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Postscripts

The Jacksonville State University English Department Alumni Newsletter

Editor- April Walker

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From Newport to Paris, Henry James Style

By Larry Gray

“Try to be one of those people on whom nothing is lost.” This was the advice of Henry James to aspiring writers in “The Art of Fiction” (1884), and I have mostly followed it in the last three years while attending international conferences related to James and to film adaptation studies. As one might expect, some of the most educational experiences occur on the margins of the academic setting—and I don’t even mean such practical matters as getting from Charles de Gaulle airport into Paris during a general strike. Or just getting to Atlanta’s airport when flooding has closed the Interstate around that city . . .

Newport, RI (July 2008): The Henry James Society has arranged for its international conference to take place every three years (since 1993) in one of the cosmopolitan locations that was significant in his life and fiction. New York, Paris, and Venice have been host cities; in 2008, we gathered in a place where James lived mostly as a teenager and young man—the coastal resort of Newport. Famous since the late 1800s for its huge mansions (or “cottages,” a term related to their part-time use rather than to their size), the location was a getaway for the well-to-do but lacked most of these impressive domiciles during James’s time there. When he revisited America in 1904, after twenty years in Europe, he referred to the mansions as “white elephants”—apparently annoyed by them as he was by New York City’s new skyscrapers.

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Thanks to airline delays, I arrived alone well after dark in the midsummer evening and negotiated my way through confusing card-secured doorways, down hallways cleared and door-less for painting, into a more habitable wing of a Salve Regina University dormitory—well-lit but otherwise deserted, and blessedly air-conditioned—where most of us would be staying. My suite of rooms was also deserted, but would I be sharing it with later arrivals or have it all to myself? Some such things one learns only upon arrival, or even later; it was all mine. Setting baggage down, I went back outside into the humid night to walk a bit and phone home about my arrival. I knew that Collinwood—the mansion used for the exterior shots in the old supernatural soap opera, *Dark Shadows*, was now a Salve Regina building/dorm and wondered if I could find it nearby in the dark. (It turns out that the Carey Mansion, or Seaview Terrace, built in the 1920s, was a ten-minute walk away, and right next to the more mundane but still quaint building where most of the conference was held during the next few days. I would educate some of my fellow attendees about this fact, made all the more appropriate since *Dark Shadows* adapted *The Turn of the Screw* for one of its most popular storylines [Quentin and Beth] in 1969, at the height of its popularity.)

Next morning, coastal-bright and clear, I walked into town for breakfast near the Tennis Hall of Fame, and returned for the opening of the conference in the afternoon. My paper on James’s “The Birthplace” and The New York Edition would be delivered the following morning, but in the meantime, I saw some famous critics’ names on name-tags, and met some who were known as well as some who were as yet unknown by reputation. A water-cooler moment occurred when this popular dispenser of liquid relief from the summer heat found itself embarrassed of its contents (as James might say), and I helped someone place the large, full receptacle in place of the empty; we then noted our name-tags and discovered we knew each other—I would be quoting him (David) in my paper, and as a primary Society officer/organizer, he had overseen my abstract’s inclusion in the conference.

Morning number two: I would be the last of four speakers on our panel. The first three were distinguished: deans and department heads from places like Georgetown, Temple, and University of Cincinnati, but only the third paper was smoothly delivered. I had made mine as entertaining as possible, and was gratified at the start when the audience caught the Bob Dylan reference: without naming him, I alluded to his having distressed his 1965 audience at the Newport Folk Festival by “going electric” (down the street, located at the Tennis Hall of Fame, in fact), and I then linked this more recent event to Henry

James's New York Edition as a "living," revised, and not immediately well-received version of his own past works. I discussed James's deconstruction of authorship and of teaching, though without the jargon: his story "The Birthplace" concerns the curator of Shakespeare's Stratford house, and how tourists don't want "the truth"; they want entertaining anecdotes about his boyish leaping up to touch this particular roof-beam. My audience appreciated the humor in all this, as well as my apparently not-so-self-evident connection between the story, James's birthplace being New York, and the eponymous title of his collected edition. Sometimes one must go out into the world in order to make the obvious, obvious; some such idea, at all events, was not lost on me, after my panel, as David introduced me to Philip from University College London and other distinguished Jamesians, and we then started plotting something for Paris, next April, at the European society's first Jamesian international conference.

