



As you see, I do not treat the creation of fiction, that is to say the invention and development of fantasies, as a form of abstract thought. I don't wish to deny the uses of the intellect, but sometimes one has the intuition that the intellect by itself will lead one nowhere.

—J.M. Coetzee (1940—)

PART ONE OF NEW SERIES

For the first event in the ongoing series, “Taking It to the Next Level: Your English Degree at Work,” the English Department hosted a well-attended panel on September 22, titled “So What *Else* Can I Do with an English Major?”

Challenging the cliché that the only choices available to the English major are either teaching or writing, the panelists discussed the various career options available to degree-holders.

In attendance were John Razzano, an editor in the field of environmental protection; Jason Taylor, in the non-profit sector and land conservation; Marcia Tucci, from the Academic Advising Office; and Christopher Watkins, a civil rights attorney. Also participating were Tom Olsen, Chair of the English Department, and Beth King, from the Career Resource Center.

Professor Olsen's prefatory remarks included “what makes an English major?” He suggested that we are “united in a desire to communicate our appreciation for the written word,” and discussed a list of “core skills.” After a brief talk by Beth King about available services, the panelists discussed the utility and application of their English education, and how it provided them with useful skills.

All mentioned their ongoing engagement with reading and writing, as well as what drew them to the field. Razzano moved from technical writing to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, where he now writes and edits web and print publications. He quoted G. B. Shaw, saying “the majesty of the

English language” inspires him. Jason Taylor explained that Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* taught him about persuasive appeals which he then parlayed into advertising, making complicated ideas approachable or the lackluster inviting. Taylor said he was used to “taking something complicated and boiling it down to its concise essence.”



The panelists also discussed the utility of their skills through winding career paths. Chris Watkins noted that the English degree “prepares you for virtually any profession,” enabling one to “read, analyze, write clearly and concisely,” saying that it is a “premium skill set,” and he explained how it prepared him for law school. Marcia Tucci spoke of wide-ranging options: “the ‘dream job’ you might get may not exist yet—it may be a product of our evolving culture,” counseling that “the onus is on you to decide how to apply your degree . . . find what you love and work it into your career.”

The next series event will be a Graduate School Information Session on Friday, October 16, 3:00 p.m. in JFT 1010. Professors from the English Department will discuss the application process, financial aid, what to expect in graduate school, and career options after the degree. We hope to see you there!

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ***The Red Masquerade World Premiere on New Paltz's Campus!***
- **Graduate School Information Session October 16th!**

Faculty Profile: Nancy Johnson

Many of us have seen Professor Nancy Johnson, working on the eighth floor of Jacobson Faculty Tower, signing forms as we declare our major as English or switch our advisors. Professor Johnson is much more than Deputy Chair of the English Department; she has collected quite a resume, being at New Paltz since 1998. Throughout her career, she has taught and lectured from New York City to Boston to Montreal but has settled in New Paltz because of the warmth and friendliness she found in the department from the very beginning. After eleven years at New Paltz, many of the colleagues she began teaching with are no longer part of the community, but the intelligent and thoughtful people of New Paltz have kept her here. As an important part of our community, she has been on multiple committees, including budget committees and the Academic Senate, and she continues as Deputy Chair for the English Department.

Professor Johnson says her biggest accomplishment is becoming a better teacher. Every class she learns more and more. Her favorite subject to teach is sentimentalism and sensibility in the eighteenth-century novel, as her studies focus on the Jacobin novel as well as on twentieth-century theory. She encourages discussion in her class because she likes to hear what students are thinking; she says “the more you know what students think, the better the teacher you become.”

Professor Johnson is also bilingual, a fact which drew her to Montreal. Speaking what she thought was fluent French, Johnson quickly

learned that French in France is completely different from French in Canada. She was interested in a research-oriented doctorate program, and found that at McGill University. She was influenced by Romantic poets and reading about the intersection of politics in literature in the 1790s, as well as literature in the 1930s. Her writing focuses on the eighteenth-century novel and has brought her as far as England, with a special stay at Windsor Castle.



After writing numerous published journal articles, book chapters, and even encyclopedia entries, Professor Johnson is now in the process of editing Frances Burney’s court journals and letters, which will be published in 2010-2011. Johnson said she is attracted to this project because Burney kept meticulous diaries and gives us an intimate picture of life in an eighteenth-century

court. Johnson is trying to reclaim the self-edited narrative diaries by Burney and is intrigued by the diaries because they “were not meant to be literature.”

