

Postscripts

The Jacksonville State University English Department Alumni Newsletter

Service Learning: A New Idea at JSU by Teresa Reed

“I feel that this class has positively affected my writing because it brought out things I had never done before and I actually enjoyed what I was writing about. I would gladly take a class like this again.” A student in my fall section of Freshman Composition wrote these words at the end of the semester. This section of EH 101 had surprised many students because it included a service learning component; in other words, students were required to volunteer at local non-profit agencies in the area as part of their work for the class.

What is service learning? It requires that volunteering be part of the curriculum of a class. The volunteering experiences serve as the basis for the students’ main grades. In class, students must complete various types of assignments that encourage them to reflect on their time volunteering and then write about their ideas, integrating what they have gone through while volunteering with information, guidelines, and expectations of the classroom, as well as with other classes and experiences. The key is that students use their service as an opportunity to learn: Students learn about different perspectives on community, nation, and citizenship from others with different backgrounds. They also gain an important perspective on how their academics come into play in daily life, using skills and/or knowledge from the classroom while volunteering.

Service learning can benefit students in many ways. It allows them to engage with the community and reflect on their experiences, integrating those experiences with course materials as well as the academic discipline. The students also experience a reciprocal relationship with those people encountered during the service, both learning and teaching during the experience. They enter into public dialogue through writing, research, or some other course activity. With these goals at its center, a service-learning course can fulfill its academic duties while also broadening students’ perspectives and goals. Such a class is often an important addition to a

résumé, especially for those applying to law school or medical school or who are interested in becoming teachers, social workers, or school counselors, for instance.

Evidence indicates that service-learning allows students to do better work. Students often raise grade point averages, develop writing and critical thinking skills more quickly, have a better understanding about activism and how lines of race and class can divide, and take on leadership roles they might not have considered otherwise. Because service-learning courses can relate the subject matter of courses to the real world, students are more likely to be excited by that subject matter and retain it.

My service learning experiment started in the fall of 2006 and continued into the spring. In addition to writing the required 8 essays for class, students were also required to volunteer at a non-profit organization in Calhoun County for at least 15 hours over the course of the semester. The venues included Be Latino, Retired Senior Volunteer Program (where students helped with an adult literacy program), Habitat for Humanity’s ReStore, Jacksonville Meals on Wheels, Anniston Soup Bowl, The English Language Institute, Kitty Stone Elementary School, and Jacksonville Health and Rehabilitation, a local nursing home.

IN THIS ISSUE

Service Learning: A New Idea at JSU	1
Where Are They Now? Alumni P.S.	3
Dr. Raina Kostova Joins English Department ..	3
English Department Foundation	4
Annual JSU Writers Bowl a Continued Success	5
Another Successful Year for Sigma Tau Delta .	5
FACULTY P. S.	6
ON THE BRINK 2007	9
Southern Playwrights Competition	9
Jacksonville State University Writing Project	10
Jacksonville State University Writing Project to	
Co-Host Reading Conference	10
Imagining the Holocaust	11
Writers Club Continues to Promote Writing ..	11
ALUMNI NEWS SOUGHT	12

I contacted each of these businesses and established a line of communication with at least one person at each. The companies' representatives knew what to expect of my students and how to contact me in case of any problems. From my research, I've learned that maintaining fruitful contacts with community organizations is often very difficult, and have, therefore, done my best to maintain open lines of communication with each contact while also coaching students on how to communicate with people at their venue.

Part of the purpose of service-learning is to take students out of their comfort zones, at least a little bit, so the organizations I chose reflect that purpose, for the most part. I also had to plan around things like students' abilities to get to different volunteering locations, which is one reason that the ELI, a profit-making enterprise, is on the list.

I organized the class readings and discussions around the idea of the American Dream, which allowed for discussion of all kinds of subjects from education and immigration, to consumerism and low-wage jobs. We investigated issues of race and class and even things like how one's family history affects one's view of what the American Dream is and one's ability to achieve it. We read essays from the reader required in EH 101; we read articles from various web sites, like NPR stories; we read two nonfiction works that, through discussion and writing, we tied to the American Dream. Our focus on the American Dream provided me a way to tie together many different experiences that students are likely to have at their volunteering venues.