Meanwhile, however, during the remainder of this gathering, we toured Newport and saw houses James had lived in as well as the library where he read books—even the chairs where he sat! Inevitably, my colleagues remarked to me about all this, connecting our present experience to the content of my paper. In the afternoons and evenings, we also had the always welcome Cliff Walk, with the dark blue, white-capping Atlantic on one side and the "cottage" backyards on the other. On the final evening, we banqueted in one of the seaside mansions owned by Salve Regina, and I found myself again in wide-ranging conversation (mostly on film) with Philip as well as with colleagues from Romania, Louisiana, South Africa, and Manitoba.

Paris (April 2009 and October 2010): The European Society of Jamesians has no wish to compete directly with the more established American version, so they held conferences only in the two "off" years between Newport 2008 and Rome 2011. Both were held in the same venue; I stayed in the same nearby hotel; therefore, I take dramatic license in combining the visits in this account.

Perfect weather, and after my Thursday arrival at Hôtel Amélie, I had some afternoon time for self-guided touring, from the nearby Eiffel Tower to the Arc de Triomphe. Where were the rude French people? They were nice to me during the whole trip. The general strike in France that was making the international news turned out to be over-rated: planes were indeed landing, taxis were running; ordinary traffic ran between the airport and the city. Trash might be piling up in Marseilles, but not here.

There was just one afternoon session for papers, followed by a reception for the attendees. Although many colleagues were now familiar from my previous experiences, a conversation with Madeleine (U. Puerto Rico by way of Ravenscroft, Duke, and Michigan) and Collin (Notre Dame by way of Canada) launched me on an evening adventure into Paris with new companions. She had a restaurant recommendation on Montmartre, so we were off to find it. We took the Metro, changing at the station bearing her name just because we could. Emerging in a new arrondissement, we climbed the significant hill by stairs to arrive at a high point of the city. Stopping in for an evening look at Basilique du Sacré Coeur, then taking in the lights of Paris from our heavenward vantage in the cool air, we finally got a little more worldly and somewhat serious about finding this alleged restaurant. Either we “found” it to be too expensive or didn’t exactly locate it, but in any case we settled for a neighborhood place near Rue de Trois Frères that was plenty good enough. “And that's all there is; there isn't any more.”

I made time on Saturday to visit central Paris—the Notre Dame area—after delivering my paper in the morning, but in doing so I missed a panel including a talk by Diane, a Hollywood screenwriter who now teaches film at Emerson College in Boston. We had chatted after my paper that morning, and had not agreed about the quality of the 1974 *Daisy Miller* film (I like it; she doesn’t). I later heard (from my Manitoba connection) that she had referenced our morning conversation while delivering her paper: friendly conflict as an ice-breaker. On Sunday, after the conference officially wrapped and I had made a pilgrimage to Cimetière du Père Lachaise, we were both part of a guided tour of literary central Paris, arranged by the host university, and we continued our conversation during and after seeing L’Hôtel (where Oscar Wilde died, after maligning the wallpaper) and sites linked to James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, Richard Wright, Henry Miller, and (the list is long). When the tour disbanded in Faubourg Saint-Germain, we had the outdoor cafe experience, and later decided on a chance restaurant near La Tour Maubourg that exceeded ordinary expectations. I learned that there would be a conference in Film Adaptation Studies—a recent past one had been held in Atlanta—a few months later, in London. I would be there, and it would open up new horizons in this academic field that would subsequently bring me to gatherings in York (UK) and Berlin—with all the retrospective and anticipatory connections that may thrive when (almost) nothing is lost.

Rome (July 2011): It's been three years since Newport, and so the time has come for another gathering of Jamesians in an appropriate location. This chapter awaits the new experience in order to be written.

Imagining the Holocaust

Imagining the Holocaust is a writing competition for Middle School and Senior High School Students. "Why teach Holocaust history?" is a question that many have struggled to answer. Imagining the Holocaust is one way to teach Holocaust history and its importance to our daily lives.

