dealing with *Shadow and Act* to applying some of those ideas to a rereading of the novel itself. And that meant coming to terms with the political ideas, with Ellison's very sophisticated understanding of modern psychology, theory and practice, the issues of leadership, his place in the radical left at the time, also black-Jewish relations."

Shadowing Ralph Ellison collects the revamped "Dedicated Dreamer" with the essays that followed it—on *Invisible Man*'s investigation of black leadership models, the role of technology in Ellison's notion of technique, and Ellison's participation in intellectual culture with his second nonfiction collection *Going to the Territory*. The book represents an intellectual biography par excellence: an elegant, surprising, and inspiring examination of a synthesizer and inventor engaged in creative conversation with his world . . . not a mysterious iconoclast. (Wright has often discussed these issues with Arnold Rampersad, whose 688 page biography of Ellison is published this April.)

Along the way, Wright notes, he came to see Ellison's nonfiction as his only autobiographical work, and *Invisible Man* as a fictionalized "anti-memoir," in French novelist André Malraux's terms. The struggle in teaching *Invisible Man*, which Wright had done for decades, is that "it's very difficult for young folks these days to read that novel and not see it strictly in terms of a struggle for personal identity, to lose the driving political and broader cultural concerns."

Nevertheless, notes the winner of the Morse-Alumni Award for Outstanding Contributions to Undergraduate Education, bringing those issues to the surface is precisely his pedagogical mission. Wright (BS '68, MA '71, PhD '77) has been

DIGGING FOR THE SUBTERRAN

In the process of recontextualizing Ralph Ellison, Professor to uncover black

thinking—his commentary on the arts, culture, and politics, and so forth—from his fiction," Wright explains, sitting at a conference table in African American Studies, where he is also on the faculty. "It became very clear to me when I met Ralph and [his wife] Fanny at the Ellison Festival back in '79 how much of a scholar, a philosopher, a speculative thinker, he was—and how so much of that helped germinate his fiction. *Invisible Man* was a philosophical novel, just as Richard Wright considered *Native Son* to be a philosophical novel."

championing those broader concerns since he himself was a University of Minnesota undergraduate in the mid-Sixties. A member of the Afro-American Action Committee (AAAC), Wright participated in the January 14, 1969, Morrill Hall occupation that led to that year's establishment of the Department of Afro-American and African Studies. Today he is not only an associate professor in the department he helped form, he has this year lent his name to the John S. Wright Award for CLA students majoring in African American and African Studies. (Michael Sieben, a longtime friend from Middlebrook residence hall, gave the gift which created the award.)

In English, where Wright has taught since 1984, he has been helping to diversify not only curriculum but dissertation topics: Last year, he served on three PhD committees, including that of Daniel Anderson, who wrote on "Renaissance Men: The Harlem Intelligentsia, the African-American Press, and the Culture of Sport, 1918–1940." Anderson characterizes Wright himself as a "Renaissance Man" and adds: "Along with his ability to speak with alacrity and depth about a staggering range of subjects,

Professor Wright is a pleasure to work with and for: kind, witty, unfailingly conscientious.”

As for Ellison, Wright is not ready to shut the book on him. As he explains playfully in his acknowledgments, *Shadowing Ralph Ellison* has been an ongoing distraction from a two decade plus project in post-Enlightenment African American and African European intellectual history. Yet as Wright wraps up that manuscript as well, he’s finding that his “distraction” has become an inextricable part of the project. “A lot of Ralph’s ideas have become even more germane,” he asserts, particularly Ellison’s idea of the “vernacular process”: “This notion of patterns by which the power of literacy in the face of the barriers to literacy forms a submerged, suppressed culture, the way in which ideas and images and so forth can cross a lot of the social and cultural barriers in ways we don’t anticipate, really characterizes a significant portion of the materials I’m dealing with. There are a lot of underground and subterranean materials by Africans in the modern West.”

Wright continues: “While there is an amazing array of works coming out across the disciplines concerned with the idea of freedom, as my project ultimately is—it’s about African peoples in the modern world wrestling with the idea of freedom—the ways in which people want to talk about freedom so often are solely

MEAN NEWS

John Wright discovers tools intellectual history in the West

in terms of a narrow civic construct. But I’m finding myself in all kinds of worlds quite different than that,” Wright observes, “in the worlds of the occult and supernatural for instance, in a variety of different religious contexts. The popular notion that all black folks are Baptists and Methodists bears no relation to the actual history.”

Wright laughs heartily. “I’ve come up with a number of things that I would love to be able to talk about with Ralph, because they would surprise even him.”

continued on page 23

The Edelman Keller Endowment and the Medical School brought Pulitzer Prize winning author **Tracy Kidder** to campus October 10 and 11, 2006. At Cowles Auditorium on the 10th he was slated to discuss the topic of “Good Societies” with Political Studies Chair Larry Jacobs. But Jacobs’ introduction was followed by Kidder’s mumbled admission that he just “can’t do theory”: “It’s one of my greatest weaknesses.” He progressed to what he does well: “I just have to have stories.” He flipped through the six paperbacks before him and from various stories articulated his idea of “Good Societies”: how the world is, and how the world should be.

Kidder has spent his life searching out stories to tell, and it’s brought him to vastly disparate people and places. His 1986 book *Soul of a New Machine* on Tom West—a software engineer of superhero proportions—is ultimately about doing something “genuine,” he noted, including “joy in work” and “altruism.” Altruism? “Those impulses are connected,” Kidder asserted. Though *Soul of a New Machine* won the Pulitzer, it was *Mountains Beyond Mountains* that fully explained how a selfish “joy in work” could lead to altruism.

FALL ‘06 VISITING WRITERS

Of Paul Farmer, founder of Partners in Health (PIH) and protagonist of *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, Kidder said: “I think all my life I’d been looking for a person like him.” While at Harvard Medical School, Farmer spent most of his days sweating over how to get a certain rural Haitian a critical drug for her tuberculosis treatment while simultaneously fighting the attitude that those people just don’t get this type of medical care. Kidder read a metaphorical—and comic—passage about faithfully following Farmer up a path in Haiti, trying not to have a heart attack.

Kidder later mentioned a recent visit to Rwanda, where he saw the genocide memorial. He spoke of realizing what had happened on that spot as he gazed over monuments of bone. Confessed Kidder, whose latest book is a Vietnam War memoir: “The world is a more horrible place than I thought it was.”

At a reception the next day following a panel discussion with School of Medicine Dean Deborah Powell, Kidder introduced PIH President Ophelia Dahl. Thanks to Farmer’s ambition, PIH has expanded its mission in the Caribbean, Latin America, Russia, and parts of Africa. Dahl played a prominent role in Kidder’s book; and her appearance served to remind those present that the story is real: both the suffering and the good work being done. — by **Tim Crepeau**

Edelman-Keller visiting poets **Claudia Rankine** and **Juliana Spahr** packed the Weisman for their reading on September 27. The next day, they met with graduate students over lunch. Rankine, who had presented a knock-out poem about Hurricane Katrina at the reading, noted, “I don’t really see how you can take ‘politics’ out of your poetry, or your life. It’d be like taking breathing out.” . . . E-K visiting novelists **Heidi Julavits** and **Ben Marcus** read from their work November 1 at the McNamara Center. Marcus described his poetically dense prose as a way to return to a time when his child self comprehended a third of what he read: “when what you imagine is better than the truth.” . . . On November 3, also at McNamara, **Bharati Mukherjee** delivered the Esther Freier Endowed lecture, on national identity from a transnational writer’s perspective. That day she met with MFA candidate Karen Ahn’s Introduction to Fiction class. The author of *Jasmine* revealed that she had grown up in Calcutta reading English novels but had ended up heir to American literature, a tradition she described as “do what you want as long as you do it confidently.” Here, she said, “I could have my characters use four letter words that I don’t even know in Bengali.” □



Bharati Mukherjee



By Danielle Kasprzak

In June, 2003, my history professor, Kevin Murphy, mentioned that there were volunteer positions open that summer interviewing and transcribing for a small new University of Minnesota research collective called the Twin Cities GLBT Oral History Project (OHP). I had just finished my freshman year, and I thought the job would be a good way to get involved and make a difference in the University academic community and the Twin Cities queer community. An English major, I was already planning on attending graduate school, and I figured volunteering for the OHP would look good on my resume.