Students in this course had some varied writing assignments along with their traditional ones. For their first essay, they had to define the American Dream, then present their opinion, well argued, about whether or not they think it is mostly a positive or mostly a negative concept. In subsequent writing assignments, they addressed their feelings towards having to volunteer; they interviewed their volunteer supervisors, and they crafted pamphlets for their volunteer organizations.

Students who made the most of the experience, like the one quoted at the outset of this article, responded quite favorably. First of all, students remarked upon their being interested in what they had to write about, often writing about first-hand experiences as opposed to the standard "What did you do over your summer vacation?" type of essay that often shows up in Freshman composition. In fact, according to the results of a questionnaire I conducted in the fall—having students complete a pre- and post-class version—enjoying writing for pleasure proved to be the item on which students most often expressed an improvement, followed by "Trying to understand other's views."

Students also reported that they felt as if they had grown personally through their volunteering. For instance, at least two students have applied for work at the ELI after their experiences there.

With the active BCM and Wesley chapters we have at JSU, along with other service-oriented groups, including the sororities and fraternities, it seems to me that we already have a sizable percentage of students who are active in various charity and volunteer projects—Habitat for Humanity, Renew Our Rivers, tsunami relief, for example. This student population reflects the attitude needed for service-learning. Service-learning could foster this attitude and create a reputation for Jacksonville State University that includes not only academic excellence but also civic responsibility.

Service learning can benefit students at any stage of their education—from elementary school through high school and on to college—and much information is available on the internet. Any readers interested in learning more can go to the following web sites: www.campuscompact.org — a coalition of national university & college presidents whose institutions foster "the civic purposes of higher education"; www.servenet.org — ServeNet, a list of resources for service learning, including grants & job listings in the not-for-profit sector; www.servicelearning.org — National Service-Learning Clearinghouse; www.ncte.org/groups/cccc/com/service/108736.htm — web site of the National Council of Teachers of English, for a special conference on service learning. Also, please contact me for further information: treed@jsu.edu or by phone at 256-782-5456. (Dr. Teresa Reed is an Associate Professor of English at Jacksonville State University.)

Postscripts, the English Department alumni newsletter, is published yearly. It is provided free to English graduates of JSU by the English Department.

Editor Gena Christopher

Layout Michelle Burr

Where Are They Now? Alumni P.S.

For this edition of *Postscripts*, we interviewed Katie Nelson Newton. Ms. Newton graduated magna cum laude from JSU in July of 2005 with a double major in English and Communication.

What are you doing now?

Currently, I am the owner of The Ink Blot, an invitation and stationery shop. I run and manage the shop, which is located in Anniston, Alabama. Our products range from all-occasion invitations to personalized stationery and personalized napkins and accessories. We offer custom-designed invitations in-house, and we also offer a large selection from various retailers. A web site will soon be accessible for nationwide shopping and delivery (www.TheInkBlotShop.com)

Before I opened the shop, I worked in banking for just over a year, but I hoped to find a career that allowed me to use my best skills. I married Russ Newton in May of 2006, who is also a graduate of JSU. We reside in Anniston, Alabama.

Are you using your English degree?

I use the knowledge I obtained while earning my English degree on a daily basis. Having the ability to use punctuation and grammar properly is a must in this business. Thanks to my English degree, I am confident while writing and composing text for invitations and mail-outs to customers. I also use skills that I learned in classes, such as Creative Writing, Advanced Oral Communication, and Technical Writing, to make a polished impression in the business world.

What are your fondest memories of JSU or do you have particular memories you would be willing to share?

My fondest college memories come from being involved in various campus activities while a student at JSU. One of my favorite honors was being elected Miss Jax State 2004 by the student body, and my fondest memories come from being the president of Zeta Tau Alpha and a senator in the Student Government Association. I also enjoyed getting to know fellow English majors through membership in Sigma Tau Delta.

(If you are an English major from JSU, we would love to interview you for a future *Postscripts*.)

Dr. Raina Kostova Joins the English Department

Joining the English faculty in 2006 was Dr. Raina Kostova. Her duties during her first year at JSU included teaching the American Literature surveys, Freshman Composition, and Basic English Skills, and serving on the EH 098 Teaching Improvement Strategies Committee. Her personal experience with English as a second language enables Dr. Kostova to more easily understand the difficulties international students face when studying abroad. After completing her Bachelor of Arts Degree at the American University in Bulgaria, which is her home, Kostova came to the states to study at the University of Maine (MA) and Emory University (PhD). She joined us upon completion of her doctoral program in May 2006.

