

Healing Words

Musical statement on the human cost of war
fuses Indigenous themes with classical forms

Enemy Slayer: A Navajo Oratorio premiered in Phoenix, February 7 and 9, 2008. Conducted by Michael Christie, with a score by Mark Grey, the Phoenix Symphony performed a brilliant alliance of Indigenous oral tradition and Western classical and choral music. The performance highlighted the fusion of Diné oral tradition with English language in a libretto by ASU Associate Professor Laura Tohe—whose native cultural heritage is Diné (the cultural name preferred by the Navajo tribe of Arizona).

The oratorio's evocation of Diné cultural sense of presence so impressed me that I asked Professor Tohe how she came to write the libretto. According to Tohe, composer Grey had in mind a concert composition with an Indigenous theme. He had "researched Navajo poets and my work in New York City library holdings." She further explained how "in the summer of 2006, he [Grey] contacted me... with the prospect of writing a Navajo creation story and asked if I would be interested in writing the libretto for the oratorio.... I was challenged [by] the idea...."

Enemy Slayer is based loosely on Monster Slayer, a mythic figure in Diné oral tradition. It is quite a leap in cultural understanding to have Diné mythic knowledge conveyed and understood in a culture and language ostensibly different from the original. Because composer Grey imagined *Enemy Slayer* as an attempt to demonstrate events that happen in different worlds as the same, Tohe offered

her creative skill to accomplish just that. "A successful collaboration includes faith," she says, "I had complete faith that whatever Mark created would come from his integrity and honesty. I was writing what I knew about Navajo oral tradition and writing poetry, while he composed from his training, experience, and artistic sense."

What makes *Enemy Slayer* remarkable is its present-day topical relevance to the American public's concern about the Iraq War, and the impact and toll of that war

relevant to today's audience, it had to be filtered through a contemporary lens. Hence, a veteran who returns home must overcome the monsters he brings back from the war." She adds, "The fusion... creates a powerful statement about the aftermath of war. It creates a bridge between two worlds using orchestra, voice, story, and imagery. It also affirms Diné language, oral literature, and the power of music to bring everything together artistically."

In conclusion, Tohe observed, "On one level, *Enemy Slayer* expresses the torment of the veteran protagonist and his need to heal, while on another level, it expresses how war touches our lives personally, communally, and nationally. If there is a resolution to be made—and I hope there is—it is that this country needs to acknowledge the terrible toll that war takes on returning veterans and on us as a nation. While Seeker is restored through Diné ceremony, there must be other ways for returning soldiers to heal."

Judging by the standing ovation *Enemy Slayer* received at its premier, the impact of the oratorio vision was very positive. This vision was expressed wonderfully by the 150 member chorus—representing Seeker's home and national community—in its lyrical recitation of a Diné prayer toward the end:

*By means of corn pollen
May there be hózhó before you
May there be hózhó below you
May there be hózhó above you
May there be hózhó all around you.*

—SIMON ORTIZ



From L to R: Michael Christie, conductor; Scott Hendricks, baritone; Laura Tohe, librettist; Mark Grey, composer. Photo/Deborah O'Grady

on the American psyche. Seeker, the hero and principal voice, sung by baritone Scott Hendricks, is an Indigenous combat veteran returning home to the Navajo Nation. Traumatized by war, he suffers Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms like many Iraq War veterans. Tohe says, "Growing up around storytellers, I learned [that] stories of the past—mythic or historic—are still relevant to our lives today. To make the mythic story

The Chair's Corner

A new energy pervades the Department of English. With ongoing support from ASU's President and Provost, we came together during this semester's first weeks to entertain campus visits for ten national searches. Excellent candidates from the best places around the country accepted our offers with vitality and eagerness to grow, transform, and advance the Department's excellence.



Neal A. Lester

That excellence is already showcased vividly by our faculty's scholarship, creativity, and teaching. Maureen Daly Goggin was acknowledged as "Faculty Exemplar" in the last tenure and promotion cycle, and Jim Blasingame was named "Outstanding College Teacher of Children's or Young Adult Literature" by the International Reading Association and "Professor of the Year" by the ASU Parents Association. The Conference on College Composition and Communication deemed Sharon Crowley's *Toward a Civil Discourse: Rhetoric and Fundamentalism* "Outstanding Book," and *Rhetoric Review* selected Keith Miller's essay on the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., as the "Best Essay."

We also applaud our students' accomplishments: English Club members presented at the 23rd Annual National Undergraduate Literature Conference at Weber State University (Ogden, UT), and our graduate students accepted tenure-track positions across the country.

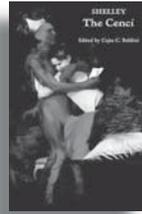
Inside and outside ASU, this Department is also collaborating with diverse communities. The Phoenix Symphony premiered *Enemy Slayer: A Navajo Oratorio*, with Laura Tohe as the librettist. Scholar Ned Blackhawk, jointly with the Heard Museum and ASU's American Indian Studies Program, launched the Simon Ortiz and Labriola Center Lecture on Indigenous Land, Culture, and Community. Alumnus Dan Shilling pledged to the Department half the proceeds from his new book *Civic Tourism: The Poetry and Politics of Place*. Creative Writing faculty Melissa Pritchard initiated an outreach project with patients in the Kidney Dialysis Unit at Phoenix Children's Hospital.

