Welcome to Stylus, the newsletter of the English Department of Saint Louis University. I took over the Chairing of the Department from Professor Sara van den Berg in 2012. Sara is a tough act to follow. A hugely respected scholar, for over ten years she has guided the Department to its present enviable position – a leading Department of English, nationally ranked, with a flourishing undergraduate and graduate program. When my colleagues chose me – a recently arrived Englishman, transferred from the banks of the Clyde in Scotland to the banks of the Mississippi – to succeed Sara, they took, I think, a considerable risk. Would faculty have to learn the rules of cricket? Would everything stop for tea at four o’clock?

In fact, in 2013, there was no time to play cricket and very little time for tea. Over the course of the past year, the University was thrown into what might, charitably, be termed an “administrative crux” in its upper management. Many members of the Department contributed to the sometimes fierce debate which ensued. I was very, very, proud of my colleagues who brought their analytical skills of argument, wit, and reason into play in the service of the University, as we debated what kind of institution we wanted to be. Now we greet a new President at SLU, and the narrator’s words in the final chapter of Jane Austen’s Mansfield Park seem appropriate: “Let other pens dwell on guilt and misery. I quit such odious subjects as soon as I can, impatient to restore everybody not greatly in fault themselves to tolerable comfort...”

As the chair of the Department, much of what passes over my desk, drops into my email inbox, or turns up in the mail is routine administrative stuff. It can be boring, annoying, distracting, vexing, worrying and (just occasionally) amusing. But roughly once a month, a spreadsheet arrives which is very welcome indeed. This is a print out of the details of donations that members of the wider SLU community – former students, faculty, and staff – have, generously, decided to make towards supporting our work in the English Department. (Continued on page 2)
A Message from the Department Chair (Continued)

Jonathan Sawday

I'm always gratified but also intrigued when I receive this very welcome news of support. It's heartening not just because these donations help us to do things that we wouldn't otherwise be able to do, but because they remind me that our work with students and our work within our discipline really does matter to those of you who have spent time with us. At a point when the value of a humanities degree has, in some quarters, been called into question, these donations remind me that former students still, I hope, continue to benefit from their time studying English at SLU. Inevitably, and being a relative newcomer to the Department, I want to know more about our donors: when were they here? Who influenced them? What was the Department like in their time? Above all, when there are so many worthy and high profile causes which people are asked to support, I wonder what prompted these individuals to think about us. It also reminds me that a University Department is more than just the sum of those faculty, staff, and students who are currently working here. Rather, there's a chain which links former generations of students in the past, to those with whom we're working in the present.

So, what do we spend the money on? Our operating budget – the funds which the College and the University makes available to us to do more than just deliver seminars, classes, and lectures – barely covers a proportion of what we do, let alone what we'd like to do. I say that not in a spirit of complaint. Money is tight, as it has always been. But donations to the Department help us to support students and faculty in ways that would otherwise be impossible. They help us to fund prizes for our deserving students, to help graduate and undergraduate students broaden their education through travel to libraries and archives, to attend conferences, to bring visiting scholars, critics, writers, and poets to St. Louis, and to promote the faculty's research. Every dollar that we receive is spent in helping the Department to be more than just a collection of offices in a building on Lindell Boulevard here in St. Louis. Your dollars help us to become a vibrant intellectual community, which is, in the end, why we are here.

Prompted by that spreadsheet, this year I contacted a few of our alumni, asking them if they'd like to contribute something of their memories and experiences of their time at SLU. Two former students sent me fascinating accounts of their time here in the 1950s and the 1960s. We've printed them below. I hope more such accounts will be forthcoming.

Almost every week, in the Department, there's some kind of special event: a poetry reading, a lecture from a visiting scholar, graduate students or faculty presenting their research as part of our monthly Textual Revolution series, a conference or a colloquium. The details are posted on our website. These events range from the highly specialized to broader topics of more general interest. They are open to anyone who has an interest in literature and culture – faculty, staff, students, and, above all, our alumni. I hope that we can welcome you to them in the course of this year and in future years.

