



**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND WRITING STUDIES
NEWSLETTER**

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to PhD student Andy Verboom whose poem "Rite" has been awarded the 2014 Winston Collins / Descant Prize for Best Canadian Poem! This year's judges, Mark Kingwell and Leanne Shapton, describe Andy Verboom's poem in the following terms:

Rite is a beautifully anarchic, even witchy poem: a detail-heavy tale of euphoric conflagration, a demon-lover's catalogue of things and ideas sacrificed to fire. Academic knowledge of every conceivable kind is incinerated – "*Commitit* then to the *flames*: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion," David Hume enjoined against all system-building metaphysics. Insects, fruit, writing instruments, and notebooks all meet the same fate. There are arresting phrases throughout: 'plashing / of plastic bags', 'Lascaux-style genitals', 'Pencils turn charcoal, their erasers / harder nipples'. Partly a sort of a high-toned version of Alice Cooper's *School's Out for Summer*, partly a perverse but gorgeous lover's-quarrel-with-the-world anti-poem, this neatly enjambed lyric is, finally, a funny and moving paeon to fire. Like so many excellent poems, it communicates its own *ars poetica* even as it instantiates that position. Destruction, it says with quiet glee, is the linking concept of all language, ritual, human interaction, indeed life itself.

This annual prize is in memory of Winston Collins, writer and enthusiastic teacher of literature at the Universities of Cincinnati, Princeton and Toronto. The prize will perpetuate his remarkable talent for encouraging self-expression through writing.

Congratulations to the following graduates of Western's English Doctoral Program on their recent career successes:

Gregory Brophy, Assistant Professor (Tenure-Track) Bishop's University, Sherbrooke, QC (July 2014);

Michelle Coupal, Assistant Professor (Tenure-Track), Laurentian University, Sudbury, ON (July 2013);

Ann Gagné, Program Coordinator, Applied Arts & Health Programs, Faculty of Continuing Education and Training (FCET), Seneca College, Toronto, ON (September 2013);

Rebekah Lamb, Assistant Professor of English Literature and Victorian Studies (tenure-stream) at Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Academy, Barry's Bay, ON, associated with Redeemer College, Ancaster, ON (July 2014);

Daniel Martin, Assistant Professor (Tenure-Track) in Victorian Literature at Grant MacEwan University, Edmonton, AB (July 2014);

Suvadip Sinha, Assistant Professor of South Asian Literatures and Cultures, Department of Asian Languages and Literatures, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN (September 2014).



Please join us in congratulating Dr. Stephanie Oliver, Dr. Elizabeth Effinger, and Dr. Russell McConnell, who successfully completed their doctoral programs in the Winter 2014 term! Please see the attached poster for more information.

McIntosh Prize - On behalf of the adjudicators of this year's McIntosh Prize Competition for the best presentation by a fourth-year PhD student, Steven Bruhm is delighted to announce that **Zeinab McHeimech** is our winner. Her essay, "*Allahgraphy and Counter-veiling in Omar ibn Said's Life*," offers a bold and provocative reading of a text by a nineteenth-century African American slave which has traditionally occupied an ambivalent relationship to critiques of race and slavery in America. Zeinab insists that we read this text in relation to Said's Islamic faith and its use of the Quran, a reading that theorizes a very different kind of relationship to notions of bondage and servitude. In her close analysis of Arabic inscription, Zeinab offers an original and subtle thesis that combines attentive close reading with polyglot sophistication. Her delivery was eloquent and poised, lucid while being endlessly suggestive. The judges agreed that this was a splendid performance. Congratulations, Zeinab!

Congratulations are also due to our five other presenters, who helped to provide us with a remarkably stimulating and intellectually engaging day. It was an honour to watch these academics at work. And finally, thanks to our judges, Allan Pero, Thy Phu, and Pauline Wakeham, and for those of you who were able to come out to hear the talks.