The recent visit and lecture by *The Matrix* series actor Harry Lennix, coordinated by Ayanna Thompson, best embodies the Department's new energy. Speaking to a standing-room-only audience, Lennix pledged to return to ASU. Afterwards, he wrote to Thompson: "The entire week was extremely affirming for me, and I cannot think of a better use of my time and energy.... I have said it before and I think a repeat is warranted: I enjoy the exchange of ideas with intelligent and invested people, just like you and your colleagues.... I am eager to return there as soon as time allows."

Please join us in our growth and transformation!

—NEAL A. LESTER

New Faculty Books



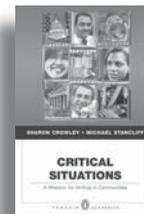
Cajsja C. Baldini, ed. *The Cenci: A Tragedy in Five Acts: An Authoritative Text Based on the 1819 Edition*. Valencourt, 2008.



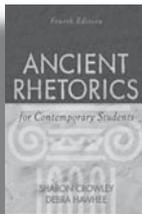
O M Brack, Jr., ed. *Tobias Smollett, Scotland's First Novelist: New Essays in Memory of Paul-Gabriel Boucé*. Univ. of Delaware Press, 2007.



Robert E. Bjork, R. D. Fulk, and John D. Niles, eds. *Klaeber's Beowulf*, 4th ed. Univ. of Toronto Press, 2008.



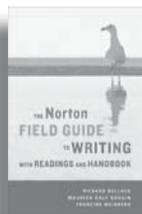
Sharon Crowley and Michael Stancliff. *Critical Situations: A Rhetoric for Writing in Communities*. Longman, 2008.



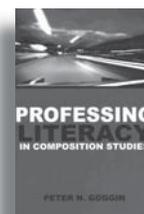
Sharon Crowley and Debra Hawhee. *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*, 4th ed. Longman, 2008.



Bettie Anne Doebler. *Lost Sheep*. PublishAmerica, 2007.



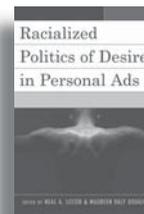
Maureen Daly Goggin, Richard Bullock, and Francine Weinberg. *The Norton Field Guide to Writing with Readings and Handbook*. W. W. Norton, 2007.



Peter N. Goggin. *Professing Literacy in Composition Studies*. Hampton, 2008.

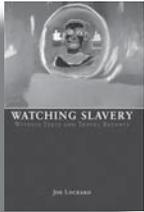


Peter Lehman. *Running Scared: Masculinity and the Representation of the Male Body*. Wayne State Univ. Press, 2007.



Neal A. Lester and Maureen Daly Goggin eds. *Racialized Politics of Desire in Personal Ads*. Lexington/Rowman & Littlefield, 2007.

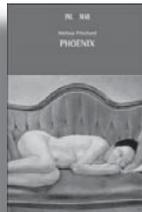
New Faculty Books



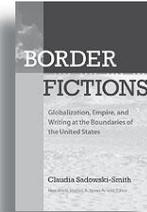
Joe Lockard
Watching Slavery: Witness Texts and Travel Reports. Peter Lang, 2008.



Richard Newhauser and István Bejczy. *A Supplement to Morton W. Bloomfield et al., 'Incipits of Latin Works on the Virtues and Vices, 1100-1500 A.D.'* Brepols, 2008.



Melissa Pritchard
Phoenix. Italian translation of *Phoenix* (1991). Palomar, 2007.



Claudia Sadowski-Smith
Border Fictions: Globalization, Empire, and Writing at the Boundaries of the United States. Univ. of Virginia Press, 2008.

From Literature Scholar to Cultural and Environmental Activist

Moving from his native Pennsylvania to Tempe in 1980 to pursue a PhD in eighteenth-century British literature, Dan Shilling, Community Faculty



Dan Shilling

Associate, earned that degree in 1987 with a dissertation on rhetorical strategies in essays of Samuel Johnson. Little did he know this would lead him to a life of civic activism or “applied” humanities. After serving five years as a program director at the Arizona Humanities Council, he became its Executive Director in 1989. For the next 14 years, Shilling would spearhead many cultural projects at the Council, ranging

from literacy to environmental ethics to the subject of his new book: civic tourism.

In a recent issue of *Cultural Heritage Tourism News*, Shilling defines “Civic Tourism” as “an extension of, supplement to, and tool for ecotourism, cultural tourism, heritage tour-

ism, geotourism and other place-based activities.” In 2006, while Curator of Humanities at the Sharlot Hall Museum in Prescott, he organized the first national Conference on Civic Tourism. The conference generated so much enthusiasm that a second national conference is scheduled this fall in Rhode Island.

Tourism is the world’s largest and fastest growing industry, but it is often limited by corporate economics, which Shilling calls “disaster tourism”—wherein little is authentic, local voices are ignored, and most of the profits are funneled outside the communities that generate them. The antidote, Shilling believes, is civic tourism.

Civic Tourism: The Poetry and Politics of Place (Sharlot Hall Museum Press, 2007) is an outcome of this community-based ethos. With a foreword by the much anthologized essayist and fiction writer Scott Russell Sanders, Dan Shilling’s book is currently available from Changing Hands Bookstore—www.changinghands.com. Shilling may be reached through the Civic Tourism website—www.civictourism.org.