Jonathan Sawday, PhD
Chair, Department of English

Walter J. Ong, SJ, Chair in the Humanities
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News from the Undergraduate English Program (Dr. Ellen Crowell)

As the director of SLU’s Undergraduate English program, I attend numerous prospective student and major fairs. And invariably I get asked the same question: “So...what can you do with an English major?” I usually reply by pointing out recent surveys of Fortune 500 companies that list strong writing, communication, and critical thinking skills as the attributes employers value most highly in prospective hires – skills English majors have in spades. I also talk about the way intense engagement with literature gives us an almost unparalleled intimacy with the innermost thoughts, feelings and worldviews of others. In this way, English majors cultivate a privileged vantage point on the complexities of human nature.
News from the Graduate Program (Continued from Page 2)

A more appropriate question might be, what can’t you do with an English major? Over the past few years, our department has capitalized on the varied interests of our engaged and creative student body, and a diverse and energetic group of faculty members. In addition to partnering with several interdisciplinary minor programs across the university—including Film Studies, Medical Humanities, and Women’s and Gender Studies—we now offer our students four distinct ways to complete the English BA. These four concentrations allow majors to engage deeply and variously with the discipline of English, and to expand their study of English outwards into other related areas of inquiry. With this greater freedom of choice and concentration, our major is expanding: in May 2013 we graduated over 50 English majors, who are now pursuing a range of academic and professional careers across the country.

In the Fall of 2013 the Department launched two new concentrations—Rhetoric, Writing and Technology and Research-Intensive English—to complement our already established concentration in Creative Writing. Students choosing to pursue the BA in English with a Rhetoric, Writing and Technology emphasis augment traditional literature courses with the study and practice of Rhetoric—the art of persuasion—from ancient texts to new media. The Research Intensive program is our department’s honors concentration: accepted applicants to this honors program work together in small seminars where they challenge each other to produce rigorous and critically engaged scholarship that prepares them for post-graduate study in English and related disciplines. Establishing these two new concentrations—ones that now stand alongside our vibrant Creative Writing Program—means that SLU English majors have multiple exciting ways to steer their own intellectual and creative focus while completing their degree.

And our majors, once graduated, move on to fascinating and diverse careers in a variety of fields. One graduate is now pursuing a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition at Purdue University; another has explored educational policy and has been appointed as a research fellow at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research; a third uses his skills in critical analysis as an Emergency Room surgeon; yet another hones argumentative skills learned in English seminars as a first-year law student at Yale; and a recent graduate is using his knowledge of image, symbol and narrative to pursue a year-long writing program at the Vancouver Film School.

This semester, we have revised the structure of the undergraduate major to make certain that students can complete coursework while still having freedom to explore the many new areas of research and inquiry our program offers. Our plans for the future are ambitious—including more research funds for undergraduate English scholars, new common areas where majors can meet and work, collaborative research projects between faculty members and undergraduate students—but with a student body so engaged and a faculty so committed, we know we are moving in the right direction.

News from the Graduate Program (Dr. Joe Weixlmann)

It’s a good time to be a student in SLU’s graduate English program. Our doctoral students now receive four years of full financial support instead of three. When one combines this level of aid with the streamlined pathway to the Ph.D. we introduced in 2011, we anticipate that five years will become the norm for degree completion, and an increasing number of our recent students are on track to graduate in four years. It is also worth noting that both masters and doctoral students have seen their annual assistantship stipends rise from $12,000 just a few years ago to $18,000 currently. These are all important steps towards helping students to complete the doctorate without incurring significant debt.

The quality of our incoming classes, as measured by entering grade point average and standardized test scores, has been steadily on the rise, and the geographical diversity of our student body continues to broaden. These talented students have found an increasing number of ways to showcase their achievements. It is now common for our doctoral students to enter the academic job market having published journal articles and book chapters, and having presented several papers at conferences, even though the funds the university and department have to support these activities are much more limited than we would wish.

Enterprise students last year organized a conference entitled “There and Back Again: 75 Years of The Hobbit” and followed that successful effort with an even more impressive one by attracting the 9th Biennial Conference of the International Association of Robin Hood Studies to SLU this fall. This conference featured speakers from the U.K., Australia, and across the U.S. Our students have also organized a series of reading groups that meet on a regular basis. They participate actively in SLU’s Graduate Student Association, in the English Graduate Organization, and they serve on various departmental committees. Their writing and instructional skills have led extra-departmental units to employ them as graduate assistants. These and other accomplishments have made our graduates competitive in the job market. As near as we are able to determine, our job candidates have, over the past decade, achieved tenure-track jobs at a rate above the national average for U.S. doctoral programs. We are in all ways justifiably proud of our graduate students, past and present.
Three stories about our research

The popular perception of research in a discipline such as English is of someone laboring in solitude with manuscripts and editions in a dusty archive. Maybe that’s why, unlike our colleagues in the sciences or in that most photogenic of disciplines – Archaeology (think Indiana Jones) – we rarely figure in Hollywood films. Well, yes, we do work with old (and not so old) books. But we also do a lot more. Here are three unusual stories about the research conducted by faculty over the past year.