SSHRC AWARDS

Thy Phu's new research project, "Vietnamese Photography and the Visual Narratives of War, 1954-1994," has been awarded a SSHRC Insight Grant of \$166,060.

Pauline Wakeham's research project, "Decolonizing Reconciliation: Indigenous Justice-Seeking in Post-Oka Canada," has been awarded a SSHRC Insight Grant of \$158,927.

PRESENTATIONS

Madeline Bassnett presented two papers: "Local Food, Godly Nation: Motherhood and Domestic Food Production in Early Modern England" at the Modern Language Association (MLA) conference in Chicago on January 10, 2014, and "Eat and Pray: Food and National Identity in the Diary of Margaret, Lady Hoby" at the Renaissance Society of America (RSA) conference in New York on March 29, 2014.

Ryan Gibbs (PhD 1) presented a paper "That's *My* Shakespeare': Canadian Canonical Discourse in John Murrell's *Taking Shakespeare*," at the Northeast Modern Language Association convention in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, April 5, 2014.

Derek Shank (PhD 3) presented a paper "Glossy *Pearl*: Transactional Hermeneutics in the Heterocosmic Text," at the 49th International Congress on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 9, 2014.

George Ramos (PhD 3) will present a paper on May 24 during the Canadian Society for Renaissance Studies Conference at the 2014 Congress of Humanities and Social Sciences: "Satan as Sisyphus: Absurd Heroism and Proto-Existentialism in *Paradise Regained*."

Rebekah Lamb will present a paper "'A Living House:' Everyday Life and Living and Sacramental Poetics in William Morris, George MacDonald, and the Inklings," at the *George MacDonald and the Victorian Roots of Modern Fantasy* conference at Magdalen College, Oxford (UK) from 13th-15th of this upcoming August.

33rd Annual Western Summer Shakespeare!

The Department of English and Writing Studies presents *Twelfth Night*, to be held July 8-12, 2014, outdoors in the University College Courtyard, 7:30 pm nightly. Tickets (at the door): Non-students \$15; Students and Seniors \$10. For more information please call 519-661-3403, or jdevereu@uwo.ca.

PUBLICATIONS

Madeline Bassnett has published "Dietary Virtue and Good Governance: The Domestic Politics of Lady Mary Wroth's *Urania*" in *Modern Philology* 111.3 (Feb. 2014): 510-32.

Moll, Richard J. "'Brutus the emperor': National and Heraldic Foundations in London, College of Arms L6." *Mediaeval Studies* 75 (2013): 109-45.

Writer-in-Residence 2014-15



The Department of English and Writing Studies is delighted to announce that **Gary Barwin** will be our Writer-in-Residence in 2014-15. Barwin is a writer, composer, multimedia artist, educator and the author of seventeen books of poetry and fiction as well as books for both teens and children. A winner of the 2013 City of Hamilton Arts Award (Writing), the Hamilton Poetry Book of the Year 2011, co-winner of the 2011 Harbourfront Poetry NOW competition, and recipient of the 2010 bpNichol chapbook award, the KM Hunter Artist Award, and major grants from the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council, Barwin's work has been widely performed, broadcast, anthologized and published nationally and internationally. His YA novel, *Seeing Stars* was shortlisted for both the Crimewriters of Canada Arthur Ellis Award as well as the Canadian Library Association YA Book of the

Year, and his picturebook, *The Magic Mustache*, was chosen as a "Best Bet" by *Macleans*. His latest book is *Moon Baboon Canoe* (poetry, Mansfield Press, 2014) and he has just completed a novel, *Yiddish for Pirates*.

Barwin's varied background includes a PhD. in music composition, a B.A., B.F.A and a B.Ed. For nearly ten years, he has taught middle school and high school. He has also taught writing at McMaster University and at Mohawk College, to street-involved youth, and at Offcentre Arts and Creativity Workshops. In Fall 2013, he served as the Young Voices eWriter-in-Residence at the Toronto Public Library. Born in Northern Ireland, Barwin joins us in the upcoming academic year by way of Hamilton, Ontario, where he lives with his family and a fear of the family car.