To this end, interested English faculty at JSU developed the idea of Imagining the Holocaust, a writing contest designed to teach Holocaust history and its continuing influence in today's world to middle school and high school students in Alabama. The competition is open to many kinds of writing, from essays to more creative approaches in poetry and fiction. Entries are due each spring, and prizes, including U. S. Savings Bonds valued at \$100, \$75, and \$50 for the top three winners in each category, are awarded. This year, Margaret Copeland oversaw the middle school entries and Susan Dean, the high school entries. Steven Whitton was project coordinator.

See www.jsu.edu/english/holocaust

JSU Writers Bowl

On October 27, 2010, the English Department sponsored the Fifteenth Annual JSU Writers Bowl. Nearly sixty teams from high schools throughout northern Alabama traveled to the JSU campus to compete.

Following a Halloween theme, the team competitions required students to write a letter from a reality show producer explaining why their choice of monster (the Frankenstein monster, Count Dracula, the Wolfman, the Invisible Man, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, the Creature from the Black Lagoon, the Mummy, or the Phantom of the Opera) is being eliminated from the show. The teams also wrote a poem in which they were required to include specified words from a list of different cities, plants, colors, and foods. For the individual essay competition, students were given the following options: a) If you were an employer, under what circumstances would you fire an employee? b) In your

opinion, what invention or discovery has brought about the most far-reaching and lasting changes in our civilization?

JSU's Steven Whitton again served as the chair of the Writers Bowl Committee, assisted by Gena Christopher and Randy Davis. Submissions were judged by the following JSU faculty: Don Bennett, Christy Burns, Susan Dean, Larry Gray, Gloria Horton, Bill Hug, Katie Johnson, Raina Kostova, David Myer, Teresa Reed, April Walker, and Julia Wooster.

Jacksonville State University Writing Project

The Jacksonville State University Writing Project site had another successful year, beginning with the summer institute in June 2010, at which fourteen teacher fellows read, wrote, presented, and learned together as much as they could about being successful teachers of writing. The participants for the institute were as follows: Ann Jones, Alexandria High School; Michael Beavers and Holly Matthews, Rome High School; Chad Hoffman, Pell City High School; Evelyn Dunn and Stephanie Meagher, Anniston High School; Kim Beck, Farrah Kilgo, and Laurie Amberson, Southside Elementary; Summer McNeal, Randolph Park Elementary School; Jennie Vaughn, Jacksonville State University graduate student; Patti Shields, Hokes Bluff Elementary School; Charissa Lambert, Ohatchee High School; and Cecil Hollinquest, Benjamin Russell High School.

In addition to the summer institute, the site held a number of other events, beginning with the Writing in the Twenty-First Century Conference in July, cosponsored with the JSU Regional In-Service Center, at McClellan. More than fifty area teachers attended the event, keynoted by Carolyn Chapman, author of *Reading Don't Fix No Chevys*, with concurrent sessions provided by JSU Writing Project fellows. Another successful event was the third annual Technology in Education Conference, sponsored by the site in November. In fact, it was so successful that we had an encore conference in April. These conferences were coordinated by Rodney Bailey, our technology coordinator, and Melissa Shields, co-director.

The past year has been busy for our site in other ways. In January, the site hosted its annual Advisory Board meeting; twenty of our board members attended the event. The *JSU Writing Project Newsletter* was published in the spring. The tenth annual Language Arts Olympiad was held in May, after being postponed due to the April 27 tornadoes. Our writing group, Scribblers,

continues to meet monthly, and a number of the group's members have had works published this past year. After Gloria Horton and Rodney Bailey participated in a Web Presence Retreat in Denver in May 2010, Rodney was named to the National Writing Project Technology Leadership Team. Five teacher consultants from our site attended the National Writing Project annual meeting in Orlando in November.

The 2011 Summer Institute is now underway, and we are beginning to plan for 2012; teachers who wish to receive an application for next year's institute should e-mail Gloria Horton (ghorton@jsu.edu) to be put on the mailing list. Director of the JSU Writing Project is Gloria Horton; co-directors are Lisa Williams, Melissa Shields, and Lisa Light; technology liaison is Rodney Bailey.