As the summer went on, I began to realize the importance of such a project in dispelling the assumed narrative of queer life in the Cities. My first foray into intellectual, academic theory was not reading the postmodern European theorists' ideas of what makes a narrative and why narrative is just a construct.

interview participants (membership in the collective now stands at 20). Since I was only an undergrad (a young undergrad at that!), I sometimes felt uncomfortable working with such intellectual people. However, they never made me feel unwelcome, and they included me in all the decision-making processes with an equal voice. I was never forced to do the work no one wanted to do. Within a year of being involved, I was acting as lead interviewer during the interviews.

Since 2003, the OHP has collected approximately 100 oral histories, amounting to over 300 hours of recorded interviews. Often absent from the usual archives and marginalized both in and outside the academy, these stories have become valuable resources for undergraduates, graduate students, and professors conducting research, as well as an innovative teaching tool for instruction at both the undergraduate and graduate level. The OHP has been a catalyst for interdisciplinary and intercommunity conversations on history, life narratives and oral histories, the meanings attached to sexual and gender identities, subjectivity, the Twin Cities, and Minnesota. The oral histories have also sprouted projects that engage communities outside the academy, including an exhibition, "Protest and Parade: GLBT Activism and 'Pride' in the Twin Cities."

The book emerging from the conversations initiated by the OHP is designed to capture these conversations, yet it also utilizes ethnographic data as well as documents, ephemera, illustrations and other forms of archival materials from such collections as the Tretter Collection in GLBT Studies (University of Minnesota) and the Quatrefoil Library (St. Paul). Thus, the book reflects and interprets research that extends far beyond the core interview collection.

After two years of interviewing, I was invited to co-author one of the chapters for the book. Knowing that the professors and graduate students trusted me that much was an incredible confidence boost. In fashioning the book's essays, we have strived not to discuss GLBTQ life in Minneapolis and St. Paul as a transparent, linear history. Many local GLBTQ histories attempt to present a unified narrative of queer community formation, but we believe that such histories often elide the conflicting and contradictory experiences and interests of people and groups who don't fit well into the dominant narrative. Instead, the essays offer a series of linked historical case studies that illustrate the multiple ways in which Twin Citians have lived queer lives and forged queer constituencies over time.

When I first came to the University, I had no idea what I wanted to do, other than pursue a degree in English. I didn't know that there was such a thing as gender and

QUEERING THE NARRATIVE

English senior Danielle Kasprzak recounts how a lowly freshman joined a University research team and ended up co-authoring a book chapter

Rather I was actually hearing the discrepancies in the general narrative. Interviewing the participants brought personal meaning and unique slants to the stories that everyone hears about queer life in the 1950s and 1960s.

In the summer of 2003, only five people were involved in the project: the two graduate students who had created the project with their advisors, an undergraduate intern, a professor, and me. Throughout the summer and following years, more graduate students and professors were recruited to help

sexuality studies, or even an interdisciplinary way to approach American history. Now, I'm writing my honors senior thesis in English with the topic of lesbian separatism in the Twin Cities in the late 1970s and early 1980s. My focus is on the involvement of non-lesbian women (i.e. bisexual/straight women), lesbian mothers, and women of color. I have already analyzed some interviews from the OHP and noticed how these women's identity as lesbian separatists were conflicted with their identities as mothers or bisexuals. My primary texts will be the oral histories collected from the OHP, as well as interviews gathered this year.

As a child and teenager, I enjoyed school and wished I could stay in it forever. Now I know that, indeed, I can work at a university as a professor and keep learning for the rest of my life. ■

Danielle Kasprzak received a Captain DeWitt Jennings Payne Scholarship for 2005–06. She began working with OHP through the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP).

Jennifer Coleson

When I didn't receive any scholarships from the University as an incoming freshman, I assumed I never would. I thought that since it was such a big school I had no chance of standing out. My sophomore year, I declared my English major two weeks before the scholarship deadline. During the course of that initial advisor meeting, I was strongly encouraged to apply not only for the departmental and college-wide scholarships, but for upper division honors, and also to consider writing a summa thesis my senior year. I felt overwhelmed. But I applied.

A few months after that meeting, a letter from the English Department notified me that I had been awarded the Jessie M. Comstock Scholarship and the Captain Dewitt Jennings Payne Scholarship. It was thrilling news. I didn't realize then, though,

By the fall of 2004, my English Literature B.A. was well in view. In fact, with careful planning, my years of Japanese language and culture classes could be transformed from a minor, a footnote on my degree, into a major. Financial concerns had plagued me since returning to the Cities, but, with guidance from the English department, I had chosen to apply to a study abroad program in Tokyo and was pursuing scholarships in all shapes and sizes. I didn't believe for a second that my dream of circling the globe and seeing how Japan in all its vastness and complexity measured up to my glowing, day-dreamed, book-fed image would ever happen. I still didn't believe it as I boarded the plane and watched the video screen that marked our progress over Alaska and the restless Pacific swimming in the night thousands of feet below. Nor did I as I wound my way

“THERE WAS SOMEONE COUNTING ON ME”

Four undergraduates describe the impact of scholarships on their lives

how much these scholarships would aid me in achieving my educational goals.

My scholarships helped ease the financial burden of paying for school by myself. I was able to work less and concentrate more on my studies and on extracurricular activities. I attended the University of Minnesota's Social Justice Retreat and held an executive board position with the University's GLBTA (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Allies) Network. Receiving two generous scholarships also helped to boost my confidence in my abilities as a student. I worked harder in my classes, asked more questions, and sought out additional opportunities outside of the classroom. Over the course of my junior year, I elected to add a second major in Hebrew and was given the opportunity to be a student representative on the English Undergraduate Studies Committee. Slowly I began to realize my potential here at the University of Minnesota.

Those scholarships dramatically changed how I approach my education. I no longer feel like one number among a multitude. I know I have worked hard, and I know what it feels like to be rewarded for my hard work: It feels wonderful.

Tim Crepeau

The title of the University of Iowa course was “Crisis in the 20th Century.” The course catalogue was printed in a way that didn't reveal the other side of the colon, but it fulfilled a freshman requirement, fit my schedule well and had my advisor's endorsement. As it turned out, the other side was “U.S./Japan Interactions in the 20th Century.” That was the seed. I wanted to be far away, and Japan was just that. Surreally far away. And fantastic fodder for a hungry, dissatisfied, and naive mind. Never thinking I'd get there, I began taking steps toward it and returned home to the University of Minnesota.



through customs and had a Visa error sorted out. Not until I was sitting on the bus (not at all like the buses of New York or San Francisco or Minneapolis or Iowa City) with the other bemused kids (I was a kid again) who had just come half a turn around the globe did I realize it had really happened.