—CORNELIA WELLS

Bender to Publish Sea Memoir

Since retiring in 2003, Professor Emeritus Bert Bender has continued to pursue his interest in the American sea novel. His own sea memoir, *Catching the Ebb: Drift-fishing for a Life between Cook Inlet and Academe*, will be published this fall by Oregon State University Press. The memoir, which is the first book on the drift gill-net fishery of Cook Inlet, Alaska, will contain drawings by the well-known artist-writer of the Pacific Northwest, Tony Angell. Bender’s memoir is based on his 30 years of experience as a drift gill-net fisherman for salmon in Cook Inlet. He recounts his experiences of

living in two very different worlds as he strove to balance his summer career in the fishery with his academic career at Arizona State University.

Additionally, Bender’s memoir traces the decline of the fishing industry in Cook Inlet fueled by environmental degradation caused by, most notably, the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989 and the encroaching human population in the area. *Catching the Ebb*, like his earlier *Sea-Brothers* (1990) asks, can we “restrain our reckless behavior in polluting the sea? And ‘can we avoid depleting the ocean’s resources?’” The memoir ends on a positive note based

on what Bender calls, “the State of Alaska’s successful record in managing the Inlet’s salmon as a sustainable resource.” Bender hopes his memoir “will appeal to readers with interests in literature of the sea, environmental literature, or the broader field of American experience where the active and contemplative lives are joined.”



The memoir will sport drawings by artist Tony Angell, as did Bender's 1990 monograph, Sea Brothers.

—KATHLEEN HICKS

New Faculty & Staff



I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, as cause for withdrawing from a friend.
—Thomas Jefferson

It's ASU Again for Visiting Professor

David Holmes, Visiting Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Composition, comes to us from balmy Malibu, California, where he is Associate Professor of English and Blanche E. Seaver Professor in Humanities at Pepperdine University. He says he was prepared for the Arizona heat, but, "I didn't know how cold it gets here in January!" Nevertheless, he is enjoying his time in the ASU English Department, finding his colleagues "incredibly warm."



David Holmes

Holmes is also profiting from a bit of extra time for his research, having submitted one article for

publication and making headway on another. He has two book projects in the works—one that explores socially conscious pedagogies and the Alabama civil rights movement, and another that remaps the rhetorical narratives of the Birmingham civil rights mass meetings. An area of particular interest to Holmes is the epistemology of racism; he asks "what discourses and rhetorics do we use to make racism respectable?" One might argue that most educated twenty-first-century Americans wouldn't defend racism as "respectable." However, Holmes contends that just as the nineteenth-century pseudoscience of craniology used skull proportions to racialize intelligence, so does the acceptable science of the statistical bell curve often help justify racialist practices.

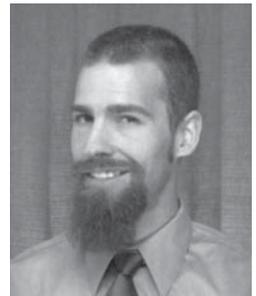
This is Holmes's second visit to ASU; ironically, he was a job candidate here in the late 1990s, but decided at the time not to re-locate. He is grateful to be working alongside his friends Sharon Crowley and Keith Miller, with whom he shares common research interests. Holmes says this latest ASU experience has been stimulating, and "is making me think more seriously about being at a research institution."

—KRISTEN LARUE

New Main Office Staff Onboard

The English Department welcomes Karen Silva as the Department's new Office Supervisor as of December of 2007. Silva's varied experience, prior to joining the Department of English, includes the position of Administrative Assistant both at Fletcher Library, West Campus, and for Human Resources here in Tempe. Back in Sacramento, California, she was close to the limelight, you might say, coordinating staffing and assisting with technical work for KVIE, a PBS station. She's even served as site photographer and guide at Biosphere 2. Karen says she "loves working with people" and "thrives on challenges and learning new things."

Awarm welcome also goes out to Phillip Karagas. He comes to the English Department from the ASU Bookstore, where he worked since 2001, quite glad to find himself now in the position of Administrative Assistant with his "oft-missed department." After graduating from ASU with a BA in English literature, Karagas worked as a freelance writer for online publications (*Phoenix City Search*, to name one) and is currently working on a novel. He also devotes time to his own independent film company, Crossed Hares, as both writer and director. And as if all that weren't enough, Karagas just celebrated his second-year wedding anniversary. (Congratulations!)



Phillip Karagas

Risha Sharma, a nine-year valley resident and Sun Devil graduate in Communication, is the Department's Office Specialist. Sharma provides "front line" assistance to students, faculty, and any and all visitors to the main office. She enjoys the diversity of ASU and "all that university life has to offer." In her spare time, Sharma hikes, watches football and classic movies, and walks her dogs in the park. She also appreciates a good read, especially the biographies of famous historical figures.

—ROSSANA LHOTA

"Well(s) Said" KEY:

1-i; 2-p; 3-a; 4-r; 5-e; 6-o; 7-c; 8-k; 9-l; 10-m; 11-q; 12-h; 13-n; 14-j; 15-f; 16-b; 17-u; 18-g; 19-d; 20-s; 21-t.

Well(s) Said: A Column Rhetoric & American Politics

Slogans, Speeches, and Poetic Interventions: A 21-Quote Salute to Democracy

Who said *what*? Because political rhetoric is often daunting, this playful overview begins with the answers: a few well-known or outstanding individuals who've used their voices on behalf of American democracy. How many of these answers can you match with the "questions" below? (See "Key" on opposite page, bottom.)