Dr. Kostova's dissertation is titled "Poetic Text and Socio-Political Reality in the Work of Wallace Stevens and Osip Mandelstam." She states that her "dissertation examines Wallace Stevens' poetics of 'reality' and 'imagination,' and demonstrates how the imagination, traditionally associated with poetry and fiction, becomes intrinsic to Stevens' perception of reality. Stevens' vision of the reciprocal exchange between the interior world of individual consciousness and the political discourse of the outside world is brought to light by Mandelstam's projection of a new science of language, which foregrounds the power of the poetic word to transform our perception of reality. In this respect, [Kostova's] comparative approach adds a new dimension to the rich corpus of Stevens scholarship."

Along with her teaching duties, Dr. Kostova enjoys walking and visiting with her friends across the United States. She is spending her summer teaching a Freshman Composition course, prepping the courses she will teach next year, learning French, and visiting her homeland.

Students who have had the good fortune to enroll in her classes find her to be a very talented and enthusiastic teacher. And, her colleagues praise her scholarship and her ability to communicate her research in an effective way. We are happy to welcome Dr. Raina Kostova, the newest member of the JSU English faculty.

English Department Foundation

We appreciate the large number of alumni, friends, and Department members who have generously donated to the English department this year. We also want to recognize the fact that several of you donated in memory of Ethel Reaves and Susan Methvin. Thank you.

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Tax-deductible donations to the English Department Foundation may be made through the JSU Foundation by directing mail to the JSU Foundation, 700 Pelham Road North, Jacksonville, AL 36265. Indicate that the donation is for the English Department Foundation and, in the case of memorial gifts, also signify the name of the honoree. Donations can also be made online by clicking on "Make a Gift" on the JSU Homepage (www.jsu.edu). Thank you.

Annual JSU Writers Bowl a Continued Success

On October 25, 2006, the English Department sponsored the Eleventh Annual JSU Writers Bowl. Forty-six teams from high schools throughout northern Alabama traveled to the JSU campus to compete. The team competitions required students to write a letter of application in the persona of a classic movie monster looking for employment at their high school and to compose an Italian sonnet about their high school opening with the line "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways." For the individual essay competition, students were asked to discuss how their high school education is preparing them for their future chosen careers. The 2006 winners included the following: Individual Essay First Place: Will Jackson (Donoho); Second Place: Justin Shake (Oxford HS); Third Place: Jordan Whetstone (Donoho). Prose First Place: Eyes of Oedipus (Oxford HS); Second Place: Wailing Muskrats (Central HS); Third Place: Bulldogs (Montevallo HS). Poetry First Place: Bohemian Bards (Handley HS); Second Place: Team Name (Hartselle HS); Third Place: Idiomatic Quirks (Cherokee County HS). Overall Team First Place: Bob Jones Team 1 (Bob Jones HS); Second Place: Bulldogs (Montevallo HS); Third Place: Eyes of Oedipus (Oxford HS). JSU's Steven Whitton was 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, Jennifer Foster, John Hickman, Gloria Horton, Raina Kostova, Joy Maloney, Judy McKibbin, David Myer, Elizabeth Nelson, Teresa Reed, Misty Sandlin, and Julia Wooster. The 2007 JSU Writers Bowl will be held on Wednesday, October 31. Teachers who are interested in sponsoring a team or teams should contact Gena Christopher at (256) 782-5856 or genac@jsu.edu.

Another Successful Year for Sigma Tau Delta

This past fall, Sigma Tau Delta was busy with several activities. The group had its annual Scary Story read-around in October and its induction ceremony for new members in November. Members also participated in the Banner Decorating Contest during JSU's Homecoming Week activities. In February, the group hosted its annual Worst Love Poem contest and held a second meeting to work on its project to honor JSU faculty. In March, the annual Faculty Scholar Lecture featured Dr. Andrea Porter, a member of the English Department, who spoke on the topic of blogging and podcasts. Also in March, Sigma Tau Delta members did a "Happy Spring Break" project, passing out candy to students at various locations on campus.