First, Dr. Joya Uraizee travels to Africa to investigate the stories of child soldiers…

“Last year I was working on a new book, about the representations of child soldiers in fiction and film from Africa and Asia. I was examining memoirs such as Ishmael Beah’s *A Long Way Gone* and movies like Edward Zwick’s *Blood Diamond*. While most of my research and some of the writing was complete, I wanted to meet some of the children in East and West Africa who had been forced to fight as soldiers. My aim was to find out whether what I was reading about meshed with the realities of their lives.

I started contacting friends in academia in East and West Africa. After many emails and phone calls, I was able to set up meetings with academics in both Uganda and Sierra Leone, as well as with several lawyers, social workers and journalists. Most of these individuals (academics and non-academics alike) had some knowledge of, or contact with, reformed child soldiers.

In Uganda, I spent most of my time in the capital city, Kampala, on the campus of Makerere University. I was given helpful suggestions about the narratives written by and about Ugandan children abducted in the 1970s and 1980s by the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) – a militant organization operating in Sudan and Uganda, which has been accused of widespread human rights violations. Some of my contacts indicated that I should be questioning why only a few Ugandan children were talking about their experiences, and what kinds of socialization occurred when they wrote about their lives, while others pointed out that the only way to get accurate testimonies from such children was to spend time with them and befriend them.
I decided to visit Gulu, a small town in the north, where there were many children and families displaced by the war between the LRA and the Ugandan army. I took a bus to Gulu, where a local social worker showed me around. I interviewed several children and adults displaced in the war. Their conditions were squalid. Most were impoverished by their war-time experiences as well as their exposure to AIDS. They spoke to me about the deprivations they were suffering. Although the LRA is no longer a viable threat in Uganda, many of the families I saw in Gulu were unable to return to their homes.

On my return to Kampala, I made contact with a reformed child soldier, who told me about his time with the LRA when he was a teenager. It was a harrowing story. He had been kidnapped from his home in the north by LRA militants and forced to fight. He was able to escape after a year and made his way back to Gulu. With help from an American NGO, he was able to complete several years of high school. Eventually, he dropped out due to lack of finances, and is now a security guard with a local business. I am still in contact with him and am trying to help him find ways to fund his education.

I then flew to Freetown, Sierra Leone, in West Africa. I was curious about the stories written by child soldiers during the civil war in the 1980s involving Liberia. Charles Taylor of Liberia, and Samuel Doe of Sierra Leone, the main perpetrators of atrocities against children, had been apprehended soon after the war ended, and now the country was at peace. I was particularly interested in how the children, who had been forced to fight and commit horrible atrocities, were being rehabilitated. I began by meeting two professors teaching at Fourah Bay College, Freetown, who made arrangements for me to visit some camps for reformed children and interview journalists who knew about their situation.

Unfortunately, just before I was going to interview them, I got very sick and had to be hospitalized. The hospital took very good care of me, but I had to cancel all my appointments because I was exhausted. I was particularly disappointed at having to cancel my tour of the UN Special Court for Sierra Leone, and my interview with some reformed child soldiers.

I resolved to come back in a few years to follow up on these missed opportunities. As it happens, soon after I returned to the U.S., I was contacted by one of those reformed child soldiers and we are in regular contact with each other today.

Secondly, Dr. Ellen Crowell discovers a mysterious book case...

"In October, 2008, I was working as a research fellow at the UCLA William Andrews Clark Library in Los Angeles. One day, while toiling away at a project concerning Oscar Wilde and his posthumous legacy, I looked up from my table to notice, for the first time, a curious bookcase at the back of the reading room. Each top corner of the bookcase was inscribed with the initials 'OV,' which—given my single minded pursuit over last few weeks— I misread as 'OW'—Oscar Wilde. Thinking the case had something to do with the vast ‘Oscar Wilde and his Circle' collection of archives housed at the Clark, I filed this bookcase and its contents away in my virtual "to-do" list as a possible future research project.