ANSWERS:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>a. Cherokee Saying
b. Martin Luther King, Jr., Speech at the Holt Street Baptist Church during the Montgomery Bus Boycott, 1955
c. John F. Kennedy, <i>Inaugural Address</i>
d. Maya Angelou, "On the Pulse of Morning," Inaugural Poem for Bill Clinton (excerpt #1)
e. Robert Frost, "The Gift Outright," Inaugural Poem for John F. Kennedy
f. e.e. cummings, "next to of course god america i / love you land of the pilgrims and so forth..."
g. Native American Proverb
h. Stephen Crane, "War Is Kind"
i. Abraham Lincoln, <i>Gettysburg Address</i>
j. George W. Bush, Press Conference, 18 Apr. 2006</p> | <p>k. Warren G. Harding, Campaign Slogan following World War I
l. Arthur Bloch, <i>Murphy's Law, Book Four three</i>
m. Edna St. Vincent Millay, "Conscientious Objector"
n. Neil Diamond, "America"
o. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Lincoln Day Dinner Address, Jan. 28, 1954
p. Martin Luther King, Jr., <i>I Have a Dream</i> Speech, 1968
q. Patrick Henry, Virginia House of Burgesses Speech, 1775
r. Eleanor Roosevelt, Letter to Harry S. Truman, 1948
s. Don Fardon, "Cherokee Reservation," Sung by Paul Revere and the Raiders
t. Walt Whitman, "I Hear America Singing"
u. Wallace Stevens, "The Death of a Soldier"</p> |
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QUESTIONS

1. [W]e here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.
2. [E]ven though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream.... a dream deeply rooted in the American dream a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men [and women] are created equal.'
3. When the White Man discovered this country Indians were running it. No taxes no debt.... White man thought he could improve on a system like this.
4. No one won the last war, and no one will win the next.
5. Something we were withholding made us weak / Until we found out that it was ourselves / We were withholding from our land of living, / And forthwith found salvation in surrender... / To the land vaguely realizing westward....
6. My fellow Americans: ...politics ought to be the part-time profession of every citizen who would protect the rights and privileges of free people and who would preserve what is good and fruitful in our national heritage.
7. [M]y fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.
8. Back to normalcy.
9. One good slogan can stop analysis for 50 years.
10. I shall die, but that is all that I shall do for Death. / I will not tell him the whereabouts of my friends nor of my enemies either. / Though he promise me much, I will not map him the route to any man's door.
11. Give me liberty or give me death.
12. Do not weep, babe... / Because your father tumbled in the yellow trenches, / Raged at his breast, gulped and died.... / Mother whose heart hung humble as a button / On the bright splendid shroud of your son, / Do not weep....
13. Far, we've been travellin' far / Without a home, but not without a star / Free, only want to be free / We huddle close, hang on to a dream // On the boats and on the planes / They're comin' to America / Never looking back again....
14. I hear the voices, and I read the front page, and I know the speculation. But I'm the decider, and I decide what is best.
15. 'why talk of beauty what could be more beaut- / iful than these heroic happy dead / who rushed like lions to the roaring slaughter / they did not stop to think they died instead / then shall the voice of liberty be mute?'
16. There is never a time in our American democracy that we must ever think we're wrong when we protest. We reserve that right.
17. The soldier falls. // He does not become a three-days personage, / Imposing his separation, / Calling for pomp. // Death is absolute and without memorial, / As in a season of autumn, / When the wind stops....
18. Treat the earth well: it was not given to you by your parents; it was loaned to you by your children.
19. History, despite its wrenching pain, / Cannot be un-lived, and if faced / With courage, need not be lived again.
20. They took away our native tongue / And taught their English to our young / And all the beads we made by hand / Are nowadays made in Japan.
21. ... the varied carols I hear; / Those of mechanics... / carpenter... / mason... / boatman... deckhand... / shoemaker... hatter / wood-cutter... ploughboy... / The delicious singing of the mother – or of the young wife at work – or of the girl sewing or washing – Each singing what belongs to her, and to none else; / The day what belongs to the day – At night, the party of young fellows, robust, friendly, / Singing, with open mouths, their strong melodious songs.

—CORNELIA WELLS

Scholarship and Civic Participation

I am in politics because of the conflict between good and evil, and I believe that in the end good will triumph.
—Margaret Thatcher

2008 *Beowulf* Symposium Explores Monsters

The Department of English, the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (ACMRS), and the ASU English Club sponsored the 2nd Annual *Beowulf* Symposium, March 21-22, 2008. Kicking off the symposium, Asa Mittman (ASU School of Art) presented on “the monster that I am: Otherness and Identity from *Beowulf* (c. 1000) to *Beowulf* (2007).” Mittman showed creature drawings from *The Wonders of the East*, an Old English fictional work that appears with *Beowulf* in the Nowell Codex, along with clips from recent film adaptations of *Beowulf*, to support his argument that monsters in the famous epic poem possess human characteristics, and that humans, especially *Beowulf*, are at times monstrous. Audience members then viewed the 2007 film version of *Beowulf*.

On Day 2 of the symposium, over 30 students, faculty, and friends gathered at the home of Robert Bjork, Professor of English and Director of the ACMRS,

for dinner, wine (or mead), and a communal reading. Participants read aloud in Old and Modern English as they conveyed the tale of the brave *Geat* hero and his bloody confrontations with the infamous monster Grendel, his vengeful mother, and a deadly fire-breathing dragon.