FACULTY P. S.

Rodney Bailey serves as President of the Southern Association for Performing Arts. SAPA was established in May of this year as a way of providing percussion ensembles and color guard units with limited travel budgets and financial resources, a venue to compete within their demographic area. It is the mission of SAPA to perpetuate the growth of pageantry arts in the South by providing positive experiences to all staff members, performers, judges and spectators, and by promoting education, creativity, and freedom of expression through the unification of pageantry and the performing arts.

Don Bennett has been an instructor in the JSU English Department for five years. He teaches Freshman Composition, Oral Communication, American Literature, English Literature, and the Theory of Composition. Prior to coming to JSU, he taught high school English and history in both Alabama and Georgia. He is currently the President of the JSU chapter of Phi Kappa Phi, a national honor society for teachers, students, and alumni. Don is a member of the Theatre of Gadsden and has performed in *Death of a Salesman* and *Twelve Angry Men*. He and his wife Amy had their first child, Paul, in May 2006. He also has a seven-year-old stepson, Timothy.

Christy Burns served on the hiring committee and the JSU Writing Scholarship Committee this year. She judged plays for the Southern Playwrights Competition, poems and short stories for the "Imagining the Holocaust" writing competition, and essays in the individual essay competition for the JSU Writers Bowl. In addition, she co-sponsors Sigma Tau Delta and has recently joined the committee for the On the Brink Writers Conference

Gena Christopher serves as editor of *Postscripts* beginning with this edition. She teaches Alabama literature and Technical Writing, along with the occasional American literature survey or Oral Communication course. She also serves on the planning committees for On the Brink and the JSU Writers Bowl. Mrs. Christopher sponsors the JSU Circle K International club and is a member of the Jacksonville Medical Center Auxiliary.

Margo Collins completed editing *Before the Count: Early Vampire Tales, 1732-1897*, due out from Zittaw Press by the end of the spring and contracted to complete a second volume, *The Dime-Novel Vampire: Nineteenth-Century American Vampire Mysteries*, due out next fall. She continued as book-review editor for *The Eighteenth-Century Novel*, and contracted to write four book reviews for *The Eighteenth-Century: A Current Bibliography*. She presented papers at both regional and national conferences.

Margaret Copeland, formerly Griffin, was married on August 13, 2006, to David R. Copeland, former director, JSU Office of Continuing Education. She has served on the Department's hiring committee for an assistant professor and the departmental committees for Speech, Basic English, and Freshman Composition.

Randall Davis served as discussion leader for the Sixteenth Annual Literature and Medicine Retreat, sponsored by the Alabama College of Physicians. Works discussed included Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, David Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross*, poetry by Philip Larkin, and short stories by Eudora Welty.

Carmine Di Biase presented a paper called "Borrowed Identities and the Writer's Exile: James Joyce, Italo Svevo and their Younger Brothers." This was on invitation by Professor Charles Klopp, of the Ohio State Department of French and Italian.

The conference was held, at OSU, and was called: "Borders, Culture, and the Construction of Identity: The Case of Trieste."

Robert Felgar: In addition to balancing his classroom and administrative duties, Robert Felgar received his 35-year pin, arranged for a departmental retreat on teaching literature last August, and was directed by JSU librarian Harry Nuttall to a review of his first book on Richard Wright (in *The Year's Work in English Studies* for 1980) that he was unaware of that refers to it as "a helpful introduction to the work of Richard Wright. It sketches the biography briefly but effectively and traces Wright's development from the bleak determinism of *Lawd Today* to the growing collectivist social awareness of *Uncle Tom's Children* and on to the relentlessly desacralised vision of *Native Son*, concluding with the final exilic fiction and non-fiction in which Wright struggled with increasing despair to re-assert his control and power within his medium. Felgar's

most significant contributions are his re-interpretation of the ending of *Native Son* and his illuminative counterpoising of *Twelve Million Black Voices* and *Black Boy*.”

Jennifer Foster was selected to work as an orientation leader during the summer of 2007. She continues to serve as the judicial and faculty advisor for Zeta Tau Alpha Fraternity. Ms. Foster judged entries for the Writers Bowl, Southern Playwrights Competition, and Imagining the Holocaust.