When I returned to the Clark several years later with the express purpose of opening up the ‘OV’ bookcase, I learned that I was the first to have done so in over 50 years. This was a completely unopened, uncatalogued archive. And once I pulled the doors open, I realized that the library was sitting on a goldmine. This early twentieth-century glass-fronted bookcase contains an almost untouched archive of the publications and proceedings of a private London bibliophilic dining club, called The Sette of Odd Volumes. Formed in London in 1878 by prominent London bookseller and collector Bernard Quaritch, and in continuous operation from 1878 through the 1940s, the group’s name is drawn from book-collector lingo: individual volumes not paired with others in their ‘set’ were ‘odd,’ and thus less valuable than when united with their ‘brother’ books. By the mid-1880s, the Odd Volumes club boasted a distinguished membership of prominent booksellers, bookbinders, illustrators, poets, novelists, artists, entrepreneurs, and publishers—a diverse and at times discordant network of aesthetically-minded gentlemen whose overarching connection to each other was a passion for books. Their monthly dinners were also populated by distinguished guests. And as these untouched archives decisively demonstrated, one of the Odd Volumes’ most frequent, vocal, and esteemed dining guests was none other than Oscar Wilde.

Over the past two years, I have worked with the Clark Library to document, catalogue and contextualize the materials contained within this one-of-a-kind bookcase. My discovery led to an invitation from the Clark to curate an exhibit (running from October through December 2013) that opened up the Odd Volumes bookcase to the public for the first time.
Three stories about our research (continued)

This exhibit, entitled ‘Odd Volumes: Bibliophilia at the Fin de Siècle,’ showcases the Clark’s collection of over 1000 rare books, typed and handwritten letters, menus, invitations, original artwork, and early twentieth-century photographs chronicling the history of this exclusive gentlemen’s dining club founded on a love of book collecting. Wilde, who attended the Odd Volumes evenings at least six times between 1885 and 1892, seems to have been inspired by this odd collection of book collectors: many germinal ideas for his published works have their roots in these smoke- and wine-fueled evenings.

So, my initial misreading of the ‘O.V’ carvings on this neo-gothic mahogany bookcase was in fact a moment of illumination. Seeing ‘O.W.’ instead of ‘O.V.’ led me to open the glass doors of a secret archive no other Wilde scholar had touched.

Finally, Dr. Toby Benis explores the geography of Jane Austen’s novels…

“The term ‘spa’ derives from the name of a town in Belgium, renowned for its supposedly healing waters. Perhaps the most famous spa town in Europe is the city of Bath in western England. By the time of the novelist Jane Austen (1775-1817), successive waves of development had made Bath second only to London in the variety and scale of its social scene: by day visitors took the waters, shopped and walked the city’s public spaces, and by night they gambled and attended lavish entertainments in newly-built assembly halls and theatres. It was this frothy environment that captured the imagination of the young Jane Austen and provided the backdrop for Northanger Abbey, her first completed novel.

My current research project explores how Austen and her contemporaries conceived of social space. So, this past summer I travelled to the UK, to explore Austen’s Bath. Central Bath today looks, in many respects, like the town the novelist visited and later lived in. Its Georgian-era buildings are organized around the tidy geometric shapes of Queens Square, the King’s Circus, and the Sydney Gardens. Austen’s work, however, suggests a different Bath. The city’s public spaces disorient Catherine Morland, the seventeen-year-old heroine of Northanger Abbey, as often as they provide referents for social interaction. Genteel surfaces give way to social misunderstandings that threaten the all-important matrimonial prospects of her characters.

Working in the archives at the Bath Record Office, and at the Bath Central Library, gave me a new context for understanding Catherine’s puzzlement as she tries to navigate the streets of Bath, and its diverse yet stratified social scene. Bath’s city tax records and parish rate collection books from the 1790s and 1800s, for example, group residential units not by house number, but simply by street or neighborhood, suggesting a different way of organizing spaces compared to the modern city. I examined descriptions of a parish boundary marking ritual with elaborate illustrations of parishioners floating down the River Avon in boats, staking their claim to a section of the river by physically retracing its borders. What struck me was the complete lack of a graphic map. Instead, the processional route was written out in great detail, with references to trees, large rocks, and fences, along with specified resting points for ceremonial cannon fire and festive drinks.