JSU Writers' Club

The JSU Writers' Club had another successful year. The RUM Fiction and Poetry Contests brought a number of entries. The following are the winners of the RUM Fiction contest: 1st Place: Erin Young, "Mr. Reeve's Wife"; 2nd Place: Megan Brooks, "A Twisted Heart"; 3rd Place: Trace William Cowen, "Pleathers"; Hon. Mention: Michael J. Jackson, "The Veil." The winners of the RUM Poetry Contest include the following: 1st Place: Julie Margaret Skinner, "Lemon Blues"; 2nd Place: Zachary McCauley, "Jesse's Jazz"; 3rd Place: Alex Ward, "Dunbar"; Hon. Mention: Kagan Ayres, "Glorified Homicide."

The JSU Writers' Club also ran a poetry contest for the JSU Arbor Day Celebration. The winning poem was "The Lesson of Trees" by Alex Ward.

On the Brink

On the Brink, JSU's conference on emerging Southern writers, continued without the major weather issues that hampered the 2010 event. This year's conference was held on February 19, 2011, at Leone Cole Auditorium. Two morning sessions included: Clyde Bolton (*Hadacol Days*), Susan Greg Gilmore (*The Improper Life of Bezellia Grove*), Jennifer Horne (*Bottle Tree*), Kerry Madden (*Up Close: Harper Lee*), Kathryn Magendie (*Tender Graces*), Inman Majors (*The Millionaires*), and Jeffrey Stepakoff (*Fireworks over Toccoa*). A book signing and lunch with the authors followed.

The On the Brink committee includes Christy Burns (English), Linda Cain (Library), Gena Christopher (English), Margaret Copeland (English), Kenneth Calvert (Community Representative and retired School of Education), and Steven Whitton (English).

Plans are underway for the 2012 On the Brink conference to be held in February 2012. For more information about the conference, please contact Dr. Steven Whitton (256-782-5414; swhitton@jsu.edu), Ms. Gena Christopher (256-782-5856; genac@jsu.edu), or go to www.jsu.edu/english/allbrink.

Southern Playwrights Competition

The winner of this year's Southern Playwrights Competition was *Dead Towns of Alabama* by Barry Bradford. The committee is especially grateful to the dedicated group of readers who helped to choose the winner. For more information concerning the Southern Playwrights Competition, contact Joy Maloney (256-782-2835; jmaloney@jsu.edu).

English Department Foundation

We appreciate alumni, friends, and department members who have generously donated over the last year. Your donations help support our many programs.

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Donations can also be made online by clicking on “Make a Gift” on the JSU Homepage (www.jsu.edu). Thank you.

Postscripts Bios

Rodney Bailey is the Technology Liaison for the JSU Writing Project and has recently been appointed as a member of the Technology Liaison Network for the National Writing Project. Along with these duties and his teaching duties, he also serves as the Color Guard Coordinator for the Marching Southerners and plans to accompany the group to London this December. In addition, he will be a Gamecock Orientation Advisor in the fall.

Don Bennett has been an instructor in the JSU English department for nine years. He regularly teaches Freshman Composition, Oral Communication, American Literature, English Literature, Advanced Composition, and the Theory of Composition. He is a member of Phi Kappa Phi, a national honor society for teachers, students, and alumni, and the NCTE, the National Council of Teachers of English. He serves on the JSU Writing Project's Advisory Board as well. Away from school, Don and his wife Amy (singer, vocal instructor, blogger and mom extraordinaire) both like to perform with the Theatre of Gadsden. The entire Bennett family appeared in their first production together in July of 2010, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Don appeared as Jacob, Amy was the Narrator (for which she won the 2010 season's Best Actress award), and their two children, Timothy, age eleven, and Paul, who just turned five, appeared in the Children's Choir. It was a blast!

Christy Burns served on the On the Brink Committee for emerging Southern writers. In addition, she read entries for several writing competitions, including Southern Playwrights, Imagining the Holocaust, and the JSU Writers Bowl. She teaches Freshman Composition, Oral Communication, and Composition and Speech.