Through the English department, I had received the Donald V. Hawkins and Jessie M. Comstock scholarships as well as recommendations from professor Don Ross and PhD candidate Megan Casey that paved the way to other scholarships—all so I could be the luckiest kid on that bus.

Bridget Haeg

They were embalming me. Jabbing their tweezers up my nose and sliding out pieces of my brain like soft strips of salmon. I could only clench the bed sheet, saline dribbling onto my lips, and think of a yellow Egypt where they nestled your brains in smooth, earthy pots, swathed your body in a cloth tortilla, and laid you to rest in the pyramid's soundless cavern.

It was August, 2005, and I had just had neurosurgery to remove a brain tumor. My doctors were extracting the gauze from my brain.

Two weeks after the surgery, I started my junior year—no time for a proper convalescence. I couldn't imagine missing the classes in which I had enrolled. More importantly, the previous spring I had been awarded the English Department's Captain DeWitt Jennings Payne scholarship. There was someone counting on me to return, to produce, to learn. My surgery had made me question my English major. I had become enthralled with the prospect of knowing what a doctor knows: our sinewy outsides, our slippery insides, our souls. The Payne scholarship also provided a much-needed road sign to return to my English studies.

With the scholarship, I could focus solely on school and health. I took a Literary Theory course and uncovered a whole new world of English studies. Three English professors in particular offered not only reassuring praise on my writing,

continued on page 22



Conspiracy, the fear of conspiracy, and conspiracy theories have altered life in the United States since 9/11, and popular culture has been far from immune to that influence. With fascination, PhD candidate Anne Carter has watched the increased employment of what she terms “conspiracy as a rhetorical figure” in cinema, TV, and literature. For at the same time she has been tracing such a use of conspiracy by Victorian writers experiencing their own turbulent times.

Studying for her Master’s at the University of London, Carter had noticed that amongst Wilde, Joyce, and Yeats, the notion of “buried secrets” often served to address both involvement in secret societies (for example, that of Yeats) and novelistic plotting. Carter was drawn to the University of Minnesota’s graduate program in part by Andrew Elfenbein’s work here on Victorian literature. Then 9/11 happened. “I was taking a class on Empire and the Novel,” Carter relates. “We

the Victorians to the Modernists of her Master’s thesis. But gradually she honed the focus down to writers in the 1830s and 1840s, such as Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens, and then widely popular novelists W. H. Ainsworth and Phillip Meadows Taylor, whose concerns included the Chartism movement in England, colonialism in India, and gender inequalities.

Chartism is a recurrent theme. “The working class people are engaged in this movement to change Parliament in a way that’s pretty revolutionary,” Carter notes. “What they’re asking for seems very tame to us: to have a secret ballot, for instance; to have universal manhood suffrage, not just [voting by] people who make a certain amount of money and own a house. But the [demands] were disturbing to people, especially the middle class. Often you can see this thread of paternalism running through the novels, where people are saying through analogy—they don’t say things directly, necessarily—that the working class needs to be looked after by people who know better, who are more educated.

“One of my chapters is about Guy Fawkes,” Carter continues. “Here he is, this 17th century person, who comes alive for these writers in the 1840s and 1830s as the way to talk about those revolutionary changes. Some people saw the demands the Chartists were making as so unsettling, so revolutionary, that they were like blowing up Parliament.”

Over the course of her research, Carter saw that, like their Modernist ancestors, these Victorian novelists were also very aware of the similarities between political and novelistic plotting. As Carter writes in her dissertation abstract, they (along with the memoirists, playwrights, and journalists her research also covers) were quite cognizant of their own roles as “very public plotters.” Carter observes: “The novelists use narratives of conspiracy as a figure for their own work and their relationship to their audience: plotting in the sense of conspiracy comes to function as a way to consider plotting in the sense of novel writing, reading, and, especially, criticism.”

Dickens’ *Barnaby Rudge*, for instance, shows the author’s anxiety about the power of the novel, and media in general, to manipulate the public, especially in terms of arising religious or nationalistic fervor. Carter summarizes: “Through stories of conspiracy set in faraway times or places, these novelists engage with social, political, artistic, and economic questions closer to hand.”

At 45 years old, Carter has already had one career as a computer skills instructor at the University of North Carolina. A native of Florida, with stops in Germany and Atlanta, she spent twenty years in Chapel Hill. She has a BA in Psychology and a degree in Educational Media. Working at North Carolina allowed her to take one course gratis

CONSPIRACY THEORIZING

PhD student Anne Carter untangles the plotting of Victorian novelists

were reading about the Indian Mutiny of 1857, and there was a figure named Nana Sahib. The way that people were talking about him in the 19th century and what he was up to was incredibly similar to the way people were talking on the news about Osama bin Laden.

“So I started thinking, ‘What else are these conspiracies being used to talk about? How are they looked at by people in power, how are they looked at by people who are out of power, to talk about their positions in the political, social or economic scene?’”

At the start, Carter was looking across

per semester, and her English professors encouraged her to attend graduate school.

Carter is on the home stretch of her dissertation—“finishing up and madly revising the final chapters”—and one can hear it in her laugh, which is warm and unforced, but a little bit giddy, as if it might spiral up and away from her given the chance. She credits her progress to a Summer Dissertation Fellowship, granted to Carter and PhD candidate Rachel Mordecai last spring, and supported by alumni contributions.

“I couldn’t have finished without it,” she states firmly. “It gave me the time to concentrate and not have to do any other kind of work.

“I think it also gave me some courage,” she adds. “The fellowship was kind of an imprimatur, saying, ‘You’re doing a good job—keep going!’ That overall courage translates to every day sitting down at your computer and actually typing out what you think. And revising that into something better, and showing it to other people, which will help you make it better. I got a *lot* of work done,” she stresses, “and I really appreciate it.” □

Anne Carter successfully defended her dissertation on November 29, 2006.

It shouldn't be surprising that a young man named "one of the best undergraduate poets I've ever taught" by Regents Professor Patricia Hampl grows up to be president of an international company widely known for its high-quality hydraulic pumps, hydraulic bolt tightening tools, and mechanical pipeline connectors. After all, Wallace Stevens proved that no natural law prevents the souls of poets and corporate managers from mixing. Certainly George Bowman (BA 1982) seems to find no paradox in his existence as both the leader of Enerpac, an Actuant company with annual revenues past the billion mark, and the man with a daily practice of writing poetry and fiction.

When he was an undergraduate here, he imagined being a wrestling coach, then writer, Bowman remembers via email. A two-time wrestling state champion for North Dakota, where he was raised in Grand Forks, Bowman wrestled for Minnesota and qualified for the Division I Nationals. But as a senior, Bowman started thinking about technical writing. "I wanted a job," he confesses, "beyond my part-time stints working at the *Minnesota Daily* and writing annual reports for a local pharmaceutical firm. Technical writing seemed to be a way to leverage my skills."

wrestling!) Family keeps him grounded. "Sometimes it seems like there is almost too much going on," he admits, "but then I realize how lucky I have been."