I came away from my visit with an understanding of an environment very different from our own. This was a pre-GPS world in which one’s spatial position was understood apart from fixed categories of organization. This looser sense of relations might have served Bath residents well enough in the century before Austen’s era. But, her novels capture with particular clarity how such ad hoc arrangements sharpened the disagreements over characters’ status and financial resources in an England on the cusp of modernity, where old money, new money and the emerging middle class were jockeying for position not only in the national consciousness, but in the streets and squares of the cityscape.”
The Prison Arts and Education Program

Over the past four years, a number of the Department’s faculty and graduate students have worked to support the Prison Arts and Education Program. Dr Devin Johnston (English) and Dr. Mary Gould (Communication) describe the work of the program.

“When we arrive on Monday afternoons, the visitors’ center at Eastern Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center (ERDCC) is always quiet. The quiet might in itself seem surprising, given that this is a crowded, maximum-security prison, home to more than 2,500 men and workplace for 700 men and women. Officer Dean Cox greets us with a weary smile and a bit of conversation. On a good day his job must be boring, and so he seems glad of someone—anyone—who breaks up the routine. It’s a large room that serves many purposes: parole hearings, GED graduations and, of course, visiting days. Touchingly, baby seats and Scrabble games fill a shelf near the vending machines. A sign taped to each table reads, ‘No sharing food or drinks… No brushing arms or touching faces.’

A little before 3 p.m., incarcerated men begin to file in for our Inside Out Series, shaking our hands with warmth and a touch of formality. Several dozen are familiar faces; others are here for the first time. Our guest speaker chats with a small knot of men before the event begins. When everyone gets settled, there’s little in the way of whispering or rustling. A calm intensity fills the room. Many in the audience learn of a subject for the first time, witnessing the passion of a lifetime practitioner or the insights of an expert. Others, in the course of our discussion, reveal unexpected expertise: the audience has included a professional photographer, a graphic designer, a Naval engineer with an interest in quantum physics, as well as poets, novelists and visual artists.

Perhaps it is difficult to think of a prison as having an intellectual life. After an afternoon in prison, it is not uncommon to hear a speaker, or visitor who has joined up for the conversation, admit, usually on the drive back to St. Louis, ‘that was not what I expected,’ or ‘that did not look like the prisons on television.’ Michael O’Leary, a structural engineer from Chicago, experienced this sort of disorientation after speaking on the principle of least action. Reflected on the experience, he noted, ‘When my talk was over and several men came to thank me for coming, I was struck by the strange sense of shared purpose. In retrospect, it was obvious; ideas come alive by discovery… It was a privilege to be part of it.’

Speakers generally tell us that their time at the ERDCC becomes a frequent topic of conversation in the weeks following a visit. Likewise, the men incarcerated at the prison and the men and women working there tell us that they, too, continue the conversation long after an event has ended.

Raymond Scott, who works in the ERDCC library, tells us that ‘every event sparks interest and anticipation’ and that he sees an increase in interest in a topic after a talk. ‘People return to the library to read more about the topics and speakers. Often, I hear others discussing past events months later. The other day, for example, I overheard a conversation about August Kleinzahler’s poetry among guys in the library.’

Like Scott, Eric Webb also senses a palpable difference in the environment at the ERDCC: ‘for years, negativity and dread plagued the prison. Everywhere I turned, people complained about how miserable or tired they were of being stuck in an endless cycle. However, the conversations generated from the events and workshops provided through the ‘Inside Out Speakers Series’ produce a measurable difference in the attitudes of the people I encounter everyday, both staff and inmate alike, and transform this institution into a community.’

The Inside Out Speakers Series is now in its fourth year. Our first event was a poetry reading by August Kleinzahler. Since then, more than thirty writers, artists, musicians and performers have appeared before an audience of prison staff, incarcerated men, and community members. Many of these have been creative writers participating in the English department’s Sheila Nolan Whalen Reading Series and the Jean Drahmann Writer’s Residency.

The speaker series is part of the programming of the Saint Louis University Prison Arts and Education Program, which brings arts and humanities to prisons in Missouri. The mission of the program is to provide intellectually stimulating, educational experiences that foster human connection, an appreciation for the arts and resources for self-expression and personal growth. In addition to these bi-monthly speaker events, we facilitate workshops, including many led by English Department faculty. For instance, Paul Lynch recently taught ‘The Art of Persuasion,’ and Ruth Evans taught ‘States of Mind: Otherness and Mental Illness in Memoir and Literature.’