Gena Christopher is the Director of the English Department Writing Clinic and the English Department Red Balloon Discussion Group. She also serves on the planning committees for the On the Brink Conference, the Arts and Sciences Student Symposium, the JSU Writers Bowl, the University's China Initiative, and she is on the Board of Directors of the JSU Writing Project. She represented JSU on a panel at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities in [February](#), 2011, and she will serve as a faculty mentor for Freshman Orientation this summer. Ms. Christopher taught Contemporary Chinese Literature in Translation during the [May](#) 2011 term and hopes to continue her study of Chinese literature over the coming year.

Margaret Copeland served as the Coordinator of the Middle School Division for the Imagining the Holocaust Writing Competition and is a Committee Member for the On the Brink Writers Conference. In addition to her service work, she teaches Freshman Composition, Oral Communication, and American Literature.

Randall Davis served as discussion leader for the Twentieth Annual Literature and Medicine Retreat, sponsored by the Alabama Chapter of the American College of Physicians/American Society of Internal Medicine in January 2011. Works discussed included Richard Powers' novel *The Echo Maker*; David Auburn's play *Proof*, short stories by Ron Rash, and poetry by Carol Ann Duffy.

Susan Dean participated as a judge for several writing and speaking competitions, including the College of Arts and Sciences Student Symposium. She oversaw the high school entries for the Imagining the Holocaust Writing Competition. She teaches Freshman Composition, Oral Communication, American Literature, and Technical Writing.

Carmine Di Biase published a review of *Luigi Castiglioni's Lettere dalla Francia (1784) In Annali d'Italianistica*. In addition, the Troubador Press has accepted his English translation of *The Diary of Elio Schmitz* for publication in its Italian Studies series. The manuscript should be in print some time during the coming academic year. He traveled to Venice this past June to lecture at the Canadian Association for Italian Studies Conference. His lecture, one of four, is titled "Il diario di Elio Schmitz in inglese: problemi testuali e di traduzione."

Robert Felgar celebrated 40 years of working at JSU, successfully managed the Academic Program Review of the English Department last fall, and agreed to be interviewed by the National Writing Project about the early years of the JSU WP, which he directed in 1988.

Jennifer Foster just finished her fifteenth year in the English Department. She has recently developed both sections of American Literature that are offered online during the summer terms. In addition to those courses, she also teaches Basic English Skills and Oral Communication online during the regular terms. She is currently working on a hybrid section of The Bible as Literature that will include a corresponding student-guided web site. She will serve as a Gamecock Orientation Advisor for her tenth year and will also attend the American Association of State and College Universities' (AASCU) Annual Conference during the summer of 2011.

Joanne Gates published “Henry James’ Dictation Letter to Elizabeth Robins: ‘The Suffragette Movement Hot from the Oven’” in *Henry James Review*. She presented “Teaching the Structure of *Hamlet*: The ‘To Be or Not to Be’ Soliloquy Repositioned in Recent Film Adaptations” at the Popular Culture Association in the South and American Culture Association in the South (PCAS/ACAS) Conference in Savannah. She applied for and received a Faculty Research Grant for 2011-2012: Shakespeare: Borrowed, Invented, Adapted. She continues to update, expand, and redesign the Elizabeth Robins website related to a University Research Grant she received last year. In addition to these scholarly pursuits, she has also exercised her creative side, as her poems, “Dale Evans” and “Woman, Why Weepst Thou,” won first place awards in the spring and fall Contests of the Alabama State Poetry Society.

Larry Gray published “Hollywood Shrugged: Ayn Rand’s Impossible Epic” in *Adaptation*, an Oxford University Press Journal, in March 2011. Tenure and promotion to Associate Professor were granted by JSU at about the same time. He delivered papers at conferences held at the University of Portland, at Humboldt University in Berlin, and at the American University of Paris in summer and fall 2010; conferences in Montreal and Rome will follow in summer 2011. Larry also participated in a summer institute on the short story—led by Pulitzer Prize winner Louis Menand of Harvard University—held at the National Humanities Center in July 2010; in summer 2011, he will return to the NHC for a similar experience, this time studying T. S. Eliot’s works with thirteen other PhDs chosen in a national search and led by Christopher Ricks. Continuing his JSU service of previous years, Larry administered the Major Field Achievement Test, taught the ECE workshops, and served on the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate.