The more solitary pursuits of writing, faith, and exercise help balance the scales; Bowman writes for himself rather than for publication. Nevertheless he finds a way to envision even writing as team work. A formative moment at the University of Minnesota, he writes, was "my first poetry course with Patricia Hampl. We had a great group of students; the discussion was like nothing I had ever participated in. Now I understand that we were doing

THE POET MANUFACTURER

Alumnus George Bowman (BA '82) manages a life of writing, family, and hydraulic pumps

While Bowman was earning a Master's in Technical Writing at Minnesota he began working for Cray Research. Writing technical manuals there involved working with the units that developed new product. And what had been a way of making money turned into a vocation. "I think that the excitement of working in a corporation was similar to what I experienced in athletics," he explains. "It's a structured environment in which an individual or team can excel.

"I enrolled in the Harvard Business School," he goes on, "only after taking accounting, statistics and marketing in the MBA program at the Carlson School in the evenings. In this way, I had confidence in my interest and aptitude for business. This really demonstrates the great resource of the University of Minnesota."

Bowman received his Harvard MBA in 1990, then went to work running a business for Ingersoll Rand Corporation. A year later, he joined General Electric, where he remained for eleven years as, in turn, a product manager, engineering manager, regional sales manager, and business leader for three businesses. One was located in Mexico, which allowed him to develop a "passable, not fluent" command of Spanish.

Bowman has been president of Enerpac for almost four years, during which time the former niche business expanded dramatically via two key 2005 acquisitions (British companies Hydratight Sweeney and Hedley Purvis) and various international inroads, including the Australia and New Zealand markets and projects such as the rolling retractable roof of the new Olympic stadium in Nantong, China. Bowman had a chance to observe the latter last summer: "It was very exciting to see the Chinese national track team practicing there."

He wishes he knew Mandarin, along with his Spanish and college German. He is also traveling regularly to Indonesia, Australia, Brazil, and Europe. "The highlight and the biggest challenge is always people," he declares. "I have had the opportunity to develop relationships with people from many countries and cultures. And I am always amazed at the strength of the distribution network and the talent of our people."

Interpersonal communication then is one of the primary tasks of this president—and clearly having studied English helps. Further, Bowman emphasizes, "I think writing critical essays about literature allowed me to develop my analytical and problem solving skills. And studying literature naturally gives you empathy with people."

Empathy comes in handy at home as well. Bowman and his wife Angela have four boys age five and under, including a set of twins. (So he did end up coaching



George and Angela Bowman and family

action learning, or authentic learning. In other words, we were engaged in a quest to write great poetry—and Trish provided the tools and advice along the way." The role of the individual working within a group, the athlete within the team, the writer in the literary community, is one that continues to inspire Bowman. Recently he asked a theater academic which Shakespeare passages might relate to "the conflict that many people in corporations face regarding their personal will versus the organizational will." Chapter and verse followed, and Shakespeare schooled him again.

"It is hard to pin down exactly what about English has made me successful," Bowman notes finally, "because having been an English major is part of who I am." ■

Tim Brennan published the following: “The Professor of Literature,” *Biblio: A Review of Books* (March-April 2006); “Beyond Shame and Outrage,” *Literary Review of Canada* (June 2, 2006); “A Subtle Barbarism,” *Toronto Star* (Sept. 3, 2006); and “Left, Right and Muddle,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (June 9, 2006). He presented the following invited lectures: “Cultures of Belief” at Johns Hopkins in November; and “On Collaborative Work” at the University of Pennsylvania in October. He received a University of Minnesota Grant-in-Aid for *Borrowed Light: The Colonial Imagination in Modern European Thought (1905–1968)*.

Michael Dennis Browne was a MacDowell Colony Fellow for three weeks this past fall. He gave a reading at Marlboro College, Vermont, and judged the undergraduate/graduate poetry awards at the University of Michigan (with Jane Shore). He taught summer workshops at the Iowa Summer Writing Festival and the Collegeville Institute (St. John’s University). He took two research trips to Ireland in connection with the memoir he is writing, *Build Me a Boat*. In spring of 2007, he will publish *Panthers*, a limited edition book of poems with Indulgence Press.

Tom Clayton ended his term as president of the Association of Literary Scholars and Critics in October. As president, he helped along negotiations for the publication of the journal *Literary Imagination* (in which professor **M. J. Fitzgerald** has published;

Modernist Studies Conference, she presented the paper “Dorian Gray: The Proto-Picture of Modernist Celebrity” and, as Chair of Nominations and Elections of the Modernist Studies Association, introduced the newly elected officers to the Association.

Maria Damon received the University of Minnesota Distinguished Teaching Award for Outstanding Postbaccalaureate, Graduate, and Professional Education for 2006–07. She co-authored a contribution to *Creative Writing: Theory beyond Practice*, edited by Nigel Krauth and Tess Brady. A multi-media piece, “On a Pure Jag, Unmarked Grave,” for which she wrote the text, is featured in a centenary publication of the Spanish poet Carmen Conde in the Cartagena city archives. See http://driftlessmedia.com/movies/on_a_pure_jag.mov. She presented the paper “Modernist Precursors of Cultural Studies and Poetics” on a panel sponsored by the National Poetry Foundation entitled “New Directions in Poetics” at the Modernist Studies Conference. In September, she attended the conference “BIOS: The Poetics of Life in Digital Media,” where she co-presented a multi-media piece entitled “The End.” Her essay “Poetries, Micropoetries, Micropoetics,” is forthcoming in the *Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies*.

Genevieve Escuré received a McKnight International Travel Award.

Patricia Hampl presented the one-woman show *Just a Stop on the Circuit: Great Artists Visit Old St. Paul* in November at the Fitzgerald Theater in St. Paul. Her new memoir *Blue Arabesque* was named a *New York Times* Notable Book of 2006.

Paula Rabinowitz presented a talk about the poetry of Mark Nowak at the American Studies Association convention in October entitled “Shutterings, Endings and Autopsies: Towards a Poetics of the Postindustrial Documentary” and a talk at the Modernist Studies Association convention in October entitled “The Abysmal Problem of Time: Pulp fiction by and about Borges.” At the MSA convention, she also participated in the Pulp, Noir, Modernism seminar and on the panel entitled “Open Forum on Feminism: From the Archive to the Student: Feminist Texts for Modernism.” She published the essay “Museums, Art and the Rackets” in *Against the Current* (March/April 2006). In the spring 2006 issue of *AC: Collaborative Journal*, she co-authored with Liz Phillips the essay “On collaborating with an audience.”

Donald Ross published “Sunny Memories and Serious Proposals” in *Transatlantic Stowe: Harriet Beecher Stowe and European Culture*, edited by Denise Kohn, Sarah Meer, and Emily B. Todd (University of Iowa Press, 2006). Todd (PhD ’99) co-wrote the introduction “Reading Stowe as a Transatlantic Writer.”

Julie Schumacher, director of the Creative Writing Program, received a McKnight Special Events award for her proposal “Writers at Work,” a four day event to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the MFA program in Creative Writing (see page 6).

Geoffrey Sirc joined the English faculty as professor. His interests are in composition theory and pedagogy, technology/writing, visual arts and art theory, hip hop, and the modernist era. He won an Alumni Association Distinguished Teaching Award while on the General College faculty. His latest book is *Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition* (Utah State), which he co-authored with Anne Frances Wysocki, Johndan Johnson-Eilola, and Cynthia L. Selfe.