Joanne Gates organized author Bret Lott’s visit to JSU in September 2006, a Friends of Houston Cole Library Program. She continues to Chair the Board of the Friends.

Larry Gray delivered a paper entitled “The Displaced Intellectual: War-Time Novels of C. S. Lewis” at Mobility/Stasis/Modernity in the Space Between, 1914-1945: the Eighth Conference of The Space Between, Literature and Culture, 1914-1945, which was held at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, PA, June 7-9, 2006. His paper, “A Case of Reappearing Nationalism: Sherlock Holmes and the World Wars,” has been accepted for the Ninth Conference of The Space Between, to be held at the US Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD, in June 2007. Closer to home, Dr. Gray introduced a screening of the Tim Burton film of *Big Fish* in Gadsden, AL, on January 18, 2007, in connection with Gadsden’s One Book, One Community program — designed to promote literacy and the enjoyment of reading; his talk was entitled “Awfully Big Adventures and Good Endings.” In a related activity, he also participated in a roundtable discussion of this novel and film with other local scholars at Gadsden’s Cultural Arts Center on February 15, 2007. This past year at JSU, Dr. Gray has again administered the Major Field Achievement Test for graduating English majors and has taught the workshop for the English Competency Exam—giving advice about good writing, each semester, to a hundred or so anxious but hopeful would-be graduates. He served as one of the English Department faculty judges for the Dr. Robert U. Moersch Poetry Awards, in the spring semester, on behalf of the Writers Club. Additionally, he was a reader for the Imagining the Holocaust writing competitions, judging submissions by local middle and high school students.

Pitt Harding’s essay “Milton’s Serpent and the Birth of Pagan Error” was published in the Winter 2007 issue of *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*. As faculty adviser to the Writers Club, Dr. Harding continues to help organize and judge the Dr. Robert U. Moersch (RUM) Awards in Fiction and Poetry.

John Hickman taught English as an adjunct instructor at Gadsden State Community College from 1989 to 1995. He taught in an adjunct capacity at JSU for one year prior to his receiving a full-time position in 2003. He frequently teaches American literature surveys and freshman composition. He taught English as a second language while with the Alabama Language Institute. In 2005, he became a member of the Holocaust Remembrance Committee and serves as the high school coordinator for “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 the state of Alabama.

Gloria Horton serves as treasurer of the Alabama Council of Teachers of English; Liaison Officer to NCTE for the Association of College English Teachers of Alabama, representing that organization on the NCTE Board of Directors; and 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 2007 United Way Campaign and as secretary of a United Way Allocations Panel. She also serves as chair of the College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Council. Mrs. Horton edits the *WIT Newsletter*, the *JSU Writing Project Anthology*, and *The Academe Newsletter*. She serves as a reviewer for *English Education*, as editor for the publications of the office of the Vice President for Institutional Advancement, and has written an article on using graphic organizers to be published by the National Writing Project’s National Reading Initiative. She is chairing the Reading for the Twenty-First Century Conference to be held on July 18, 2007, and is a coordinator of the JSU Language Arts Olympiad. She is Director of the JSU Writing Project.

Bill Hug reviewed for the *Anniston Star* titled *The Tycoons: How Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, Jay Gould, and J. P. Morgan Invented the American Supereconomy*, by Charles Morris; September, 2006. He also served as Faculty Senate representative; Chair, English Department Hiring Committee, and Academic advisor for the English and the Liberal Studies programs.

John Jones continued work on his book manuscript entitled *Conversing with Friends in Eternity: Blake and Dialogue*, completing three chapters, leaving him with two left, which he plans to complete this summer.

Rufus Kinney serves as the English department liaison with the campus bookstore to make certain that all textbooks are ordered correctly. He is still working for safe destruction of chemical weapons as a member of Families Concerned About Nerve Gas Incineration, and he serves on the Sierra Club's Confronting Corporate Power Task Force.

Joy Maloney serves as coordinator for the Southern Playwrights Competition for the Middle School division of the Imagining the Holocaust writing competition. She is a judge for the Writers Bowl and an ECE proctor and grader. Joy attended the Alabama Writers Symposium in Monroeville in May .

Judith McKibbin served on the On the Brink Writers Conference Committee and read plays for the Southern Playwrights Competition. She retired from her position as editor of *Postscripts* with last summer's publication.

