



The Literature Program

Texts & Technology

Literature/Language Alumni Newsletter -- Spring 2003

Hello folks,

The most exciting news of the season is Stockton's search for its 4th President. Since last spring when Vera King Farris announced her planned retirement, the Stockton Board of Trustees and campus community have been conducting a nation-wide search for her replacement. Four candidates are visiting the campus in January and February; then the Board of Trustees will make an offer. So keep your eyes on the newspapers. There should be an announcement in a matter of weeks.

Students and faculty in the Literature program are working hard, as usual. Scott Rettberg, who joined us last semester as Assistant Professor of New Media Studies, is teaching technology/literary courses to full capacity. We are happy to see our students welcoming Scott and these courses.

Stephen Dunn is back after a semester off. He is teaching the advanced writing workshops, and on January 31st he was pictured on the front page of The Press of Atlantic City, with an accompanying article about his thoughts on the New Jersey poet laureate controversy. He writes that efforts by members of the state legislature to abolish the post suggests that they think "poets are inherently dangerous." If only that were so: "It would presume we were being listened to." Read the story at http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/news/newjersey/013103POETS_J31.html

The following day, G.T. Lenard was featured on the front of The Press receiving a great big hug from Jerod Howard, one of 19 Literature majors who graduated at the Fall commencement ceremony. Read the story at http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/news/atlantic/020103STOCKTON_F01.html

Front page photos of Literature faculty two days running – pretty swanky!

In other news, Norma Grasso has recently been named Professor Emeritus, effective in the Fall of 2003. Norma will be retiring after next year. We will miss her and wish her well.

Last semester we held a panel discussion for current students during which four alumni introduced and chatted about their professions. Patty Hanahoe-Dosche, Pam Wirstad, Doug Skinner, and Nicole Pensiero presented advice to students about the job market post-Stockton. We had a good crowd and the speakers were informative and witty. The afternoon was well spent. We are planning a similar panel discussion for the spring term. It will feature alumni who have recently attended graduate school (or are currently attending). We hope to let our students know what they can look forward to if they continue their education past Stockton.

Last Fall we had two speakers visit in support of our electronic textuality interests. Shelley Jackson gave a reading. She is author of the hypertext classic *Patchwork Girl*, the recent Anchor Books short story collection *The Melancholy of Anatomy* and several intriguing Web works available at <http://www.ineradicablestain.com>. Nick Montfort spoke on hypertext issues; he is coeditor of *The New Media Reader*, to be released this month from MIT Press and author of *Twisty Little Passages*, the first book-length work on interactive fiction, to be published next year by MIT. More info on Nick is available at <http://www.nickm.com>.

Sigma Tau Epsilon, our chapter of the national honor society for English students, is off to good start. Last semester members went bowling with other clubs from around campus, trying to build connections. They also had a bake sale as their first fundraiser. This semester they are launching *The Spectrum*, a literary zine that will be updated bi-weekly. It is located online at <http://caxton.stockton.edu/spectrum>. The group is also sponsoring a seminar on American sign language towards the middle of this semester and will be doing volunteer work in Stockton's Free-To-Be daycare center beginning in March.

On the scholarly front, Debby Gussman has recently published two articles: "'Equal to Either Fortune': Sedgwick's Married or Single? and Feminism," in *Catharine Maria Sedgwick: Critical Perspectives, Past and Present*, Lucinda Damon-Bach and Victoria Clements, eds. Boston: Northeastern University Press: 2003, and "Republican Rhetoric and Subversity: Women, Indians, and Citizenship in the 1820's" in *Professing Rhetoric: Selected Papers from the 2000 Rhetoric Society of America Conference*, F. Antczak, C. Coggins, and G. Klinger, eds. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002.

Debby had the pleasure of teaching a Senior Seminar in American Autobiography in the Fall of 2002 to an outstanding group of students. The titles of their seminar papers are on her website: [http://caxton.stockton.edu/bookish/stories/storyReader\\$48](http://caxton.stockton.edu/bookish/stories/storyReader$48)

Lisa Honaker has just finished an article on *Treasure Island* ("One Man to Rely On': Long John Silver and the Shifting Character of Victorian Boy's Fiction"), which she has sent off to the journal *The Lion and the Unicorn*. She has also just finished a book review on Tessa Hadley's *Henry James and the Imagination of Pleasure*, which will appear in *English Literature in Transition* 46(4).

A weblog project on *Ulysses*, part of the *Ulysses* celebration in her Modern British Novel class, can be found at <http://caxton.stockton.edu/ulysses/>. Lisa writes "We had a party in that class to celebrate having read the whole damn book." At that party, Phil Reed also gave a reading (to much acclaim) from his newly self-published novel *Her Life Will Be Set to Music*. Go to <http://www.phil-reed.com> to find out how to obtain copies.

This fall Scott published a hypertext fiction, "The Meddlesome Passenger" in *Beehive* http://beehive.temporalimage.com/content_apps51/app_b.html and an essay, "Experiments in Irrational Exuberance: The Present and Future of Electronic Literature *or* How I Became E-Literate" in *Kairos* <http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/7.3/binder2.html?coverweb/rettberg/index.html>. He is guest-editing a *New Media Studies* focus issue of the *American Book Review*, out in March, and editing *State of the Arts: the Proceedings of the Electronic Literature Organization's 2002 Symposium*, also out in March.

Tom Kinsella (the author of this missive) is continuing to work on the long-term project for which he was given a sabbatical in Spring 2002. He is slowly piecing together the history of bookbinding in

colonial Philadelphia. He is co-author, with Willman Spawn, of "The Description of Bookcloth: Making a Case for More Precision," published in Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, 96:3 (September, 2002). He also had published a review article on 'For the Love of the Binding': Studies in Bookbinding History Presented to Mirjam Foot in the Age of Johnson: 13(2002).

Ken Tompkins is ably serving as our distinguished program coordinator. Ken continues to develop computer resources for our program. He is webmaster of nearly 450 weblogs created by students and faculty. He is experimenting with a range of interactive web-based programs, keeping our thinking about technology, teaching pedagogy, and literature innovative and up-to-date.

Here are a few sites you might want to visit:

The Program homepage: <http://caxton.stockton.edu/thelittprogram/>

Pictures of faculty (including an early January meeting in a local watering hole):
[http://caxton.stockton.edu/theLITTprogram/stories/storyReader\\$25](http://caxton.stockton.edu/theLITTprogram/stories/storyReader$25)

Student Work On-line -- various weblogs created as class projects (several are beginning to generate notice nationally and even internationally):
[http://caxton.stockton.edu/theLITTprogram/stories/storyReader\\$19](http://caxton.stockton.edu/theLITTprogram/stories/storyReader$19)

We are still hoping for comments from alumni on their Stockton Literature training and are looking for quotes for our Careers page [http://caxton.stockton.edu/thelittprogram/stories/storyReader\\$41](http://caxton.stockton.edu/thelittprogram/stories/storyReader$41). You may email Ken Tompkins at ken@loki.stockton.edu with your most quotable quotes. He's also the person to write if you would like to take part in the alumni panel discussions that are held each semester.

As you can see, we've been keeping busy. We hope you are all well. We'd love to hear from you, whether you're quotable or not. Our email addresses can all be found on the new webpages.

Best regards,

The Literature Program

P.S. Remember, if you change your e-mail, let us know at <http://loki.stockton.edu/~ken/litt/littmajors.htm>

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