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she was also on the program committee) to be taken over by Oxford University Press. Of the fourteen CLA Selmer Birkelo Scholarship winners last spring, two were majors in Classical Civilization, a small interdisciplinary program Clayton chairs. Clayton also spoke at a memorial service for the late Harry Gregg, who holds the record for courses taken with him: at least ten.

Lois Cucullu published “Over-eating: Pilgrimage’s Food Mania and the Flânerie of Public Foraging” in the *Modernist Cultures* issue on “Modernism and the Everyday,” edited by Scott McCracken (Summer 2006). For the Eight Annual

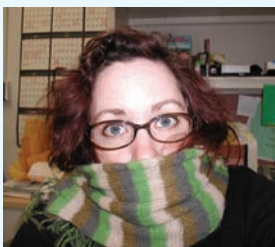
Ray Gonzalez will publish his third book of nonfiction *Renaming the Earth: Personal Essays* with the University of Arizona Press in 2007. Other forthcoming publications include prose in the following anthologies: *Flash Fiction Forward: 80 Very Short Stories* (W. W. Norton), *Let There Be Night: Testimony on Behalf of the Dark* (University of Nevada Press), and *American Food Writing* (Library of America). His 2005 book of prose poetry, *The Religion of Hands*, received a 2006 Latino Literature Hall of Fame Award for Best Book of Poetry. An interview with Gonzalez, along with several poems, was featured in the fall 2006 issue of *The Indiana Review*.

Madelon Sprengnether presented her paper “The Classroom as Psychoanalytic Space” at the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association. She also participated in a Discussion Group session on “The Historiography of Psychoanalysis” at the annual meeting of the American Psychoanalytic Association. “Lot’s Wife,” a poem from her recently published collection of prose poems *The Angel of Duluth*, was reprinted in *To Sing Along the Way: Minnesota Women Poets From Pre-Territorial Days to the Present* (New Rivers Press).

David Treuer received a McKnight Presidential Fellow Award, which is targeted specifically to the most promising faculty granted tenure and promotion to associate professor. The Ojibwe speaker received an NEH Fellowship to save endangered languages. He was named a 2007 Guggenheim Fellow.

Michelle Wright published “What is Black Identity?” in a special issue of the French academic journal *Cahiers Charles V* entitled “L’Objet Identité” edited by Jean-Paul Rocchi. Wright delivered a lecture at the University of Rome in December on contemporary theories of black identity, and in January, 2007, delivered the Martin Luther King, Jr., Day address at the University of Bonn, Germany. She is now serving as the Fulbright Professor of the Amerikanistik Institut at the University of Munich for 2006–7. Besides teaching, she will be conducting research on constructions of blackness in Hitler’s Germany. Wright and Rod Ferguson (American Studies) received a monetary award from the CLA Scholarly Events Fund to support their event entitled “Rethinking the Literary and Spatial Archives: New Strategies for Theorizing Black Genders and Sexualities.”

Creative Writing Program coordinator **Kathleen Glasgow** (MFA 2002) received a CLA Staff Outstanding Service Award for 2005–06. In nominating her, program director Julie Schumacher wrote: “Kathleen Glasgow’s contributions to the Creative Writing Program and to the larger University and Twin Cities literary community have been truly and consistently exceptional.”



PhD candidates **Liz Hutter**, **Mitchell Ogden**, and **Marie-Therese C. Sulit** co-authored with adjunct professor **Eric Daigre** (PhD 2001) “To Serve, Perchance to Learn: A Pedagogical Play in Four Acts,” published in *Pedagogy* (Duke University Press, 2006).

Emily August (MFA candidate) and Patricia Kirkpatrick interviewed poet Brenda Hillman in the fall issue of *Water–Stone Review*.

Emily Bright (MFA candidate) published her poem “A Hundred Things” in a recent issue of *North American Review*. Bright’s

first chapbook will be published by Pudding House Press in summer 2007.

Taiyon Coleman (PhD candidate; MFA 2002) has a poem, “Sister,” in the anthology *Gathering Ground*, edited by Toi Derricotte and Cornelius Eady (University of Michigan Press). Her poem “Catfish” is forthcoming in *The Ringing Ear*, edited by Nikki Finney (University of Georgia Press). A Cave Canem fellow, she read in December at the Studio Museum in Harlem.

Kathleen Chen (PhD candidate) was awarded the Dante Society of America’s Charles Hall Grandgent Award for the best graduate essay on Dante in 2005–06 for her essay “I Hear Cries of ‘Mary, Pray for Us’: The Role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Dante’s *Purgatorio*.”

Tara DaPra (MFA candidate) published “Old-Fashioned New Bohemian” in the August issue of *The Rake*.

Eric Dregni (MFA candidate) published three books: *Follies of Science: 20th Century Visions of Our Fantastic Future* with John Dregni (Speck Press); *Weird Minnesota* (Sterling); and *Zamboni: The Coolest Machines on Ice* (Voyageur Press).

Chelsie Gawnemark (MFA candidate) won the U of M Celtic Studies Grant, which will allow her to do research in Belfast, North Ireland, this year.

Jen Johnson (MFA candidate) had her poem “Into Light” featured on

Martha Stewart Radio’s “The Naturalist’s Datebook.” It was originally published in *Isotope: A Journal of Literary Nature and Science Writing*.

Andrew Luckham (MFA candidate) was awarded a 2006–07 Jacob K. Javits Fellowship in the field of creative writing. The Javits awards students who have demonstrated superior academic achievement and exceptional promise.

Alex Mueller (PhD candidate) delivered “An Anti-Homeric Ethic: Translating Truth in *The Destruction of Troy*” to the New Chaucer Society Congress in New

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York in July, 2006, and “Exhuming Troy: Reviving Bodies and Origins in John Clerk’s *Destruction of Troy*” at the 41st International Congress on Medieval Studies in Michigan in May, 2006.

Laura Owen (MFA candidate) won third place in the *Momaya* short story contest with “The Villa.” The story is published in the *Momaya Annual Review 2006*.

Douglas W. Texter (PhD candidate) presented “Institutional Crisis: Cold War Scholar and State in Herman Hesse’s *Glass Bead Game* and Walter Miller’s *Canticle for Leibowitz*” at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Utopian Studies in Colorado, in October. “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Dystopia” will be published shortly in *Utopian Studies*. Texter’s short story “Primetime” placed second out of 1100 entries in the Writers of the Future Contest. In addition to being published in the annual *Writers of the Future* anthology, Texter will be flown to Los Angeles next summer for a week-long workshop conducted by professional science fiction writers.

Josh Wallaert (MFA candidate) co-directed with Grant Aaker the documentary *Arid Lands*, about the landscape of the decommissioned Hanford nuclear site in southeastern Washington. *Arid Lands* premiered at the Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Festival in January 2007 and won the “People’s Choice” award. It screens at the Bell Auditorium in April.

Del Adamson (PhD 1977) retired in spring 2006 from the University of Minnesota's former General College and volunteers making recordings for the blind.

Randy Adamsick (BA 1976) is development director at the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum in Chicago. He led the Steering Committee which planned the controversial exhibition *The African Presence in Mexico*, touring North American museums for the next five years. Adamsick is a member of the Department of English's Advisory Board and was formerly executive director of the Minnesota Film Board.

James J. Berg (PhD 1996) edited and wrote an introduction for a spring 2007 publication from the University of Minnesota Press, *Isherwood on Writing*.