David Myer continues to serve as a member of the Editorial Board of *The Journal of the Alabama Academy of Science*. He served as a reader/judge for the JSU Writers Bowl, the Southern Playwrights Competition, the Imagining the Holocaust student writing competition, and the NFAM Student Writing Contest. He serves on the English Majors and Minors Committee, the Competency Committee, and the Literature Survey Committee.

Elizabeth Nelson has been chosen as a 2007 Gamecock Orientation Advisor. She was a text editor for *The Passport For Success*, the College of Education's annual report. Ms. Nelson was a judge for the Homecoming pep rally's banner competition and a reader for the Southern Playwrights Competition. She also served as a member of the Department's Competency and Review committees.

Andrea Porter has been invited to serve on a panel at Marist College in New York in the fall that is dedicated to the Vietnam War and its literature. She will focus on Vietnamese women in literature and the Vietnamese language. Dr. Porter also serves as the National Fraternity Education Chair for Zeta Tau Alpha sorority, is an advisor for the ZTA chapter at JSU, and has been selected as a Gamecock Orientation Advisor for this summer.

Teresa Reed participated in a panel discussion of the place of study in the humanities in an ever-more technologically advanced world. She presented a paper called "In Thrall to History as Vampire," a reading of the novel *The Historian* by Elizabeth Kostova. She argued that the frightening figure of the vampire in this work generally can be understood as a metaphor for humanities scholars' relation to the past, for Dracula is both seductive and scary. This panel presentation took place at the 32nd annual meeting of the Southeastern Medieval Association, 12-14 October, 2006, in Oxford, MS.

Valerie Rimpsey continues to serve as secretary for the African-American Faculty Organization for Responsive Education (AFORE) and sits on the advisory committee for Student Life-Multicultural Programming. She continues to serve as faculty advisor for the Iota Phi Theta Fraternal Organization; additionally, Ms. Rimpsey is the faculty advisor for Common Sense Media. Also, she spoke to senior AP English students at Anniston High School about Richard Wright's *Native Son* (April 2006). In March (2007), Ms. Rimpsey attended the Grant Institute's Professional Grant Proposal Writing Workshop held at Auburn University (AL).

Misty Sandlin served on the English/Education Liaison Committee and was a judge for the Writers Bowl and the Southern Playwrights Competition. She also served on the Hiring Committee.

Susan Sellers continues to serve as Director of the English Competency Exam for on-campus and Distant Learning students. She is a member of the Teacher Education Council, a committee that is a liaison between the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Education. She served on the Institutional Effectiveness Committee for the 2006-2007 academic year. She continues to serve as the Scholarship Advisor for Zeta Tau Alpha. In the English Department this year, she served on the English 101-102 Committee, Speech Committee, and Advanced Writing Committee. She read plays for the Southern Playwrights Competition.

Janet Smart continues to teach the upper-level speech courses and to chair the speech committee. She says that her most important accomplishment of the year is recovering from a stroke she suffered in November.

Steven Whitton presented a paper on the salesman as American literary archetype for the Alabama Shakespeare Festival's Theatre in the Mind project. He continues his work with On the Brink, an annual Southern writers conference; Imagining the Holocaust, JSU's Holocaust education project; the Southern Playwrights Competition, a national forum; and the JSU Writers Bowl. He serves on the boards of the Alabama Holocaust Commission and the Birmingham Holocaust Education Committee, and he is a member of the JSU Holocaust Remembrance Committee. This past year, he reviewed over two dozen books for local media and appeared in the JSU Children's Theatre production of *Cinderella*.

Julia F. Wooster continues to serve as the Social Director for the English Department. Additionally, she serves on three departmental committees. Mrs. Wooster judged poetry entries for the Writers Bowl and plays for the Southern Playwrights Competition. She also worked in the Language Arts Olympiad. Mrs. Wooster recently re-worked her course – Detective Fiction (EH416M) – and taught it in May 2007. She continues to teach Composition & Speech, for ECE, EED, and Collaborative majors, as well as American Literature and Oral Communication on a regular basis. Mrs. Wooster is also a member of the JSU Gamecock Club, a member of the Friends of the Library, and a life member of the JSU Alumni Association.