Heather Maring, Assistant Professor of English and symposium coordinator, says a highlight of the symposium is “hearing *Beowulf* (a poem with roots in an oral tradition) read aloud.” Maring noted that the event attracts a few of the undergraduate attendees to sign up for Old English and other Medieval studies in the fall. It also provides an opportunity for colleagues and community members in these fields to gather and share their interests. Congratulations to Maring and all who participated in this year’s symposium. *Geblædfæstnes!*

—GINGER HANSON



Graduate student William Bolton and Sara Waechter-Boettcher participate in communal reading of *Beowulf* on March 22. Photo/Emilie Roy

Graduate Student News Briefs

Graduate students are presenting, publishing, and earning awards this year: Brad Gyori presented “Bridging the Ivory Towers: Creating Effective Transdisciplinary Discourses” at ASU’s Southwest Graduate Symposium, and has accepted a TAsip in the Film and Media Studies Program. Uthairat Rogers presented her paper, “Native English Speaker Graduate Students’ Perceptions of Non-native English Speaker Graduate Students’ Communicative Competence in the Individualistic Classroom Setting,” at the 6th Annual Hawaii International Conference on Arts & Humanities. Jenna Steigerwalt presented “Second Person Pronouns in Staging Conventions in the Collaborative work of Doctor Faustus,” and Alicia Wise presented “Extracting the Supernatural from *Hamlet*: An Examination of the Omitted Lines of Q6” at the Fourth Blackfriars Conference in Staunton, VA at the American Shakespeare Center’s Blackfriars Playhouse. Tanita Saenkhum was awarded the

As of April 24, nine graduate students—Nick Behm, Kirsti Cole, Anjanette Darrington, Bill Endres, Carol Mejia-LaPerle, Angie O’Neal, Michael Perry, Lynn Simms, and Jennifer Santos—have secured tenure-track positions in institutions around the country.

Spring 2008 Marvin Fisher Book Award and the University Graduate Fellowship from the English Department and Graduate College. Michael Callaway, Natalie Martinez, and Chris Vassett spoke at the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) in New Orleans. Martinez won the Dream Award for CCCC, and both Vassett and Sherry Rankins-Robertson won a Professional

Equity Project (PEP) grant from CCCC. Lisa Reid Ricker will have her essay “(Re)Collecting Herself: Jennie Drew’s Autograph Album, Mnemonic Activity and the Creation of Feminine Subjectivity” published in the collection *Women and Things, 1750-1950: Gendered Material Strategies*, edited by Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin, forthcoming from Ashgate Publishing. Kirsti Cole was given a contract by Edwin

Mellen Press for her 2009 forthcoming book, *The Rhetoric of Effect in the Short Fiction of Edgar Allan Poe*.

—STEVEN ACCARDI

Talking Politics of Race and Gender: ASU English Club Hosts Popular Panel

If you thought Americans had reached consensus on topics of race and gender, think again. These topics generate as much discussion today as ever. Proving this point was “A Panel Discussion: The Politics of Race and Gender in the 2008 Presidential Election,” sponsored by the ASU English Club, February 28, 2008. In celebration of Black Awareness Month, nearly 50 ASU faculty and students gathered in LL 165 to participate in a lively discussion.

The panel consisted of Mary Fonow, Director of Women and Gender Studies; Stanlie James, Director of African and African American Studies; and Matthew Whitaker, Associate Professor of History; and was

moderated by Ayanna Thompson, Assistant Professor of English. Panelists’ insightful comments inspired many questions from the audience.

The English Club provides a forum where undergraduate students can engage in scholarly dialogue and literacy-based community outreach. If you are an undergraduate interested in being part of the English Club, now is a great time to join. Contact Ginger.Hanson@asu.edu.

Thompson reflected positively on the standing-room-only crowd, stating that “the high turnout shows that students and faculty at ASU are hungry to engage in meaningful dialogues about

these complex issues.” She added that it was refreshing to see people speaking so frankly about the ways gender and race affect political decisions. As the event progressed, the atmosphere became electric, with an unmistakable and positive energy produced through a model of civil discourse.

The event’s popularity has prompted the ASU English Club to sponsor an undergraduate symposium in fall 2008. “Choosing the Future: Critical Issues in American Life” will provide students across disciplines another venue for discussing issues of cultural, political, economic, environmental, and social importance.

—GINGER HANSON

Warrior Poets and Papermakers

During the week in March that marked the fifth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, poets and papermakers gathered at ASU to engage in a unique conversation. Art professor John Risseuw and Creative Writing professors Alberto Ríos and Cynthia Hogue joined forces to bring returning Iraq veterans and artists from Vermont’s Green Door

Studio to printmaking classrooms, to the English Department, and to the Piper Center for Creative Writing. Led by Drew Matott and Drew Cameron, they made paper, showed off poetry publications, made silkscreen prints near the Memorial Union fountain, and joined more ASU professors and students in a roundtable discussion at Piper House.

Eight touring artists and veterans wanted to “create small bridges,” they said, between themselves and conservative groups nearby on the mall. “I joined the army for college money,”



The English Club hosted the Warrior Poets for a “Gathering in the Garden,” March 20 (top), and the “Engaged Artist” roundtable held at the Piper Writers House March 19 drew many interested in activism.

a young vet said, “but I came back with a traumatic brain injury. This ‘Combat Paper Project’ has let me transform my own uniform into a thing of beauty. I never had an outlet

for my opinions and feelings before. We engage others.”

At the lecture / video presentation at the School of Art, “Pulp Politics: Dissent and Intervention,” it was plain that artists working in communities turn learning into discovery. The artist’s identity is highlighted and defined in a larger context.