Ruth Berman (PhD 1977) wrote an introduction for the reprint of *The Wonder Book*, a collection of short fantasy by Ruth Plumly Thompson (International Wizard of Oz Club; originally published by Reilly & Lee in 1939).

Amanda Coplin (MFA 2006) published the stories "Wenatchee Heights" in the fall issue of *Blue Mesa Review* and "Beautiful Country" in *Minnesota Monthly* online. A novel excerpt titled "The Orchardist" was published in the fall issue of *Third Coast*.

Dave Crowe (PhD 1992) will publish "Hemingway's Nick Adams and Wendell

Kim Donehower (PhD 1997) will publish the book *Rural Literacies*, co-authored with Eileen Schell and Charlotte Hogg, as part of the Studies in Writing and Rhetoric series by Southern Illinois University Press in June, 2007. She continues as assistant professor at the University of North Dakota.

Julie Eckerle (PhD 2002) is assistant professor of English at Framingham State College. She co-authored with Karen Rowan and Shevaun Watson "The Tale of a Position Statement: Finding a Voice for the Graduate Student Administrator in Writing Center Discourse" for *Culture Shock and the Practice of Profession: Training the Next Wave in Rhetoric and Composition* (Hampton, 2006). She co-edited with Michelle M. Dowd *Genre and Women's Life Writing in Early Modern England* (Ashgate). The article "The Female Storyteller in Early Modern English Romance" will be published in *Gender and Oral Traditions in Early Modern Literary Texts* (Ashgate) in summer 2007. Finally, she presented portions of her work in progress "Heere this my story": *Attending to the Female Storyteller in Early Modern Romance* for the Seminar on Women and Culture in the Early Modern World at the Harvard Humanities Center, February, 2007.

Amanda Fields (MFA 2005) is teaching in the Writing Program at the American University in Cairo, Egypt. She publishes a story, "Boiler Room," in the Summer 2007 issue of *The Indiana Review*.

Laura Flynn (MFA 2006) received a 2006 Loft Mentor Series Fellowship in nonfiction. She sold her debut memoir *Swallow the Ocean* to Counterpoint Books for 2008 publication.

Robert Foulke (PhD 1961) co-wrote with his wife Patricia *A Visitor's Guide to Colonial & Revolutionary New England* (The Countryman Press).

Lauren Fox (MFA 1998) published a piece in the *New York Times* "Modern Love" column. (See also page 10.)

P. C. Hodgell (PhD 1987) published

To Ride a Rathorn (Meisha Merlin), the fourth book in the fantasy series which began with *God Stalk* (1982).

Tom Greenfield (PhD 1980) is Professor of English and American Studies at SUNY–Geneseo. His essays "Route 66" and "Rush Limbaugh" appeared in *American Icons: People Places and Things That Have Shaped our Culture* (Greenwood Press). "North American Theatre" (co-authored with Monica Moschetta) will appear in Greenwood's seven-volume *Encyclopedia of World Cultures* in 2007.

Cheri Johnson (MFA 2005) received a fellowship to Yaddo, one of the oldest and most prestigious writing colonies in the United States. She also won the 2006 *Glimmer Train* magazine Fiction Open.

Gail Langer Karwoski (MA 1972) published a new children's book: *Tsunami, the True Story of an April Fools' Day Disaster* (Darby Creek) Her picture book *Water Beds: Sleeping in the Ocean* (Sylvan Dell) is a *Learning Magazine* 2007 Teacher's Choice, and her latest novel for young readers *Quake! Disaster in San Francisco, 1906* (Peachtree Publishers) is on five state award lists this school year.

Penelope Kelsey (PhD 2002) published "Indigenous Theory and Service Learning: A Dakota Case Study" in *Literature Matters: Community-Based Learning and Literary Studies*, edited by Susan Daniels and AnnMarie Fallon (Anker Press). She presented "Making Land Issues Real to Mainstream Students: Sovereignty and Native American Literature" to the Native American Literature Symposium in Michigan in April, 2006. In September she chaired the panel "Issues in Aboriginal Literature," at the 11th Annual International Wanapitei Aboriginal History and Politics Colloquium in Ontario.

Cheryl Kerfeld (MA 1989; BA 1983), a research molecular biologist at the UCLA-DOE Institute for Genomics and Proteomics, is director of the Undergraduate Genomics Research Initiative. She is also involved in many interdisciplinary projects that extend to the humanities.

Michael Kleine (PhD 1983) is a professor in the department of Rhetoric and Writing

ALUMNI NEWS

Berry's Art," in *Wendell Berry: Life and Work*, edited by Jason Peters (University Press of Kentucky, 2007).

Lightsey Darst (MFA 2003) received a \$20,000 2007 National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in Poetry.

Michael Dickel (MA in Creative Writing 1990; PhD 1999) is publishing his poem series *Shekinah I-III* in *Poetica*. Four poems written during his recent three-month trip to Israel have been accepted by *Zone: International forum for experimental poetry and prose*, published from Buenos Aires, Argentina.

at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. A book entitled *Searching for Latini* came out on Parlor Press. Articles have appeared in *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, *Technical Communication Quarterly*, *Communication and Religion*, and *JAC: A Journal of Composition Theory*, among others. He has also published poetry on Italian art and literature in *Poem and Formalist*.

Mary E. Knatterud (PhD, 1997; MA, 1979), associate professor and senior research associate in the Department of Surgery at the University of Minnesota, has been named poetry editor of *Science Journal* (published by the Council of Science Editors). The column—"Peer-Renewed"—debuted in the July-August 2006 issue, featuring a poem she wrote, "Telling the Family: Pre- and Postop."

Tomoko Kuribayashi (PhD 1994) was awarded tenure last spring at the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point, her second tenure-track job, after her college in Vermont went bankrupt (!). She is Vice President of the Margaret Atwood Society and attended the 2006 MLA in that capacity to present a paper on Atwood and myth.

Michael Levy (PhD 1982) was guest editor for the fall 2005 special issue of the journal *Extrapolation* on Multiculturalism and Race in Science Fiction. He is co-guest-editing the spring 2007 issue on the fiction of Ursula K. LeGuin and will be taking over as co-editor at year's end.

Holly Littlefield (PhD 1999; BA 1985) has published eight children's books with Carolrhoda Press since completing her degree. She serves on the Communications Faculty at the Carlson School of Management.

William Perry Marvin (PhD 1998) published *Hunting Law and Ritual in Medieval English Literature* (Boydell & Brewer Ltd.). He is associate professor of English at Colorado State University.

John O'Brien (PhD 1995), academic vice president at Century College in White Bear Lake, gave the closing keynote at the October 2005 League for Innovation conference, entitled "Demanding Technology: Understanding the New Student."

Jane Olmsted (PhD 1996) is associate professor and director of the Women's Studies Program at Western Kentucky University. "Black Moves, White Ways, Every Body's Blues: Orphic Power in Langston Hughes's *The Ways of White Folks*," a paper she wrote for professor John Wright, has been reprinted in *Short Story Criticism*, Vol. 90, edited by Larry Trudeau (Gale Publishing Group; originally published in *Black Orpheus: Music in African American Fiction from the Harlem Renaissance to Toni Morrison* by Garland, 2000).