Our program brings together people who often exist in different spaces in the world, people who would rarely cross paths, much less engage in intellectual discussion. As we think and engage in dialogue as a community, there exists the possibility of breaking down the walls between those currently living on the inside and those on the outside.”
John Coyne, Class of 1959, remembers a remarkable teacher:

"Let me tell you what it was like to be in the English Department in the ’50s during the Silent Generation, at the time of the Beat Poets, when Gas Light Square was in its infancy, and everyone was on the road. I came to Saint Louis University in 1955 because of the Writers’ Institute founded by Dr. James Cronin. Dr. Cronin was the first person to tell me I could write. When you are seventeen that’s a very important question to have answered. It is because of Jim Cronin that I am a novelist today.

They closed down the Writers’ Institute after Dr. Cronin left Saint Louis in the ’60s. They closed it down just as colleges and universities all over America were opening similar creative leading writing programs, attracting students, making names for themselves in academia. That’s what is called Jesuit Logic. One of the first English professors I met on campus was a wise old Jesuit, Fr. Francis Yealy. I never took an English course from this Jesuit; our sole contact was informal and by chance. In the first week of my freshmen year we met on the quadrangle and he asked me about myself. Then he asked if I knew what Walter Pater had written. Well, not only did I not know what Walter Pater had written, I didn’t know who Walter Pater was.

Fr. Yealy quoted this line: ‘To burn always with this hard, gemlike flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life.’ And then he nodded—he had this great mass of white hair—and returned to his prayers, to his patrol of the quadrangle. But Fr. Yealy would see me from time to time, stop me in the quadrangle or the hallway of DeSmet, and ask, ‘Coyne, are you burning with a hard gemlike flame?’ I told him I was trying. The college—in those last years of the 1950s—was getting a whole set of new professors in the English Department. Fr. Ong had just arrived. Not having met him, we all thought, judging from his name, that he must be Chinese. Clarence Miller returned to Saint Louis, not as a student, but to teach. I had Clarence for Chaucer. And Clarence soon proved that I wasn’t marked out to be a Chaucer scholar, or any kind of scholar.

But all was not lost, because I met a writing professor, Dr. Albert Montesi, and thereby hangs a tale. I was one member of the first generation of Montesi students. There were others: Jim Doughterty, who went onto earn his Ph.D. in English and spent his teaching career at Notre Dame, and to publish *The Five-Square City*, which would go on to win the Catholic Book Award. The poet Phil Dacey was a student of Al’s, and then published a half dozen collections of his poetry. The McDonough twins, Peter and Tom, came from New York to the Writer’s Institute. Peter later taught political sciences at the University of Michigan and the University of Arizona and wrote a number of books, including *Men Astutely Trained* about the Jesuits.

Tom became a cinematographer who designed and photographed *Best Boy*, a documentary that won an Academy Award in 1979. His first novel, *Virgin with Child*, was published in 1981. Denny O’Neil, another student, is an authority on pop culture, a novelist, and comic book writer. He’s the one who had Spiderman quoting Norman Mailer. A few years later, novelist Richard Dooling, author of *White Man’s Grave* and other novels, studied with Al. Montesi was also a mentor to Paul Hendrickson, who teaches at the University of Pennsylvania and is the author of *Hemingway’s Boat*, the most recent of his many award winning non-fiction books.

All of Montesi’s students, however, did not become writers. Here’s a true story.

In 1966 I was driving a Land Rover north towards Addis Ababa, in Ethiopia. I was half a day up the escarpment, traveling across the Great Rift Valley, and I spotted a hitchhiker standing by a cluster of baobab trees outside a market town called Shashamane. I picked up the hitchhiker, of course, and it turned out he was a Peace Corps Volunteer and a Saint Louis University graduate—a math major. We started to talk about the teachers we had had in common, and I asked him if he had ever taken a course from Al Montesi.

He told me he had freshmen English with Al and went on to talk in detail about what he had written for him and what novels they read. We were really down in the flat hard belly of Africa, as far away as you can imagine from Grand and Lindell.

He fell silent at one point, and then he turned to me and said over the roar of the Land Rover engine, ‘You know, that bastard gave me a D.’

All of us, however far away from his classroom, were always trying to get an ‘A’ from Al Montesi. When Al Montesi judged our work, he brought to it the same critical sense he brought to a book by Henry James or the poetry of Yeats. You are up against the world of literature. And if you couldn’t make it out of a Montesi class, you couldn’t make it at all. And while he encouraged us, he had not lost sight of what was truly great, what was truly worthy.
He made me, all of us, feel and think that we, too, were part of this long process called literature. He did what all great teachers do: implant the subject matter into our hearts, into our bloodstreams; we were literature.