Slides showed veterans of the Iraq war in writing workshops, cutting their own uniforms from their bodies, cooking the rag and pulping it to make broadsides with silkscreen prints of their words and pho-



Alberto Ríos watches papermaker John La Falce hard at work by the Cady Mall Fountain, March 17. Photo/Karla Elling

tographs of the war. A dog tag spritzed with colored pulp became a ghostly image on paper, a signature.

Hari, an ASU Communication major who joined the group on the first day, went home then brought his own uniform back to the papermaking table to be pulped. “This shirt was something I lived in for so long,” he said, “now making it into something I can turn into a message is profound for me, personally.”

The pen, combined with silkscreen ink and handmade paper, can transform lives—and did, as this spring English and Art took poetry to the mall.

—KARLA ELLING

Scholarship and Civic Participation

Brack Planning Ahead for 2009

In 2009, the world will celebrate the 300th birthday for Samuel Johnson, English lexicographer, biographer, essayist, and poet. In the forefront of celebrations will be ASU's own Professor O M "Skip" Brack, curator of an exhibition of Johnson's works entitled *Samuel Johnson (1709-1784): A Literary Giant of the Eighteenth Century*, held at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, May 23 through September 20, 2009.

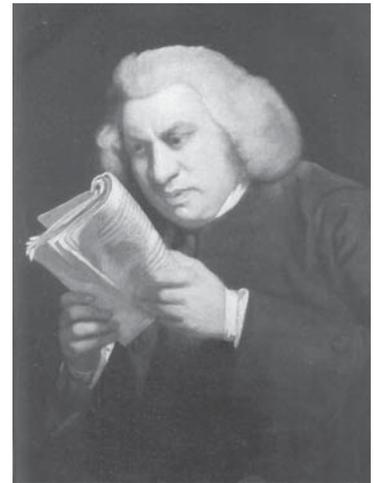
In late 2006, Brack's longtime friends and avid book collectors, Loren and Frances Rothschild of Los Angeles, donated to the Huntington Art Collections a 1775 Sir Joshua Reynolds's portrait of Johnson, called "Blinking Sam." When the Rothschilds invited Brack to spend the summer at the Library assembling books, manuscripts, paintings, and prints from their collection, it came as no surprise to Brack's colleagues here at ASU. Since 1971, Brack has been such a frequent reader at the Huntington Library that his graduate students comment that "if he is not in Tempe, he must be at the Huntington."

Brack has been interested in Johnson since his own time in graduate school and has published extensively on Johnson's life and writings. In fact, Brack is making several contributions to Johnson's tercentenary birthday celebration besides the Huntington exhibition. Brack has critically edited texts

and provides an introduction and historical annotations for Sir John Hawkins's *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (1787), the first full-length biography of Johnson. The University of Georgia Press will publish the annotated text in spring 2009.

Cambridge University Press will publish in 2009 Brack's essay, "The Works of Samuel Johnson and the Canon," in its collection *Samuel Johnson after 300 Years*. The Yale Edition of the *Works of Samuel Johnson*, forthcoming in 2009, will also include Brack's critically edited text for *The Parliamentary Debates*, vols. 11-13. This spring, Brack completed the final two volumes (19-20) to be included in the Yale Edition of Johnson's *The Biographical and Related Writings*.

—KRISTEN LARUE



"Blinking Sam," oil on canvas by Joshua Reynolds, 1775. The title of the painting comes from Johnson's complaint that the portrait made him look near-sighted.

Instructor-Sponsored Composition Conference Comes to Fruition

This year marked the first ASU Composition Conference, designed by ASU Writing Programs faculty especially for Writing Programs faculty. Thanks to the combined talents of Wendy King (chair), Laura Cruser, Susan Davis, Amisha Patel, and Ginny Simmon, members of the Composition Conference Committee, and all who participated (includ-



The first annual ASU Teaching Awards were presented at the ASU Composition Conference; winners are (L to R): Marian Crotty, Steve Beatty, Shavawn M. Berry, and Adelheid Thieme. Photo/Don Ownsby

ing the English Department's Chair, whose advocacy was key), the conference was an unqualified success.

Writing Programs faculty from all ranks gathered on the Tempe campus on Saturday, March 22, in the Durham Language and Literature building, to learn more about each other's best teaching experiences and strategies. After a breakfast introduction of the winners of the first annual ASU Best Practices Teaching Awards, both morning and afternoon sessions offered a range of topics, from effective peer reviews and "unlimited rewrites"; to online teaching "plusses and pitfalls" and SoTL—or the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. A total of fifteen concurrent sessions were scheduled, including a special segment of mini-classes on the how-tos of Instructor applications and the self-evaluation process, led by Writing Programs Director Greg Glau.

During the lunch hour, participants were treated to an Open Mic session in the Hospitality Room, where poets and songsters alike shared their own moving work or that of others. The conference wrapped up with a complimentary show at the ASU Planetarium.

Special thanks to the sponsors: the ASU Distinguished Teaching Academy and the Department of English. In all, a splendid event Writing Programs can look forward to again next year.

—ROSSANA LHOTA

Retirees Leave Legacy of Award-Winning Activism



Those who would treat politics and morality apart will never understand the one or the other.

