



# Western Arts&Humanities

*A monthly newsletter brought to you by the English and Writing Studies Department*

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## Welcome Back Everyone!

*Whether you were the type to take our brief holiday interlude to be highly reflective and contemplative, or the type to merely just sit back and relax for a few days, I hope this newsletter finds each and every one of you well rested and excited for the new year ahead of us.*

*In this issue of our department newsletter you will find that our year is already off to a great start. With news of several department accomplishments—ranging from theatre debuts to publication news—current happenings on & off campus, as well as a glance into the lives of current and past department students, this newsletter is sure to inspire student, staff, and faculty alike.*

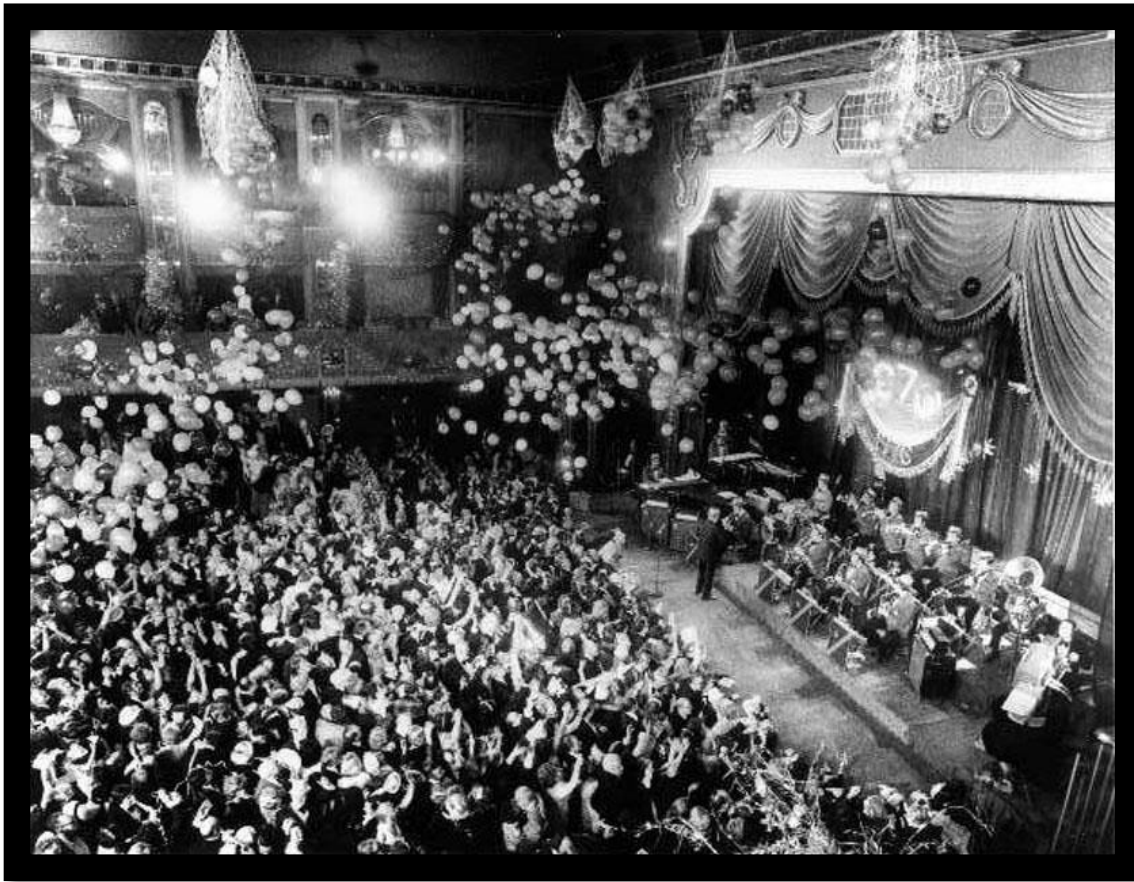
*Happy reading & Happy New Year!*

*Important dates to remember for the month include:*

*January 13<sup>th</sup> - Last Day to add a second-term half course or a second-term full course.*

*January 22<sup>nd</sup> - Last day to receive application for graduation: - In Absentia February Convocation.*

*January 31<sup>st</sup> Deadline to apply for relief against a final grade in a first-term course.*



## *Mr. New Year's Eve: A night with Guy Lombardo*

**Writing Studies Instructor's Play Makes World Premiere at Blythe Theatre Festival This Summer**

If you enjoy the countdown to midnight every December 31<sup>st</sup>, you probably have your required list of supplies for the celebration: a couple noisemakers, a glass of bubbly, someone to kiss when the clock strikes midnight...and of course, music. For nearly 50 years, music on New Year's Eve meant tuning in to Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians. Guy Lombardo owned New Year's Eve. In fact, the live broadcast of his show on December 31<sup>st</sup> was so popular that he was fondly referred to as "Mr. New Year's Eve."