Pitt Harding taught his first section of Honors Composition this year. He continues to teach Freshman Composition online, as well as Creative Writing, English Literature, and a graduate course on Milton.

Gloria Horton serves as the Liaison Officer to National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) for the Association of College English Teachers of Alabama, representing that organization on the NCTE Board of Directors. She is the chair of the steering committee for Academe, Jacksonville State University’s organization in support of faculty teaching, scholarship, and service. She served as Faculty Chair of the 2010 United Way Campaign, Chair of the Jacksonville United Way Campaign, and served on the United Way 2010 Campaign Cabinet. Gloria also served as ex-officio chair of the College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Council Merit Pay Committee. She was the 2010-2011

chair of the Jacksonville State University Research Committee. She has served as editor of the *JSU Writing Project Newsletter* and editor of the *JSU Writing Project Anthology*. She served as the 2010-2011 secretary of the Jacksonville State University Faculty Senate and chaired the Admissions and Scholarship Committee for the senate. Gloria serves on the University's Institutional Effectiveness Committee. She was invited to membership in Delta Kappa Gamma, a national society for women educators, and she was invited to join the Writers of Calhoun County. She also began a term as a member of the board of the Friends of the Library. She is a coordinator of the JSU Language Arts Olympiad and Director of the JSU Writing Project.

Bill Hug published an article, "Jacob Riis and Double Consciousness: The Documentary/Ethnic 'I' in *How the Other Half Lives*" in *Ethnic Studies Review* and a book review in *The Anniston Star*, of Jay Parini's *The Passages of H.M.*, a novel about Herman and Elizabeth Melville in their later years. He continues to teach undergraduate and graduate courses.

Katie Johnson continued teaching Freshman Composition, Oral Communication, and American Literature. In addition, she assisted in judging entries for the Southern Playwrights Competition and the Imagining the Holocaust writing competition. She also served as a judge for the College of Arts and Sciences Student Symposium.

John Jones published his book, *Blake on Language, Power, and Self-Annihilation*, through Palgrave Macmillan on May 25, 2010. This book is the first study to consider the significance of Blake's concept of "self-annihilation" as it pertains to language and communication. He also contributed four articles to *The Encyclopedia of Literary Romanticism*, which was published by Facts on Files in August 2010. The articles were on Blake's "The Clod and the Pebble" and "The Shepherd," industrialism, and slavery. In January, he gave a talk on William Blake and Mikhail Bakhtin and the parallels in their thinking on language, authority, and dissent to a session of Academe. He was awarded the University's Faculty Scholar Lecturer Award this past spring.

Raina Kostova had two articles published in *The Wallace Stevens Journal*. The titles of her articles are "The Dangerous Voice of the Realist: Wallace Stevens' Extended Critique of Freud's the Future of an Illusion" and "Deleuzian Underpinning: The Affective Emergence of Stevens' Concept of a Supreme Fiction." In addition to her articles, she was invited to serve as a referee for a peer review submitted to that journal. She and Tony Brinkley, a professor from the University of Maine, published translations of three of Osip Mandelstam's

poems in *Mayday Magazine*, an online magazine for creative work in art and literature. Raina also presented her paper, "The Poet's Return from the Dead in the Future Anterior: Osip Mandelstam's Testimony to the Soviet Revolution," at the American Comparative Literature Association Conference in Vancouver, Canada. She has been approved to be an Advanced Placement Reader for this year's annual AP Reading in Louisville, Kentucky. She served on the faculty committee that met with the peer review team in the fall of 2010. She served as a Gamecock Orientation Advisor last fall as well. She serves on the JSU Travel Grant Committee, the English Majors and Minors Committee, the Literature Survey Committee, and she has agreed to serve on a committee to assess graduate level courses. She served on three MA oral exam committees and also served as a judge for the Writers Bowl, the Southern Playwrights Competition, and the Imagining the Holocaust writing contest.