Despite her multiple writing projects and her involvement in the SUNY community, Professor Johnson still tries to find time for a little leisure reading in her life, as hard as that is for any person studying English Literature. She enjoys contemporary British novels and tries to read the shortlist of Booker Prize books each year. Lastly, Professor Johnson advocates that we read as much and as widely as we can, historically and nationally. She stresses that students should be free to enjoy all forms of literature and not to limit themselves.

Professor Johnson’s Writing Tips:

- Remember that writing is a thinking process. Set up a working argument, but allow that argument to shift and change as you gather your research and develop your ideas.
- Keep your argument closely at hand. As you write, confirm that the evidence pertains to your argument.
- Read your writing out loud. Listen for those moments when you are stumbling over your words – those are the sentences that need re-writing.

Professor Moss to Give Lecture

On October 6 Professor Ken Moss will be offering a lecture titled “How I Teach,” based on his methods of teaching more efficiently. He considers himself not only a professor in English but also a “pedagogue.” Professor Moss has a different style of teaching, having started his own school, where he taught as a “holistic educator” rather than simply a “humanistic educator.” He believes that a holistic approach to human learning is essential: the heart, intellect, and spirituality should be involved in learning.

His style encourages students to address the outside world, as it is important to broaden views and encourage students to interact with outside environments. Although he is a professor of English, he stresses that students need to be comfortable outside the world of words. Professor Moss will



also discuss various aspects of standardized teaching, and will examine roots of phrases that have dominated the public discourse, such as “learner outcome” and “rubrics.”

He is currently working on turning his lecture into a workbook, also titled “How I Teach,” where teachers can use each page of the workbook and apply it to their own teaching styles.

His lecture will also discuss the ultimate question of most teachers: “How will I know that the students will learn what I say they will learn?”

Professor Moss hopes that people will leave the lecture having learned something new. He comments that “you have to have something you are a novice in if you want to stay in touch with teaching.” The lecture will be held in the Honors Center at 5:00 p.m.

WaterWrites Set for Release in Mid-October

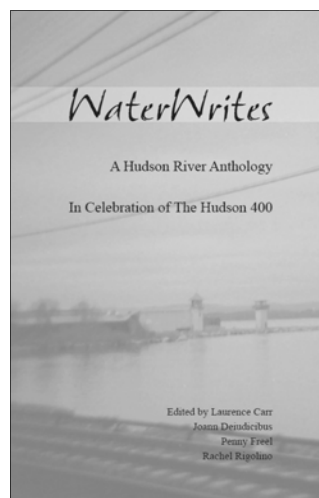
“The wind and waves create an ancient song, a river song, older than our time. A song similar to other river songs throughout the world, but unique to this place in Eastern New York. . . .”
—From the Preface

WaterWrites, an anthology of poetry and memoir from 58 Hudson Valley writers, is set for release in mid-October. Edited by SUNY New Paltz faculty members Laurence Carr, Joann Deudicibus, Penny Freel, and Rachel Rigolino, and published by the local Codhill Press, the 130-plus page volume is inspired by vibrant and varied images of the Hudson River and the personal recollections of those who live near it.

The book features writers from a wide range of ages from high school through senior citizen, including nationally and internationally published writers: Barbara Adams, Lucia Cherciu, and Donald Lev. Many New Paltz faculty and staff are among the contributing authors, including Kevin Larkin Angioli, Thomas Doran, Andrew Higgins, Michael Lutomski, Rachel Rigolino, Rhonda Shary, James Sherwood, Marcia

Roth Tucci, Robert Waugh, and Ethel Westorp.

The book truly is a collaborative effort within the SUNY New Paltz community: the cover art features a photograph by Morgan Gwenwald—a view of the Hudson River as captured by a vintage camera from a moving train—and the book designer is Laura Kniffen, both NP staff.



There will be live readings featuring *WaterWrites* authors as part of the Hudson 400, and there are two upcoming local readings, one on October 12 during the “Understanding Poetry” Modular Course and another on October 24 at Inquiring Minds Bookstore on Church Street in New Paltz. The first *WaterWrites* reading was held at the Newburgh Library in April 2009 and was very well attended.