Barwin will be posting his office hours in late August. To arrange for a classroom visit by our Writer-in-Residence during 2014/15, please contact Vivian Foglton (vivian.foglton@uwo.ca).

The 2014-15 Writer-in-Residence position is made possible by the James A. and Marjorie Spenceley Fund and co-sponsorship by the London Public Library.

Student Writer-in-Residence 2014-15



2014-15 marks the third year of the Student-Writer-in-Residence Program, a unique initiative co-sponsored by the USC and the Department of English and Writing Studies. We are pleased to announce that **Steven Slowka** will take up the position of SWiR 2014-15. Steven has wanted to be a writer ever since he was a young child, when he wrote his first story about a rabbit wanting to share her bread with a sheepdog. While he started off writing short stories, he has found poetry a more natural and exciting medium in which to write. His poetry often features nature, personal surroundings, animals, culture, and travel to think through other issues and ideas. His poetry has previously been published in *PRISM international* and *Occasus*.

He currently works as a Residence Don in Ontario Hall, has been a member of Residence Staff at Western for the past three years, and will be entering his fourth year of the Honors Specialization in Anthropology. Steven is looking forward to assuming the role of Student Writer-in-Residence for this academic year, and is especially excited to work with partners from across campus - and the greater London area - to act as a sort of 'creative catalyst', helping to mentor and create opportunities for student writers to develop and showcase their work, and to make creative writing a bigger, more visible enterprise at Western.

EVENTS

Western Alumni will host a special event, "In the Footsteps of Dublin's Giant," to celebrate **Professor Michael Groden's** career achievements on the occasion of his upcoming retirement. The event will take place on May 22nd in the Dublin Lounge of the Irish Embassy Bar and Grill (6-8 pm), 49 Yonge Street, Toronto.

For more information please follow this link:

<http://www.westernconnect.ca/site/Calendar?view=Detail&id=125361#.U3O8GCiH-Sq>

The Department also extends **best wishes to Professor Stephen Adams**, who will be retiring this summer as well! Congratulations to Professor Adams for his decades-long service to the university, and his contributions to the fields of Poetics, and Modernist American Literature.

James Reaney, London Free Press columnist and son of the late Canadian poet, playwright and professor, Jamie Reaney, is giving a talk at the Central Library on June 9th titled "In Search of the Alpha Centre". Many of the students at the Alpha Centre in The Listeners' Workshop went on to very interesting careers in the arts, including director Keith Turnbull (pictured in the story) and playwright Allan Stratton. The epic readings of *Paradise Lost* and *Jerusalem* did indeed happen!

<http://www.lfpress.com/2014/05/11/my-london-alpha-centre-was-arts-project-of-yore>

RECENT EVENTS

Language Day - Western's Writing Studies program hosted 140 gifted Grade 5 students from the Thames Valley District School Board for a full day of writing and poetry workshops on 28 March 2014. See the Rogers TV video:

<http://rogerstv.com/page.aspx?lid=237&rid=9&gid=205210>

Thanks, especially, to Michael Fox for organizing the event, and also to the Facilitators: Michael Arntfield, Tom Cull, Michael Fox, David Heap, and Stephanie Kelly.

Workshop on Teaching English Literature - On April 29th, high school teachers from London and surrounding areas visited the department to participate in a workshop on Teaching English Literature. Thanks to Alison Conway for organizing this event, and to volunteers, David Bentley, Jo Devereux, Kate Stanley, Mark McDayter, Mary Helen McMurrin, and Donna Pennee, for attending and contributing.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Best wishes to Sarah and Scott Watkin on the birth of their first child, Nathan Scott, born April 30th at 6:37 pm, and weighing 6 lbs 9 oz! Congratulations to the proud grandparents, Shelley and Bob Clark.