Joy Maloney served on the Writing Project Advisory Board. She served as a judge for many writing competitions, including the Southern Playwrights Competition, the RUM Fiction and Poetry Contests, and the Imagining the Holocaust competition. She also served as a judge for the College of Arts and Sciences Student Symposium. In addition to the aforementioned activities, she tutored students in the English Department's Writing Clinic.

Mica Mecham teaches Freshman Composition, Oral Communication, and American Literature courses. She has served as a judge for department-sponsored writing competitions and is a Scholarship Advisor for Zeta Tau Alpha. She also served as an advisor for the summer orientation team.

David Myer continues to serve on the Editorial Board of *The Journal of the Alabama Academy of Science*. He was a judge for the JSU Writers Bowl and the Imagining the Holocaust student writing competitions. He serves on the English Majors and Minors Committee, the Competency Committee, and the Literature Survey Committee. David is a member of JSU's newly formed China Task Force, and in May of 2010 he travelled to Taizhou University in China for the purpose of further developing the partnership between JSU and Taizhou University.

Elizabeth Nelson served on the English Department's Competency and Review Committees. She teaches both traditional and online classes for the department, including Oral Communication, Freshman Composition, and American Literature.

Hilda Norton has been teaching for seventy-one years and has been with JSU's English Department for forty-six years. She continues to teach Advanced

Grammar, English Literature, American Literature, and Freshman Composition.

Doug O'Keefe presented two papers at the Annual Conference of the American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies. One focused on the theory of literary adaptation, the other on issues of literary evaluation. He teaches Freshman Composition, including Honors Composition, Oral Communication, and English Literature, both graduate and undergraduate.

Andrea Porter has recently been granted tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, effective this October. Her essay "*Jarhead* and the Failure of the Vietnam Myth" appeared as the lead essay in the fall issue of the journal *CEA Critic*, and she also presented a paper on *True Blood* at the annual College English Association (CEA) Conference in St. Petersburg, Florida, in March. She currently serves as Coordinator of Graduate Student Advisement, has been chosen to be a Gamecock Orientation Advisor this summer, and also volunteers as an alumna advisor to Zeta Tau Alpha sorority at JSU.

Deborah Prickett is the English Department's Technology Liaison, and she chairs the English Composition Committee. She teaches Freshman Composition, Oral Communication, Theory of Speech, and American Literature. She teaches traditional and online courses.

Teresa Reed attended the biennial meeting of the New Chaucer Society in Siena, Italy, last July. She co-organized a session called *The Literary, Horticultural, and Historical Garden Traditions behind Chaucer's Poetry*, which she also presided over. Additionally, she presented a response to the three papers included in the session. In May of 2011, she traveled to Kalamazoo, Michigan, for the 46th Annual International Congress on Medieval Studies. She organized a roundtable session called "Glossing the Past in the Present" and presented a paper on how the past can be monstrously threatening to teachers and scholars. She continues to enjoy undergraduate advisement this year, having had over 500 interactions with students about questions of scheduling, graduation requirements, and class offerings, among other issues.

Valerie Rimpsey continues to sit on the advisory committee for Student Life Multicultural Programming. She also serves as secretary for the African American Faculty Organization for Responsive Education (AFORE). She is the advisor for the Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Common Sense Media, and Exposure. She teaches Freshman Composition, Oral Communication, and American Literature.

Tanya Sasser teaches Freshman Composition, American Literature, Oral Communication, and Advanced Oral Communication classes. She has tutored students in the Writing Clinic. She has also assisted in judging various writing competitions and has enjoyed her first year as a full-time faculty member.

Susan Sellers has completed her 10th year as Director of the English Competency Exam, which includes coordinating the campus and Distance Learning Exams. She serves as Scholarship Advisor for Zeta Tau Alpha, and she is the English Department representative for the Teacher Education Council and the Department of Secondary Education Advisory Council. She serves on the following English Department Committees: Composition, Competency, Advanced Writing, and Speech.