Selling for \$15, the book is a major literary component of the Hudson 400 Celebration and will be available through Hudson Valley tourist and environmental organizations, local book stores, Amazon.com, and directly from Codhill.com.



Red Masquerade Set to Open

Red Masquerade is having its world premiere here at SUNY New Paltz. The play opens in 1942, amidst the war, when America is enemies with the Nazis and allies with the Soviets—or so we think. We are taken to New York City, where a Greek-American photojournalist, Angela Calomiris, is recruited by the FBI to infiltrate a communist cell and spy for the government. Calomiris befriends the American Communists and learns about their vision for the future of America. She meets the Communist party official, Leona, and begins a love affair that will, according to director Stephen Kitsa-



kos, “reveal secrets, challenge beliefs and propel Angela into a world of espionage, doubt and fear. The play is based on the real life story of Miss Calomiris, a key witness in the sensational trial of the ‘Communist 11’ who were convicted of trying to overthrow the U.S. government in 1949.”

The play was written by Jack Wade, Deputy Chair of the Theatre Department at SUNY New Paltz, and is directed by Kitsakos. It will be performed in Parker Theatre October 8 through 18. The Box Office in Parker Theater can be reached at 845-257-3880.

The Back to School Crossword: Win a Novel!

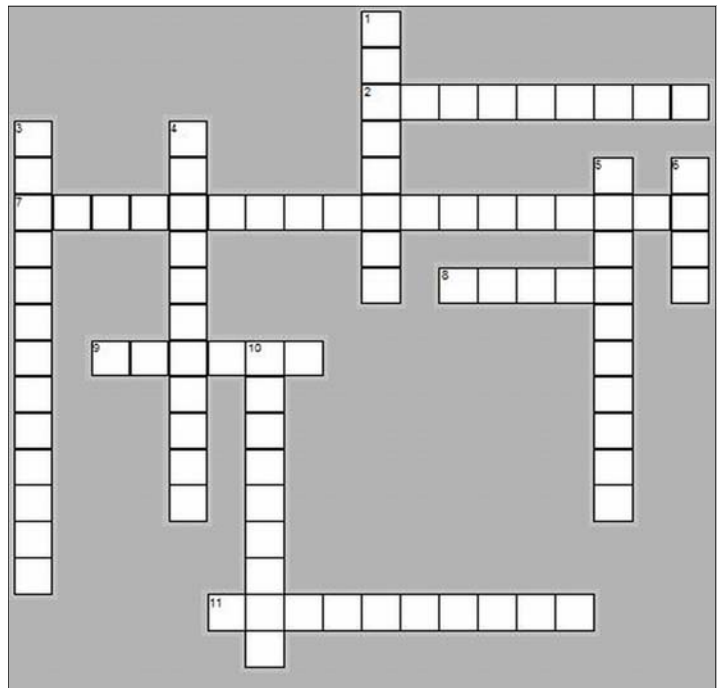
Correct, completed crosswords received in the English Dept Office (ask for Ethel) by Friday 10/12 1 p.m. will be entered into a drawing and the winner will receive the following prize: *Old School* by Tobias Wolff. All students may apply.

Across

2. Dictatorial headmaster in Dickens's *Hard Times*: Mr. _____.
7. Between 1961 and 1982, _____ was the most censored book in high schools and libraries in the United States. You phony!
8. The name of the fictional school in John Knowles's *A Separate Peace* (based on the real Philips Exeter Academy).
9. Name of the school the titular character attends in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.
11. Marjane Satrapi's graphic novel about education and politics in Iran, named after an ancient city in Persia.

Down

1. Where J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter goes to school.
3. Howard Gardner's "Theory of Multiple _____."
4. Author of the 1959 autobiographical novel *To Sir, with Love*.
5. Strict headmistress at the school Matilda attends, in the eponymous Roald Dahl novel.
6. Controversial Joyce Carol Oates YA novel (2005).
10. Paulo Friere's *Pedagogy of the _____*.



Footnotes

1. Now through November 6: Course Withdrawal Period
2. October 16: Midpoint of Fall 2009 Semester
3. November 4: Marya Hornbacher Lecture, LC 100, 7:30 p.m.
4. November 6: Last day for student-elected S/U Option
5. December 4: CAS Spring internship deadline

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