Kara Provost (PhD 1995) published the chapbook *Nests* with Finishing Line Press, featuring poems about mother/daughter relationships, pregnancy, and parenting. She left a full-time position teaching writing and literature at Montserrat College of Art in Beverly, MA, after nine years to devote more time to writing. She is now working part-time tutoring writing and academic skills in the Learning Centers at Wellesley College and Quincy College.

Maureen T. Reddy (PhD 1985) has been named chair of English at Rhode Island College. Her last book was *Traces, Codes, and Clues: Reading Race in Crime Fiction* (Rutgers).

William Reichard (PhD 1997) continues as an adjunct in English at Minnesota. His third collection of poems, *This Brightness*, was published in February by Mid List Press. His scholarly article titled "The Idea of America: Four Questions for Student Artists" was published in the July 2006 issue of *Art Education*. His essay "North" came out in the fall issue of *The Fourth River*.

Karen Rigby (MFA 2005) received a \$20,000 2007 National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in Poetry.

Amy Shearn (MFA 2005) wrote about her "Elvis Wedding" in the February 2007 issue of *Jane* magazine. Shaye Areheart Books, a division of Random House, will publish her debut novel *How Far Is the Ocean From Here?* in 2008.

John Edgar Tidwell (PhD 1981) has edited from manuscript materials, with Mark Sanders, a book-length travelogue of the late poet Sterling A. Brown envisioned

as *A Negro Looks at the South* (Oxford University Press, 2007). From the late journalist-poet Frank Marshall Davis's forty year career, Tidwell selected news materials for *Writings of Frank Marshall Davis, A Voice of the Black Press* (University Press of Mississippi, 2007). His last project collects new essays from eighteen other scholars for *Montage of a Dream: The Art and Life of Langston Hughes* (University of Missouri Press, 2007).

Michael Tisserand (BA 1992) publishes his second book *Sugarcane Academy: How a New Orleans Teacher and his Storm-Struck Students Created a School to Remember*, on Harcourt this summer. His coverage of Hurricane Katrina was included in *Unnatural Disaster: The Nation on Hurricane Katrina* (Nation Books).

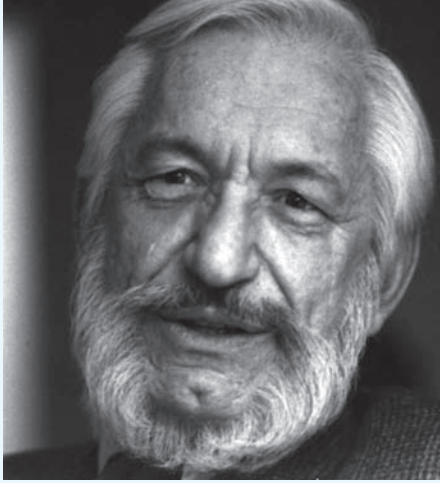
Emily Todd (PhD 1999) co-edited *Transatlantic Stowe: Harriet Beecher Stowe and European Culture* (University of Iowa Press) with Denise Kohn and Sarah Meer. She also contributed "Afterword: The Woman's Building Library and History" to a special issue of *Libraries & Culture: A Journal of Library History* (Winter 2006). She is associate professor at Westfield State College in Massachusetts.

Francine Tolf (MFA 2006) received a 2006 Loft Mentor Series Fellowship in nonfiction.

Sarah Wadsworth (PhD 2000) published *In the Company of Books: Literature and its "Classes" in Nineteenth-Century America* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2006). Assistant professor at Marquette University, she edited a special issue of *Libraries & Culture: A Journal of Library History* (Winter 2006) on the women's exhibition at the 1893 Chicago World Fair.

Kathleen R. Wallace (PhD 1994) is assistant dean of the Graduate School at Ohio State University. She serves as the executive secretary of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment.

Donna White (PhD 1991) co-edited with C. Anita Tarr J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan In and Out of Time: A Children's Classic at 100* (Scarecrow Press). She is assistant professor at Arkansas Tech University.



Michael Dennis Browne, professor of English at Minnesota and a colleague of Anderson, called him a “lovable complexity: his deep resonant voice, that he wasn’t shy to use in the classroom, together with his memory for Irish poetry, made him seem almost a harmonic for an older way of loving ‘the words.’”

Anderson wrote *James Joyce and His World*, which has been reprinted many times and now goes under the title *James Joyce*. He

The Old Man and the Poem

by Michael Dennis Browne

you are the old man and the poem
 you are the old poem who went on beyond
 the words beyond the breath (little wishbone
 of a breastbone ceasing its negligible motion)
 I am who went on saying the words
 to you who went on into the no breath
 beyond the poem’s breathing and your friend
 who wears now what you wore now wrap
 your robe around as wind rattles window
 easily rattled the window and the reader
 but not your beyond of breath not the saying
 so long ago once we were dreamed into being

Chester Anderson 1923-2006

Chester G. “Chet” Anderson, professor emeritus of English at the University of Minnesota, died in Minneapolis

IN MEMORIAM

on May 29, 2006. He was born in River Falls, Wisconsin, on December 8, 1923. Anderson was educated at St. Olaf College (1941–1943), the University of Chicago (MA 1948), and Columbia University (PhD 1952).

He taught at Creighton University, Fordham University, Danbury State College, and Columbia University before becoming professor of English at Minnesota. His central interests were psychoanalytical criticism and modern literature, Anglo-Irish modern literature in particular.

edited Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1964; 1968) with Richard Ellmann, as well as *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: Text, Criticism, and Notes* (1968; 1977). Anderson also corralled Meridel Le Sueur, Robert Bly, and Gerald Vizenor for the University of Minnesota Press collection *Growing up in Minnesota: Ten Writers Remember Their Childhoods* (1976).

Paul Magnuson (PhD 1969), Professor of English at New York University for 32 years, died on September 7, 2006. Professor Andrew Elfenbein described Magnuson as a “serious committed Romanticist whose work was especially important for those wanting to understand Romanticism in relation to its historical context.” Magnuson’s books include *Coleridge’s Nightmare Poetry* (1974), *Coleridge and Wordsworth: A Lyrical Dialogue* (1988), and *Reading Public Romanticism* (1998). — by Jessica Siefer

SCHOLARSHIPS, from page 15

but unforgettable compliments about my character during my medical ordeals. I spent so much time in office hours, receiving help with writing and help with life.

Throughout the second semester, I slowly came to terms with my nascent medical school fantasy. I remembered what I’d mused, in surgery, as the morphine set in: *This will make for some great writing material.*

Diana Heim

The Paul and Lucienne Taylor Writing Internship Grant gave me the opportunity to spend my summer as an unpaid intern at the Coffee House Press in downtown Minneapolis. Coffee House is a small, nonprofit literary publisher. Since there are only six staff members at Coffee House, they rely heavily on interns to bring manuscript submissions of quality to their attention. I also learned how to proofread and copyedit fiction manuscripts, and



I helped the publicist format book reviews and send out press packets.

Furthermore, interning at Coffee House exposed me to great contemporary literature and introduced me to the Twin Cities’ amazing local literary community. I found that I am most interested in the editorial part of the publishing process, and I hope to find an editorial job someday at a small publishing press as progressive, innovative, and unique as Coffee House.