ON THE BRINK 2007

On the Brink, the annual JSU writers conference, took place February 10, 2007. The event was presented as part of the Kaleidoscope Spring Arts Festival. It was conceived this year as a “reunion” that brought together six emerging Southern writers with one returning writer and gave them a forum to meet each other and the reading public. Writers and editors working in a range of genres, including the novel, short story, and poetry participated.

Authors were Nancy Grisham Anderson, Howard Bahr, Thomas Lakeman, Jack Pendarvis, Charles J. Shields, Natasha Trethewey, and J. Wes Yoder. There were two sessions, each devoted to how the writer chooses the “right words” for the reading public to see; two book signings; and an author's luncheon. At each session, authors read from their works and then took questions from those attending. Authors “hosted” separate tables at lunch. Participants were local, statewide (Montgomery and Birmingham) and out-of-state (Baton Rouge, LA and Maggie Valley, NC).

Southern Playwrights Competition

The Southern Playwrights Competition continues as an ongoing project of the English Department and the Drama Department. The competition is limited to full-length plays by playwrights “native to or resident of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, or West Virginia.” Plays must deal with the “Southern experience” to be eligible for consideration.

The winner of the 2005-2006 competition, *Piano*, by David Hall, was produced by the JSU Drama Department in May 2007.

Other People's Dreams by Evan Guilford-Blake took the prize in the 2006-2007 competition. It will be prepared for presentation in May 2008.

Jacksonville State University Writing Project

The Jacksonville State University Writing Project site had another successful year, beginning with the summer institute in July 2006, at which 14 teacher fellows read, wrote, presented, and learned together as much as they could about being successful teachers of writing. The participants were: Emeka Barclay, B.B. Comer High School; Tammy Benefield, Sand Rock High School; Amber Berry, Highland School; Charla Coleman, Lineville High School; Sandra Foster, G. W. Carver High School; Katie Green, White Plains High School; Sammye Hill, Hokes Bluff High School; April Jordan, Weaver Elementary School; Gail Kelley, Hokes Bluff High School; Robin Maynard, Springville Middle School; Charlene McCoy, Glencoe Middle School; Carol Rea, Southside High School; Susan Silvey, Steele Junior High School; and Jolyn Streip, Westbrook Christian School. In addition to a successful summer institute, the Writing Project hosted a number of other activities. The JSU Reading Initiative team is nearing the end of its fourth year. The team has spent the last year writing up all the findings of its research on reading and supervising the research of teachers from several area schools. The team attended a Writing Dissemination Retreat in January 2007 in Berkeley, California. Reading Initiative Team coordinator is Lisa Light from Oxford Middle School. Other members of the team are Lorrie Cooper, Oxford Middle School; Lauri Elam, Jacksonville High School; Enithie Bradford-Hunter, Tapp Middle School; Gloria Horton, Jacksonville State University; and resource people, Lisa Williams and Rodney Bailey, Jacksonville State University. Jacksonville State University's site was one of only nine out of 185 sites selected for this grant.

The past year has been busy for our site in other ways. The *Wit Newsletter* was published in the spring. The sixth annual Language Arts Olympiad was held in April. The annual WIT Conference featured Carol Jago, who presented a keynote and an afternoon workshop about teaching the poetry of Sandra Cisneros. Concurrent sessions were provided by former Writing Project fellows. Our writing group, Scribblers, continues to meet monthly, and we are welcoming new members each year.

Plans are underway for the 2007 Summer Institute and for a mini-institute for new teachers to be held during the summer. Director of the JSU Writing Project is Gloria Horton, co-directors are Lisa Williams, Melissa Shields, and Lisa Light; technology liaison is Rodney Bailey.