Congratulations, as well, to Lisa and Jamie Johnston, proud parents of Brielle Elizabeth, born April 16th at 2:52 pm, and weighing 8lbs even! Brielle is the sister of twin siblings, Evan and Aubrey.



The **Graduate English Society** (GES) is currently accepting donations for its annual book/bake sale in September. If you have items you no longer need or want, please contact Madison Bettle (mbettle@uwo.ca) to arrange a convenient time for pick-up. The GES promises to find a proper home for all your literary gems. We sincerely appreciate your support and hope to see you in September.

Sincerely,

Your GES Co-Chairs

**CONGRATULATIONS
TO THE FOLLOWING STUDENTS
WHO SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDED
THEIR PhD THESES IN THE
Winter 2014 TERM!**

Dr. Stephanie Oliver

***“Diffuse Connections: Making Sense of Smell
in Canadian Diasporic Women’s Writing”***

Supervisor: Dr. Pauline Wakeham

Supervisory Committee Member: Dr. Manina Jones

External Examiner: Dr. Sneja Gunew (University of British Columbia)

Date of Defence: 31 January 2014

Dr. Elizabeth Effinger

“The Romantic Posthuman and Posthumanities”

Supervisor: Dr. Tilottama Rajan

Supervisory Committee Member: Dr. Steven Bruhm

External Examiner: Dr. Claire Colebrook (Penn State University)

Date of Defence: 26 March 2014

Dr. Russell McConnell

“Graphic Drama: Reading Shakespeare in the Comics Medium”

Supervisor: Dr. Thy Phu

Supervisory Committee Member: Dr. Steven Bruhm

External Examiner: Dr. Goran Stanivukovic (St. Mary’s University)

Date of Defence: 27 March 2014

The Department of English presents
The 33rd Annual UWO Summer Shakespeare
TWELFTH NIGHT



8-12 July, 2014: 7:30pm nightly

Outdoors at UWO, University College Courtyard

Tickets (at the door): Non-students \$15

Students and Seniors \$10

For more information: 519-661-3403 or jdevereu@uwo.ca

ALFRED R. POYNT AWARD IN POETRY

In the spirit of stimulating the imagination, promoting creativity, and fostering appreciation of English language skills and the art of poetry, the Department of English and Writing Studies is pleased to announce the results of its tenth annual Alfred R. Poynt Award in Poetry. This award is made in accordance with the wishes and through the generosity of the late Alfred R. Poynt of London, Ontario, and is presented in May of each year. The competition is open to students registered full time in any undergraduate program at Western University. The winning entry received a First Prize of \$250.00; the Runner-Up received a prize of \$100.00; and the three “judge’s choice” poems each received a prize of \$100.00.

CONGRATULATIONS

2014 Competition Winners

First Prize

Katharine O’Reilly, “On the Night Before Your Father’s Funeral”

Runner-Up

Robyn Obermeyer, “Market Blooms”

Judge’s Choice

Julia Cutt, “All That Glitters”

Evan Pebesma, “Mosaic”

Joy Zhiqian Xiang, “love song 2”

Judges for the 2014 competition:

Adrienne Barrett

Frank Beltrano

Karen Schindler



Friday, May 23rd - 10am to 12:30pm

This day for university and college faculty provides an opportunity to get a sneak peek at the season and some 'insider' info on the productions on this year's playbill.

Join Festival artists as they offer insight into the directorial and design concepts driving this year's productions. Capitalize on networking opportunities with your colleagues over lunch before taking in a matinee or evening performance.

Cost: \$50 +tax

Price includes talks by designers and other artistic personnel, lunch, one free ticket to the matinee of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and an optional tour of the Festival Archives.

For more information call 519.271.4040 ext. 2293,
email educate@stratfordfestival.ca,
or visit www.stratfordfestival.ca/facultyday for a registration form.