Guy and the band cultivated a trademark sound early on that people loved almost as soon as they heard it. The band's sound was considered revolutionary at the time: the soft, mellow saxophones, muted trumpets, slow tempos, symphonic style always presented with top-notch musicianship.

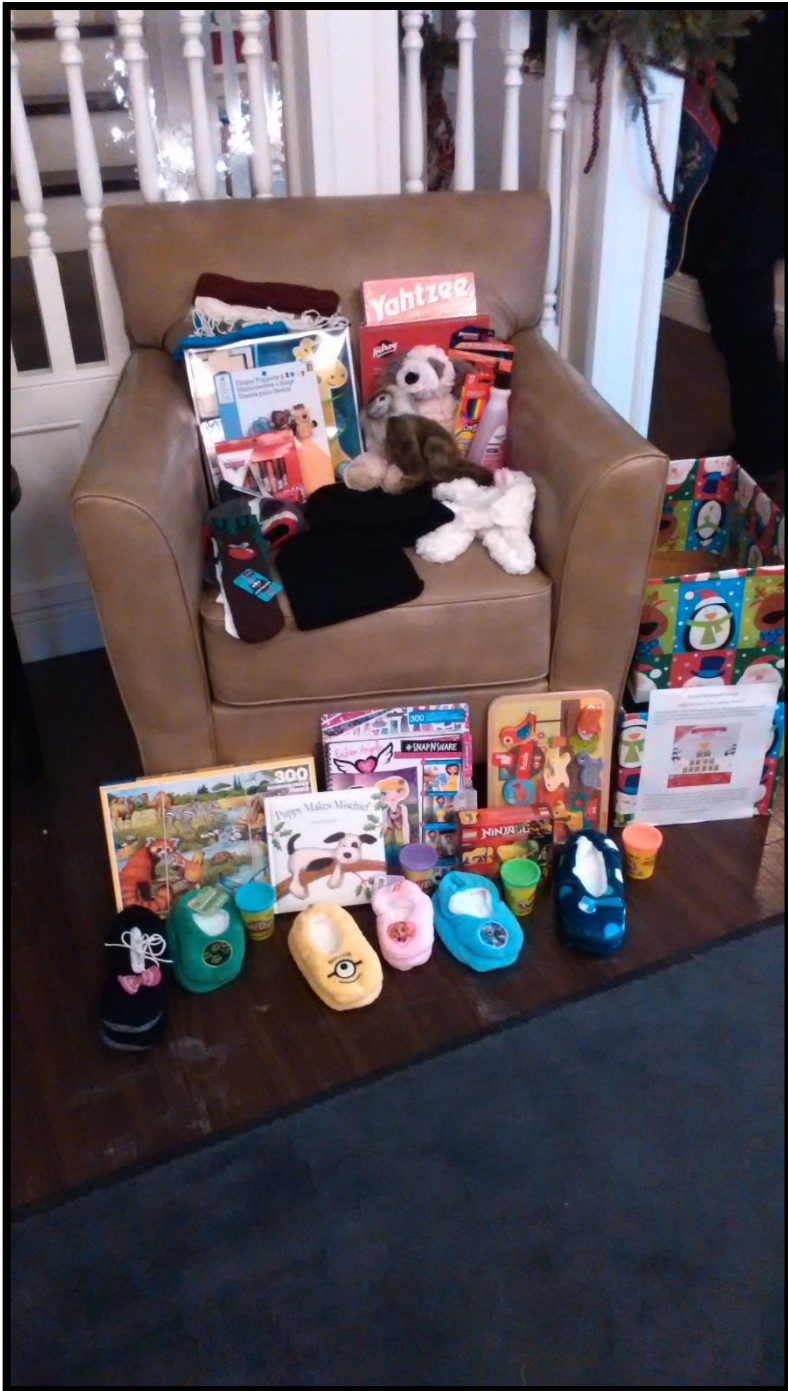
Guy's concerts were the most elegant of affairs. Imagine grand ballrooms filled with guests dressed to the nines, a fine suit—maybe even a tuxedo—or stylish frock. If you weren't sitting at your table enjoying a cocktail, you might be swaying across the dance floor to the sweet sounds of the band. On stage, the band, dressed in red tuxes, played feverously, while Guy Lombardo, dressed in black, baton in hand, gently swayed, dancing as he conducted.