Receiving the Martin B. Ruud Memorial Scholarship for 2006–07 has helped ease the financial stress of my final year of college and will allow me to focus on graduating with a double major in English Literature and Spanish Studies. My thesis is about the relationship between language and art in the poetry of Federico García Lorca and e. e. cummings. These awards have given me the chance to start saving for travel after graduation. I would love to spend a year in Argentina teaching English and continuing my study of Spanish language and literature. It would also be great to intern or work at a Spanish language press and gain more experience in editing and translation. The opportunities that I have been given in the last year have inspired me to consider new ways to use my English degree. □

WRIGHT, from page 13

Yet Ellison, who died in 1994, keeps dealing out his own surprises. "I'm trying to think of this current project in an almost novelistic way, in terms of the narrative it details," Wright describes. "In that respect, Ralph's work and the work of Ralph's admirers is becoming relevant to me in another way I hadn't anticipated."

The creative conversation continues. ▣

CHAIR, from page 2

putting to bed volume 7 of *LUNA*, the journal of poetry and translation he edits.

Our November 17 tribute to the 50th anniversary of the publication of Allen Ginsberg's ground-shattering poem *Howl* was organized by Maria Damon and orchestrated by David Bernstein of the Theater Department. The evening's mass jump-reading of the entire poem found high school students, retired modern American literature professors Robert Solotaroff and Arthur Geffen, and everyone in between joyously reveling in Ginsberg's transgressive language and incantational prosody. The evening concluded with a historic reading by faculty, graduate students, and guests of portions of the poem in such languages as Amharic, Bulgarian, Japanese, Latin, and Yiddish. Minnesota Public Radio's Kerri Miller featured Professor Damon on her "Midmorning" program noting *Howl's* anniversary. Damon, by the way, just received the University of Minnesota Distinguished Teaching Award for Outstanding Postbaccalaureate, Graduate, and Professional Education.

This bridge from English to other language and arts departments comes out of our commitment as the central humanities department of the College of Liberal Arts to link literary production (creative writing), critique (literary scholarship), and presentation/dissemination (publication and teaching). That commitment is behind three future initiatives: 1) to create a program in publishing and connect the impressive array of print and electronic publications we sponsor—see sidebar—to this community's extensive small-press publishing houses; 2) to develop a program in new literacies, literatures, and immigrant communities building on the connections that professor Thomas Augst, Director of Undergraduate Studies, our former colleague Patricia Crain (now at NYU), and lecturer Eric Daigre (PhD '01) have forged through their service learning courses; and 3) to fashion a minor in translation and poetics linking the talents of our faculty (for instance, Maria Fitzgerald translating Dante into English) and graduate students (Maria Zavialova translating Toni Morrison into Russian) to the work of scholars in other humanities departments.

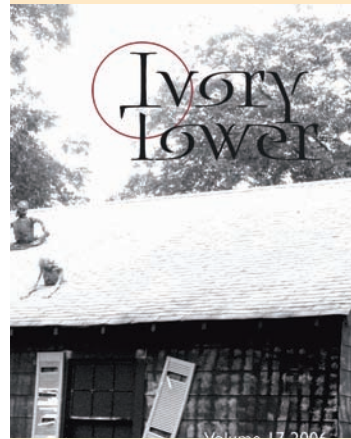
The ten year anniversaries of *VG/Voices from the Gaps* and the Creative Writing MFA remind me of how past initiatives have become exciting realities through the generous contributions of donors to the Department of English. If you are interested in supporting our future, please feel free to use the stamped envelope enclosed here, or go to <http://english.cla.umn.edu/gift.php>. I promise to keep you updated on our progress.

Paula Rabinowitz, Professor and Chair, Department of English and Samuel Russell Chair in the Humanities



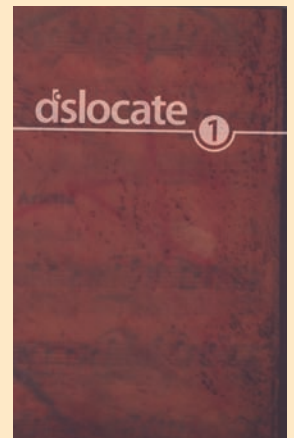
VG/Voices from the Gaps provides resources about women artists and writers of color. VG is a web-based transnational academic community including students, teachers, artists, and scholars. VG contains biography, critical analysis, and pedagogical information. VG can be found at <http://voices.cla.umn.edu/>.

AFFILIATED PUBLICATIONS



Ivory Tower is the undergraduate art and literary magazine at the University of Minnesota. The magazine is run by students who take a two-semester class designed to provide a glimpse of what it takes to run a successful business. *Ivory Tower* Volume 17 can be read at <http://www.ivorytower.umn.edu/>. Volume 18 is due April, 2007.

Dislocate is the literary magazine edited and produced by MFA graduate students at the University of Minnesota. The third print issue, due spring 2007, will feature T. C. Boyle, Carson Ellis, Peter Markus, Michael Perry and more. For issues, submission information, and updates, go to <http://www.dislocate.org/>.



Luna is a journal of poetry and translation edited by English professor Ray Gonzalez and produced through the Department of English. The spring 2007 issue features poems by Adam Clay, Dobby Gibson, Rigoberto Gonzalez, Shara McCallum, Paul Otremba, and others. For a copy, send \$10 to *LUNA*, Ray Gonzalez, editor, Department of English, 207 Lind Hall, 207 Church St., Minneapolis, MN 55455.

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GARNER-MCNARON- SPRENGNETHER DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIP

Trudy Lopic, who served the Department of English for many years as its senior accountant, has donated funds to establish a fellowship in English, in honor of (as pictured above) Professors Madelon Sprengnether, Shirley Garner, and Toni McNaron “for their significant contributions to feminist literary scholarship.” The endowment will provide fellowships to graduate students who are in their dissertation year and “whose dissertations focus on projects with feminist literary scholarship, including GLBT literary scholarship, and will contribute significantly to literary research and criticism.” Contributions to the Garner-McNaron-Sprengnether Dissertation Fellowship endowment may be made through development officer Emily Paulson at paulsone@umn.edu or 612-626-5141.

english@minnesota is now published once annually. For ongoing news, announcements, and stories about faculty, students, and alumni, go to <http://english.cla.umn.edu/>.

english@minnesota is interested in what you are doing. Let us hear from you! Contact us at sutt0063@umn.edu or at 207 Lind Hall, 207 Church St. S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455.

CALENDAR

April 11: E L Doctorow

The Esther Freier Endowed speaker reads from and discusses his work. His bestselling, award-winning novels include *Ragtime* (1975), *World's Fair* (1986), and his most recent novel *The March* (2005). 7:30 pm, Ted Mann Concert Hall.



April 13: Writers at Work: MFA Showcase

The Creative Writing Program celebrates its tenth anniversary with raffles, give-a-ways, and readings! 7 pm, Campus Club, Coffman Union.

April 25-26: Who's Got the Story?

The *Memoir as History/History as Memoir* series continues with a reading on the 25th at 7:30 pm, Weisman Art Museum, and a panel discussion on “Story and Psyche” the 26th, 7:30 pm, Nolte Center 140.

April 26: VG/Voices From the Gaps 10th Anniversary

A celebration with readings by sound poet Latasha N. Nevada Diggs and poet/short story writer Ana-Maurine Lara. 4 pm, Institute for Advanced Study, Nolte Center.

April 27: Ivory Tower Launch Party

The revitalized undergraduate literary magazine launches its second annual issue. 6 pm, Weisman Art Museum.

April 30: Joseph Lease

ENow! presents the author of *Broken World* and *Human Rights* reading from his work. 3 pm, Lind Hall 207A.