Jacksonville State University Writing Project to Co-Host Reading Conference

On July 18, 2007, the Jacksonville State University Writing Project, along with the Jacksonville State University Regional In-Service Center, will host a day-long conference, "Reading in the Twenty-First Century," at the In-Service Center at McClellan. Registration will begin at 8:00 a.m., followed by a keynote address by Dr. David Booth, Professor Emeritus of the University of Toronto at 9:00. Dr. Booth has written numerous books on reading and writing, including *Even Hockey Players Read* and his newest book, *Reading Doesn't Matter Anymore*. His keynote will discuss "Literacy and the Technological Generation," focusing on balancing print and screen texts in our classrooms as our students develop into literate citizens. Following a round of concurrent sessions focusing on such topics as "Teaching Poetry to Middle School Students," "Turning Sows' Ears into Silk Purses," "Writing across America," "Joined at the Hip: Ways to Link Reading and Writing," "Keeping It Real: Using Music, Poetry, and Images to Enhance Adolescent Students' Motivation to Read, Write, Listen, and Think," "Reading Comprehension Strategies for Secondary and Postsecondary Educators," and "The AAA Roadmap for Teaching English Language Learners," there will be an afternoon workshop by Dr. Booth, "In Graphic Detail," which will focus on strategies for incorporating graphic novels, picture books, magazines, and other media into teaching literacy. The conference is free. To register, go to inservice.jsu.edu and follow the instructions. Professional Development Units will be available for teachers who attend.

Imagining the Holocaust

High school and middle school students from across the state sent nearly 600 entries to “Imagining the Holocaust,” an English Department writing competition. Savings bonds were awarded to high school and middle school students in poetry and short story categories.

Winners in the high school division were

Nikki Buchanan	Anniston	First Place Poetry
Bethany Webb	Colombiana	Second Place Poetry
Megan Covington	Huntsville	Third Place Poetry
Ashley Miller	Anniston	First Place Short Story
Serra Johnson	Piedmont	Second Place Short Story
David Haugen	Anniston	Third Place Short Story

Winners in the middle school division were

Victoria Nunnelly	Cullman	First Place Poetry
Drew Muntz	Cullman	Second Place Poetry
Savanna Williams	Cullman	Third Place Poetry
Alex LaGanke	Cullman	First Place Short Story
Jimmy L. Davis	Cullman	Second Place Short Story
Kaylie Hill	Vinemont	Third Place Short Story

Information about student participation in the “Imagining the Holocaust” competition may be obtained from Mr. John Hickman at (256) 782-8253 or jhickman@jsu.edu or Mrs. Joy Maloney at (256) 782-5469 or jmaloney@jsu.edu. Information about the JSU Holocaust Remembrance may be had by contacting Diana Cadwallader at (256) 782-5644 or dianac@jsu.edu.

Writers Club Continues to Promote Writing

The JSU Writers Club was hard at work this year under the guidance of Dr. Pitt Harding. The Dr. Robert U. Moersch (R.U.M.) Awards in Fiction and Poetry, funded by gifts from Marion and Barbara Moersch and organized by the Writers Club, continue to promote and recognize creative writing on campus. Faculty who devoted time to judging the two contests were Dr. Gray, Dr. Harding, Dr. Kostova, Ms. Maloney, and Dr. Porter. In addition to cash prizes and a public reading of their work, the winners have their names inscribed on a plaque in the English Department.

The club’s notoriously enticing bake sales raised enough funds to produce an expanded edition of *Something Else* this year. The enlarged format of the 140-page volume contains photographs and drawings as well as fiction and poetry by more than 30 student writers, including the R.U.M. Award winners. Copies of the new *Something Else* are available at 228 Stone Center. Descriptive and narrative essays by 5th and 6th graders at Kitty Stone Elementary, which were entered in a contest sponsored by the club last year, have now been collected in *Something Else Jr.*

Both editions of *Something Else* reflect the enthusiasm and commitment of the club’s current members, and especially the skill and dedication of club president Sarah Moersch. In addition to holding bake sales, organizing contests, and editing and printing the journals, the club created a stir last fall by entering a float in the Homecoming Parade with a literary theme: it featured a papier-mâché rendering of Satan from *Paradise Lost*.

ALUMNI NEWS SOUGHT

We would like to share more alumni news, so please send us updates of your activities for publication in next year's newsletter. If those of you who earned a degree in English/Language Arts from JSU will take a few minutes to e-mail Gena Christopher at genac@jsu.edu or to fill out the form below and mail it to **Gena Christopher, English Department, Jacksonville State University, 700 Pelham Road North, Jacksonville, AL 35256**, we will be most appreciative.

Name _____

Occupation _____

Mailing Address _____

E-mail Address _____ (We promise not to abuse it!)

Recent News (Attach a note, if needed, or include in e-mail)

Degree(s) earned at JSU _____ Date(s) _____

Postscripts

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