This summer, this picturesque scene will be recreated at [The Blythe Festival Theatre](#), through the thoughtful and charmed works of Writing Studies instructor, David Scott. The production, nearly a decade in the works, will take the form of one of Lombardo's famous New Year's Eve productions. There will be performances with an eight-piece band while the "show" is "on air" and during "commercial breaks" the production will delve deeper into Lombardo's history and personal life.



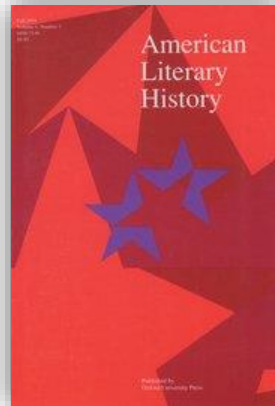
# Heartfelt Thanks

Many warm thanks to those who donated to our Ronald McDonald House Holiday Gift drive! The gifts were delivered on December 13<sup>th</sup>, in time to make it into the hands of some very special children and their families who needed a bit of extra love this holiday season. Wishing you all the best for a Healthy and Happy New Year!



# Department Accomplishments

## Publications



Professor Kate Stanley recently had her article, "Through Emerson's Eye: The Practice of Perception in Proust," published in *American Literary History*. The article can be read in full [here](#).



Professor Madeline Bassnett's book, "Women, Food Exchange, and Governance in Early Modern England," has recently been published. The abstract and purchasing information can be found [here](#).

## Competitions & Awards



While last month brought news of David Huebert's poem, "Colloquium: J.T. Henry and Lady Simcoe on Early Ontario Petrocolonialism," being shortlisted for *The 2016 Walrus Poetry Prize*. This month brings an update of triumph; late last month, it was announced that Huebert's poem had been chosen as the competition's winner. The competition's judge, Hoa Nguyen, who had this to say about Huebert's work:

"Sampling from two historical sources, "Colloquium: J.T. Henry and Lady Simcoe on Early Ontario Petrocolonialism" comments on colonial encounters in eighteenth-century Ontario. Commentary on contemporary life emerges from the removal and disfigurement of primary sources, putting avarice and empire on display."



# Keeping Up With Alumni

## Department Alumnus (BA'93) Meets 'Grape' Expectations



When model and soap opera star, Sandor Johnson (BA'93), decided he would try his hand at winemaking in his hometown of Tweed, Ont., he was immediately met by cynics. Wine industry insiders dismissed him and his plans as what they described as merely a senseless dreamer's vision of a winery. However, Johnson tried to bear them no mind, he knew what he wanted to accomplish and he knew his land was special.

The land he was to use in his ambitious venture has been in his family since 1836, through both World Wars and the Great Depression, and has seen incarnations as a homestead, dairy farm, and sand quarry. Drive an hour south through the rolling hills and green pastures and you'll find yourself in pretty Prince Edward County—an appellation celebrated for its many wineries, antique shops and beaches. But, drive an hour north through the hardwood forests of cottage country, and the landscape changes dramatically; you will find yourself in Bancroft, the mineral capital of Canada.

Now, at first thought, lying between these two areas seems as though it would be the perfect location to plant grapes vines. However, there is one major problem, typography and soil type are not the only factors in the complex equation of grape growing.

Tweed's geographical location is much farther north than any other winery in Ontario. Grapes commonly grown in regions like Niagara, Prince Edward County, or Lake Erie Shores would not last the frosty midwinter temperatures of Hasting County.

"What are you going to make wine out of, maple syrup?" critics chided. "Perhaps you'll make the best ever, Chateau du Pine Cone," others teased. "Grapes will not grow in Tweed," they said, "It is too far north. It is too rocky. The winters are too long. The elements too extreme. The grapes will suffer."