—John Viscount Morley

G. Lynn Nelson's Peaceable Classroom

Associate Professor G. Lynn Nelson received his PhD in American Literature and his MA in English at University of Nebraska, and his BA in Education at Kearney State College. He began teaching at Arizona State University in 1973. Nelson's primary academic focus is linked to a kind of writing that Linda Hogan refers to as a search for "a language of that different yield . . . a yield that returns us to our own sacredness, to a self-love and respect that will carry out to others."

This journey led to the publishing of *Writing and Being: Taking Back Our Lives Through the Power of Language* in 1994, which was revised and reprinted in 2004 and translated into Japanese in 2007. Nelson has published in journals nationwide; his article "Warriors with Words: Toward a Post-Columbine Writing Curriculum" won the *English Journal's* Edwin M. Hopkins Award for Outstanding Article in 2000.

In addition to his writing, Nelson believes in serving Arizona's diverse communities. He has mentored countless teachers as the director of the Greater Phoenix Area Writing Project, a regional enrichment program of the National Writing Project

for English teachers. From this project spawned his creation of the Young Adult Writing Project (1995); Native Images (1993); and the Rainbow Sections of English Composition (1984). The programs have flourished, offering writing classes to Arizona's youth and mentorship to its teachers. Because of these many initiatives, Nelson received the 2007 Arizona English Teacher Association (AETA) Distinguished Service Award. Nelson's work sets a precedent for many scholars' research efforts and teaching aesthetics; in this manner, his effort to teach a peaceable classroom presses on. Enjoying retirement, Nelson and his wife Laurie live in Tempe and frequent his cabin at Mormon Lake near Flagstaff, Arizona.



G. Lynn Nelson

—KYLE GRANT WILSON

Sharon Crowley's Smart and Civil Discourse

The Department of English congratulates Rhetoric and Composition Professor Sharon Crowley on her retirement this May after nearly 40 years of teaching, the last ten of which she has dedicated to ASU communities.



Sharon Crowley

Crowley retires satisfied and proud of her scholarly contributions to her field. Her latest ground-breaking work, *Toward a Civil Discourse: Rhetoric and Fundamentalism* (2006), has lately garnered these major book awards: the David H. Russell Award from the National Council of Teachers of English; the Gary A. Olson Award from the Association of Teachers of Advanced Composition; and the Outstanding Book Award from the Confer-

ence on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). Her essays have appeared in prestigious Rhetoric and Compo-

sition journals as well. Her writings attest to her career-long defense of democratic values, justice, and equitable treatment of teachers in the field.

Besides her scholarly contributions, Crowley is also proud of her students. She reports, "Many former graduate students are now professors themselves, and my undergraduate students have become lawyers, teachers, and other successful professionals." Her doctoral students, striving to complete their programs before her retirement, kept her very busy this year. She is looking forward to spending the first part of her retirement relaxing, enjoying Arizona, and reconnecting with friends. Nonetheless, Crowley admits she will miss the classroom atmosphere and "the excitement that can materialize very quickly when someone has a good new idea and others seize on it to develop its possibilities." She says, "One encounters that level of provocative talk in very few settings in our culture." ASU will certainly miss her dedicated professionalism and her talents as a motivating and inspiring educator.

—KATHLEEN HICKS

Announcing . . . Arizona Humanities Council's "Project Civil Discourse"

Throughout 2008, the Department of English will join an important effort initiated by the Arizona Humanities Council to bring "Project Civil Discourse" to the citizenry of Arizona. AHC is partnering with several community, educational, and nonprofit groups in support of environments that help seek solutions to potentially divisive problems through meaningful and respectful dialogue. The Department of English is planning events for the fall semester. Among the activities will



be one centering on Sharon Crowley's award-winning book *Toward a Civil Discourse*. Members of the planning committee include Neal Lester, Jessica Early, Kristen LaRue, Simon Ortiz, Karen Adams, and Sharon Crowley. Please contact any of the committee members with ideas for activities. (The Arizona Humanities Council Project is sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities through their *We the People* initiative. See www.azhumanities.org/pcd1.)

—KAREN ADAMS

Global Engagements



Observe good faith and justice toward all nations.
Cultivate peace and harmony with all.

—George Washington

The China Connection: Department of English and Sichuan University Exchange Program Blossoms

Stemming from President Crow's global engagement initiative, the Department of English and Sichuan University's College of Foreign Languages and Culture are uniting to expand intercultural understanding and to enhance educational opportunities through an exchange program.

Helping the program to take root and get off the ground is English Instructor Ruby Macksoud, who has been conducting information sessions for students and faculty, and screening applications before they are submitted to The Center for Global Education Services (CGES) for consideration.

"Currently, the English Department and Sichuan University are recruiting students from Sichuan to study at

ASU," says Macksoud, "with the idea that an English student and a Sichuan student will exchange his or her spot for study abroad."

Grab a cup of tea and join the conversation. There is an online chat forum for ASU English students and English students at Sichuan University: <http://groups.google.com/group/asu-english-sichuan-university>; it's open to everyone to join.

While living in foreign student residence halls, ASU students will spend one semester, or one year, at Sichuan University studying literature, linguistics, interpretation and translation, and Chinese history and culture.

Faculty are eager to engage in the exchange as well. Last summer, Department Chair Neal Lester delivered lectures on American literature and culture at Sichuan University, and this summer Assistant Professor Mark James will travel to Sichuan to teach methodology of teaching English to non-native speakers. Plans are also germinating for professors from Sichuan University to teach courses in Chinese literature and culture at ASU.