April Walker served as a judge for several writing competitions, including the RUM Poetry and Fiction contests, the Imagining the Holocaust competition, the Writers Bowl, and the Language Arts Olympiad. In addition, she has assumed the task of compiling and editing *Postscripts* with Cynthia Weaver. She teaches Freshman Composition, Oral Communication, and American Literature and has thoroughly enjoyed her first year as a full-time faculty member.

Steven Whitton continues to work with the On the Brink Conference, the JSU Writers Bowl, and the Southern Playwrights Competition. He also remains an active part of JSU's annual Holocaust Remembrance and of regional and state Holocaust organizations. He is Director of JSU's new Honors Program.

Julia Wooster continues to be the English Department Social Director. She also serves on department committees, as well as the chair of the Education-English Liaison Committee. She judged various writing competitions, including the Imagining the Holocaust writing competition and the Writers Bowl. She served as a judge for the Language Arts Olympiad and the College of Arts and Sciences Annual Student Symposium. She has also shown support for the University by attending sporting events and Drama Department productions. She continues working to improve her Detective Fiction course.

In Memoriam: Jan Rhodes

By April Walker

“Sweet, charming, and delightful” is the way Carlton Ward, the head of the Drama Department, described Jan Rhodes, the Drama Department Secretary for the past twenty-four years. The community, university, colleagues, students, friends, and her family suffered a great loss on June 4th of this year when Jan lost her battle with cancer. Although she lost the battle, Carlton explained that she never lost her spirit. Her spirit and warm nature are qualities that have endeared her to so many people, including members of the

English Department, as I am certain I am not the only one among us to have crossed Jan's bright path somewhere along the way.

Jan was a gifted pianist, who accompanied over twenty musicals. She worked with struggling vocalists from the first rehearsal to the last performance. Although she possessed a gift for music and, no doubt, relished the musical productions, she knew and appreciated other productions as well. According to Carlton, "Jan knew plays, and her consciousness guided us through many productions as far as sensitivity to ethnic, religious, economic, and social issues." Jan played a vital role in productions and was very dedicated to seeing that all seats in the theatre were full when the curtain rose.

The tribute in the lobby of the theatre at the Ernest Stone Performing Arts Center illustrates the genuinely caring person that Jan was. Many former JSU students contributed to the tribute by sharing their powerful memories and feelings. The main sense I got when reading their words was that Jan always calmed students and reassured them that things would work out as they should. I, too, was one of those students who left her office feeling much better than when I had entered. During my interview with Carlton, I had to ask if his students came to him or Jan first, and he responded, "Oh, to Jan...absolutely." It could have been because Carlton was always on the go and was hard to find, unless equipped with that rare Carlton "radar" that some students seem to possess, enabling them to find him twenty feet above the ground on the scaffolding in the scene shop. However, I think it was, in part, because Jan had a way of making students feel better. Whether she could solve their problems or not, students just wanted to talk to her and see her warm smile.

In speaking with Carlton, I get a sense that the Drama Department will continue to get business done as usual; however, it will be daunting at first without Jan's contribution. She was organized, devoted, dedicated, and immersed in assisting the entire department in its success. Carlton expressed that he will definitely miss Jan when registration for the fall semester begins, as well as when it is time to do the end of year budget. She was a valuable asset to the Drama Department. Carlton added, "Jan was at the heart of the university, the heart of the department, and the heart of the community. She grew up here, earned her degrees here, worked here, and lived here." The absence of that heart will be felt within JSU and beyond.

"The Jan Rhodes Theatre Scholarship" has been established in her honor, and the upcoming 2011-2012 theatre season will be dedicated to her as well. Jan Rhodes was, and still is, a generous soul to shine on us and fill our hearts with warmth. She will be missed by all whose lives she has touched, including those who, like her, appreciate the arts. She will continue to inspire others through the work of those whose paths she has brightened along the way.

Postscripts, the English Department alumni newsletter, is now an online publication, available at <http://www.jsu.edu/depart/english/postscrp/index.htm>.

Please look for *Postscripts* online each summer.

If you prefer a print copy of the newsletter, please contact Susan Hurst in the English Department (256-782-5412 or hurst@jsu.edu).

Thank you for your continued support of our department.

April Walker
Postscripts editor