They were right. And they were wrong. The winters are long and cold. The grapes did suffer. But they grew. Eventually. And wouldn't you know, grapes that suffer make fine wine. Damn fine wine. Wine the likes of which you won't taste anywhere else in the world. And not just because of the rare terroir.



Finding the right grapes to grow in Tweed was a touch tricky. But, luckily, Johnson had the help of his brother—a graduate from Brock University's Cool Climate Oenology & Viticulture Institute and a veteran of both the Niagara and British Columbia wine scenes. Together, the Johnson brothers tried varietal after varietal with no notable success, until the day Sandor was flipping through the *Canadian Wine Atlas* and happened upon the page about Quebec heirloom varietals.

Heritage grapes like Marechal Foch and St. Croix that grew along the St. Lawrence had already proven their resilience in cold and rocky areas. They seemed like the perfect grapes to grow in Tweed. The only real issue was, even Johnson's industry seasoned brother, Robin, had no idea how to make wine with these grapes. He could make merlot with his eyes closed, but these grapes were different. The fact is, very few know how to use these grapes anymore; the knowledge has simply been lost.

Over the years the wine industry has become increasingly standardized. The same grapes, and more often than not, the same methods seem to be grown and used nearly everywhere grapes are grown. Years ago, unique varietals were literally pulled up and out of the ground to make room for sure-sellers like Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Where there used to be countless varieties of wine, peruse any LCBO outlet today and you'll find wines from all over the world made from the same 50-60 varietals. What this has led to is an extremely narrow knowledge of varietals outside of the most popular grape types.

But, whether the brothers were working with niche grape varietals or not, they knew the moment they released wine to public they would receive their final judgement from the industry. Their first release needed to be perfection—or as close as absolutely possible.

They took their sweet time, trying countless different combinations of grapes with various yeasts and barrels. "We were the *Breaking Bad* of winemaking," Johnson told the *Western News*, while grinning ear to ear. "We were just trying to figure it out and come up with recipes that became our winners."

Those winners, bottled in 2015, have been well received. Johnson's Marquette, in particular has garnered high praise, including a presidential endorsement from Barack Obama—who tried the

wine at a political fundraiser—as well as glowing reviews from Peter Ward—an author and wine critic for the *Ottawa Citizen* for nearly 30 years.

Doing what others deem remarkable, or even impossible, is part of the creative ingenuity that sets Johnson and his winery apart. He has embraced his surroundings for what they are, and proceeded cunningly. As you look over Potter Settlement and see the first and only winery in Hasting County, it is clear that Johnson's detractors and naysayers may have, not only slightly, but extremely, underestimated the grit that lay beneath his looks and land.

### **Alumni Update: Leigh Turner**

As you may recall, our last newsletter featured a story about English and Writing Studies Department alumna, Leigh Turner. Shortly after the newsletter was released, Turner was given an award for her remarkable professional success; she was one of fifteen Western alumni to be named Canada's most powerful women (Top 100 list), by the *Women's Executive Network 2016*.

Turner said this in response to her nomination and award—in which she was described as powerful:

"I love the word powerful being used for anyone's accomplishments—especially anyone who has had to overcome hurdles to get there. The bottom line is, it takes power and perseverance to make it along the journey, and celebrating that encourages more people to keep at it themselves.



# University News

**New Year brings with it A Chance for Change**



## **WE SPEAK: Faculty & Staff Survey 2017**

**Your Voice • Your Team • Your Western**

Later this month, the 2017 WE SPEAK Faculty & Staff Survey is set to run. This campus-wide survey, that will be available from January 24<sup>th</sup> to February 13<sup>th</sup>, will seek opinions about your day-to-day work experience within your Faculty/Division at Western as a whole. Faculty and staff will be emailed a unique link to the confidential survey, which will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

*You can read more about the survey on the [WE SPEAK website](#) and in the [WE SPEAK information sheet](#).*

## WESTERN UNIVERSITY

### **Indigenous Strategic Plan**

As you may have read in the December 1<sup>st</sup> cover story of [Western News](#), or in the December [President's update letter](#), in late November, our Board of Governors' and Senate have recently unanimous endorsement of the [Indigenous Strategic Plan](#).