The English Department's study abroad program, housed within CGES (www.ipo.asu.edu), is one of many global engagement opportunities available through various departments across campus.

—SHEILA LUNA

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Word Lover's Corner



Politics are such a torment that I would advise every one I love not to mix with them.

—Thomas Jefferson

The Recycling of Political Rhetoric

Two issues ago, we wrote about recycling paper products at Starbucks, but this time we're writing about recycling something more abstract—political rhetoric. In February, Barack Obama was scolded for how he responded to a “Just words!” charge from Hillary Clinton, who had accused him of being more oratorical than substantive. At a February 16 Founders Day fundraising event for Wisconsin Democrats, Obama deviated from his prepared speech and said to the audience of several thousand people:

“I have a dream.” Just words? “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.” Just words? “We have nothing to fear but fear itself.” Just words? Just speeches?

Obama was not criticized for using the phrases, but for using them in the same way that Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick had used them in a 2006 speech. Both men are African American, and both have Chicagoan David Axelrod as their political strategist. In answer to the kind of criticism expressed by Representative Jim McGovern who said when Senator Obama uses someone else's words without crediting “their origin, those same words seem less inspiring,” Obama apologized, but went on to say that Patrick had suggested the lines to him, and that in fact, they “trade ideas all the time.” *Time* magazine weighed in on the controversy on its March 3 “Briefing” page by showing that both John McCain and Hillary Clinton had been using the “Ready to Lead on Day One” slogan, while both Clinton and Obama were using “Fired up . . . ready to go,” and Obama was using an anglicized version of César Chávez's “*Si, se puede.*” “Yes, we can.”

Repeating lines made famous by predecessors is an important part of political debate. When we Googled Martin Luther King Jr.'s “I have a dream,” we were surprised to see 28,900,000 citations. The founding fathers' “We hold these truths to be self-evident” had 1,080,000 citations, while Franklin D. Roosevelt's “We have nothing to fear but fear itself” had 534,000 hits.

Politicians use famous lines in much the same way that cartoonists draw such visual symbols as pointing fingers or arrows to send blame elsewhere; a Trojan Horse to warn against trickery; tombstones and skulls to represent death; Adam and Eve to comment on gender issues; snakes to represent evil; bombs or firecrackers to warn of imminent danger; and the three monkeys to hint at purposeful ignorance. Cartoonists have to rely on well-recognized symbols because an average viewer spends only seven to ten seconds looking at a cartoon, and the cartoonist wants viewers to spend their limited time figuring out the joke—the new idea—rather than examining background details.

Similarly, politicians repeat well-known phrases so that both they and their listeners can relax between the new parts. Politicians love to use well-accepted clichés also because they hope listeners will subconsciously connect them to successful

predecessors, but not in such an obvious way that they can be slapped down as was Dan Quayle in a 1988 debate when Senator Lloyd Bentsen told him, “You're no Jack Kennedy!”

Once a political statement gets famous, it will be taught to subsequent generations not only through history books, but through repeated usages as when cartoonists take advantage of the public's familiarity with the famous statement to provide a surprise ending—a variation on a theme. One of President Truman's most famous statements was “The buck stops here!” In 1978, Kevin McVey recycled the saying by



One of many political cartoons illustrating Teddy Roosevelt's “Big Stick” policy.

drawing a picture of Jimmy Carter sitting behind a sign on his desk that read, “What's left of the buck stops here.” Then in 2004, Jim Morin showed George W. Bush sitting at his desk behind a slogan, “The Buck Stops *Anywhere* But *Here!*”

In another example, Theodore Roosevelt's rally cry of “Speak Softly and Carry a Big Stick” was recycled by John Trevor who used it to protest Jimmy Carter's 1978 return of the Panama Canal to the Panamanians (as promised in the original treaty) by showing Carter whittling Roosevelt's big stick into a loving cup labeled “Canal Treaty.” Jim Berry criticized President Clinton for being soft on China's treatment of human rights by showing Clinton standing with a twig in his hand as he consulted Chinese leaders. The caption read: “China Policy: Speak Softly and Carry a Stick.” Bob Englehart took the opposite approach to criticize Chief Justice Rhenquist for some of his decision by showing Rhenquist lifting up his judicial robes to reveal that he was, in fact, carrying the kind of club usually reserved for cavemen.

—ALLEEN NILSEN AND DON NILSEN

accents on ENGLISH

NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AT ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Coming Events . . .

“That Different Yield” **June 26, 2008**

Public Reading by the Young Adult Writing Project
Changing Hands Bookstore (6428 S McClintock Dr) Tempe, 7:00 p.m.

**The Simon Ortiz and Labriola Center Lecture on Indigenous
Land, Culture, and Community** **October 2, 2008**

Featured Speaker: Wilma Mankiller
Campus Reception hosted by Women and Gender Studies
West Hall, time and exact location TBA
“Challenges Facing Twenty-First-Century Indigenous People”
Heard Museum (2301 N Central Ave) Phoenix, 7:00 p.m.

“Choosing the Future: Critical Issues in American Life” **October 18, 2008**

English Club Undergraduate Conference
LL Building, 9:00 a.m.

Come Home to English **November 10-15, 2008**

ASU Homecoming 2008
ASU Tempe campus, times TBA



Political cartoons often recycle images and ideas. President Teddy Roosevelt's 1901 speech articulating "Big Stick Diplomacy" (lampooned in this example) has provided fodder for countless illustrations throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. See "Word Lover's Corner" on page 11 for full story.