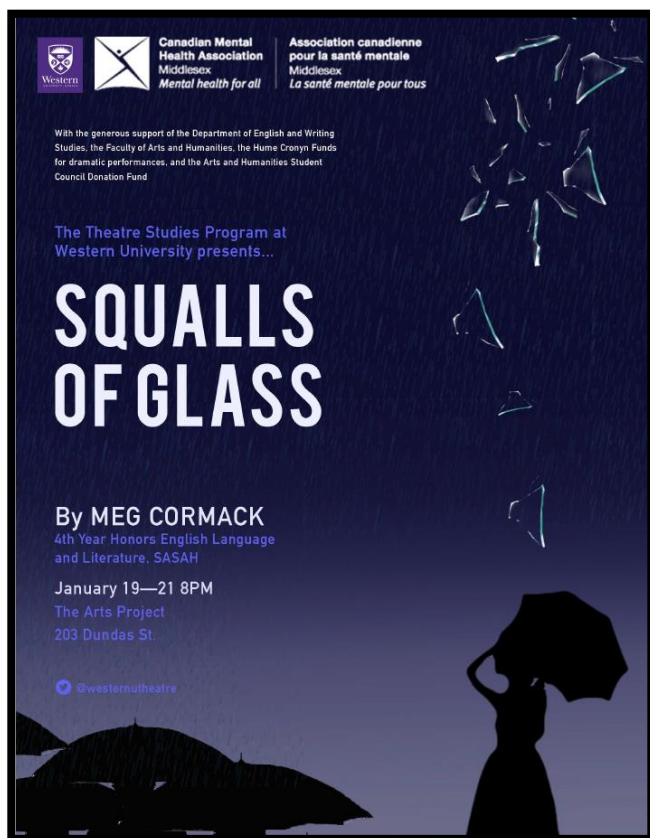
In the coming weeks a Provost's Task Force will be established with the mandate to recommend how the plan's goals are to be implemented. Western's success with the implementation will be determined in large measure by the level of engagement and support demonstrated by our entire campus community, working in partnership with Western's Indigenous students, faculty and staff, and with member of the local Indigenous community. Our collective work on this important initiative has only just begun.



# Events On & Off Campus

## Theatre Studies Presents “Squalls of Glass”

Watch *Squalls of Glass*, an original full-length play by Meg Cormack, 4<sup>th</sup> Year English Honors/ SASAH on Jan. 19, 20, and 21, 8PM @ the Arts Project (203 Dundas St.)! \$15 regular, \$10 students/ seniors. Members of a theatre company struggle to finish a musical in order to come to terms with profound loss. Their lives have been knocked askew, and their burdens begin to blur the faint divide between the real world and the psychological. A powerfully emotional piece on mental health, the hit one-act version was produced at the McManus Studio Theatre of London's Grand Theatre last winter. Performed and produced by Western students and alumni. Presented by the Theatre Studies Program at Western with the generous support of the Department of English and Writing Studies, the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, and the Arts and Humanities Student Council. All proceeds donated to Canadian Mental Health Association Middlesex.



## Poetry Cross Over Series Kickoff: A Literary Sonic Social



Join your colleagues in the Department of English and Writing Studies and across the Arts & Humanities for a full-throated, participatory evening of poetry and sound poetry activities animated by Canada Council Writer in Residence Margaret Christakos on Thursday, January 11<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-8:00pm in the IGAB Atrium (Arts & Humanities Building). Graduate and undergraduate students, faculty, and staff as well as community writers are invited and welcome.



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# POETRY CROSSOVER

A Campus Series of Literary Collaborations

Winter 2017

Western University

Animated by Margaret Christakos

2016/2017 Canada Council Writer in Residence



## • Kickoff •

**A Literary Sonic Social**

Wednesday, January 11, 2017

6:00–8:00pm

IGAB Atrium, Arts & Humanities

## • Boomerang •

**Writers Respond to  
the Annual Juried Exhibition**

Thursday, February 9, 2017

6:00–8:00pm

Artlab Gallery, Dept of Visual Arts  
John Labatt Visual Arts Centre

## • Whissper •

**Poets Interact with Quiet(s)**

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Time and Location TBA

## • Fast •

**Writers Speak Up About Food,  
Feast and Sustainability**

Tuesday, March 14, 2017

2:00– 4:00pm

Campus location(s) TBA

Contact Margaret Christakos  
([mchris63@uwo.ca](mailto:mchris63@uwo.ca))  
for more information.

The WiR program is co-sponsored by the James A. and Marjorie Spenceley Fund, the Department of English and Writing Studies, the London Public Library, the Department of Women's Studies and Feminist Research, the Department of Visual Arts and Art History, and the Canada Council for the Arts.



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## Student Profiles: Julia Vance

**Program:** English and Writing Studies (Year Four)

**Hometown:** London, Ontario

**Extra-Curricular Involvement:** Member, Off-Campus Board of First Years, Internet Commissioner, Art and Humanities Students' Council, Programming Assistant, Art and Humanities Soph Team

**Why did you choose Western?**

I was not enrolled at Western for my first year of university. When I got settled in at the initial school, I realized that it wasn't the right fit for me. I began struggling with mental health problems and eventually withdrew and took the rest of the year off. Once I returned home, Western was the only place I wanted to be. My dad is a professor at Western, and has been since I was three years old. I realized that I wanted to be in a place that was familiar to me and that I was comfortable in. What appealed to me most about Art and Humanities at Western was the size of the faculty. Because the faculty is small, I know almost everyone in my program and most of the students in my year. The small size of the faculty allows for smaller classes with the potential for more meaningful in-class discussions. I wanted to be housed in faculty that would make me feel like a "someone" and not just a number.

**What is one highlight of your Arts and Humanities experience so far?**

One highlight of my Arts and Humanities experience so far is the opportunity I had in third year to travel to New York City for the course *Reading the City: Representations of New York City in American Literature*. Not only did we visit historical sites that we read about in class and tour fantastic museums, but we also spent a lot of time exploring the city.

**"One of my favourite things about the Department of English and Writing Studies is the diversity of thoughts, opinions and perspectives that come together in class."**

**What are your plans for after graduation?**

I, like everyone else I know, have switched my degree and the plans for my future so many times during my undergraduate career that I have lost count. However, last year, I finally settled on something that filled me with the feeling of passion that I was looking for. After graduation, I plan on pursuing a career as an animal rights lawyer. My education with the Faculty of Arts and Humanities has given me the chance to grow and collaborate with a diverse group of peers that have opened my eyes to different ways of thinking and seeing things that I never saw before. The Department of English and Writing Studies within Arts and Humanities has taught me how to think critically about the world around me and has given me a strong foundation for my future in animal rights because of the ways in which I now view the world.

**What advice would you give to incoming Arts and Humanities students?**

Go to university with an open mind. You do not need to know exactly what you want to do for the rest of your life the minute you set foot on campus. Be open to loving courses that you thought you would hate and hating courses that you thought you would love. It's totally okay to realize that the program you enrolled in first year isn't the right fit for you. It is okay to go down a different path than you intended to when you first came to Western. Take courses that you wouldn't normally take. Be open to the idea that you might discover something new that you love even more than your original plan.

**What is the best thing about your department?**

One of my favourite things about the Department of English and Writing Studies is the diversity of thoughts, opinions, and perspectives that come together in class. The study and interpretation of literature really showcases the diversity of thought that the department and that this faculty, has: everyone comes in with a different background and a different perspective and five people can interpret the same text five different ways. This diversity doesn't indicate the weakness or failure of the text. Instead, it shows the strength, beauty, and impact of that text. It's fascinating to see how one text can have multiple meaning and hold true to every one of them. Literature means something different to every person studying it and that summarizes this department and our faculty beautifully.

# *Follow the English and Writing Studies Department Online*



Western English and  
Writing Studies

Theatre Studies



Theatre Studies



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Theatre Studies

The English and Writing Studies Department welcomes contributions from students, faculty, and alumni. **Do you have an idea for a future article? Do you have an accomplishment or event you would like to share?** Please send us your suggestions. **Do you want to share your thoughts on something featured in the newsletter?** Please send along your comments, reactions, and opinions. We also welcome photographs of alumni and department events. Please send news to [ncrowe4@uwo.ca](mailto:ncrowe4@uwo.ca). We would be delighted to hear from you!

The English and Writing Studies Department offers their thanks to all contributors and readers, and looks forward to bringing you more news from our vibrant department.



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