Al brought back to life the *Fleur De Lis*, the University’s literary magazine, and he organized Jazz Poetry Night. This was in 1957. Jack Kerouac had just published *On the Road*, and the Crystal Palace was having jazz poetry reading in nearby Gas Light Square. On campus we had the first of a half dozen poetry nights, all organized by Al Montesi. We were, to use Al’s expression, at the tip top of the world. We were, to quote Pater, burning with a hard, gemlike flame.

What mattered to Al Montesi, what mattered to Fr. Yealy, what mattered to Ong and Miller and Rogers, Sullivan and Jim Cronin, and all the members of the English Department, was not our future fame or fortune. What mattered was that we would learn to love literature as they loved literature.

Now I did not say this myself, but I could have. A graduate of Saint Louis University, an English major who did all three of his degrees here, came to Al on obtaining his Ph.D., and said, ‘Doctor Montesi, you have taught me everything I know, but I can’t remember one thing you’ve taught me.’ That is, in my view, a true sign of a great teacher. And A.J. Montesi, Little Al, as we fondly called him, was a great teacher.”

John Coyne’s latest book, *How To Write A Novel In 100 Days*, has just been published. This spring, his novel *Long Ago And Far Away* will be published.

**Ed Lathy, Class of 1965, remembers SLU in the 1960s:**

“When I think of SLU in the 60’s, I think of the old campus bordered by busy streets of Grand, West Pine, Spring, and Lindell. At that time what is now the Frost Campus was just being developed east of Grand Avenue with an underground lecture hall completed in my senior year along with an engineering building. A building or two, perhaps the Student Union, was being built when I graduated in 1965.

I really loved Fr. Maurice B. McNamee's course in Practical Criticism of Poetry. He chaired the English Department at SLU, and he was one of the editors of our Freshman English reader (*Reading for Understanding*) which we used in Mr. Paul’s class. My first encounter with my advisor in English, Dr. Al Montesi, came in a survey of American Literature. I remember being mesmerized by his biographical approach to teaching that class, his emotionally charged lectures on the lives of the many writers we studied. Fr. Walter Ong chaired my senior comp committee for the English Department major. He was intimidating, asking me about hubris, I remember, in the oral part of the exam, and some nineteenth-century novels that were on our massive reading list for English majors. Fr. Ong seemed interested in the fact that I was a commuting student, working in a grocery store, and playing jazz drums when I could. He seemed genuinely interested in what I took for granted as so much necessary drudgery when I couldn't play infrequent music jobs on weekend nights.

I’ve often been told by colleagues that I must have gotten a really good undergraduate education at SLU, ‘from the Jesuits.’ I’d agree, while noting that the vast majority of faculty were lay faculty. But the spirit of the place was Jesuit. Indeed, my years at SLU left me with a respect for order (even if in my case and career, a proverbial rage for it), along with meaning and the constant moral relevance of suffering humanity.”

Ed Lathy, SLU English BA in 1965, went on to get his M.A. in English from Washington University and then a Ph.D. in Humanities Education from the Ohio State University.
Some Alumni News

Thomas Farrell, B.A., 1966: "I am Professor Emeritus, Department of Writing Studies, at the University of Minnesota Duluth. I majored in English at SLU and received a Master's in English from SLU in 1968. In 2012, Hampton Press, now located in New York City, published the ambitious anthology, Of Ong and Media Ecology: Essays in Communication, Composition and Literary Studies, edited by me and Paul A. Soukup."

Tracy K. Lischer, M.A., 1967 and Ph.D., 1977: "I became a lawyer in 1984 and have practiced law in N.C. for 28 years. Just today, concurrent with your e-mail, I found in my desk one of the Christmas cards I regularly received from Fr. Ong who, along with Dr. Mandeville, was my advisor. What wonderful memories."

Dorothy M. Corrigan, B.A., 1975: "I am currently a provider on the Inpatient Psychiatry service of the STL VA hospital as a nurse practitioner. Also a member of the Ethics Consultation Service for the VA, my board specialties are in geriatrics and addictions."

Kristin Claes Mathews, B.A., 2004, and M.A., 2008: "My SLU education has guided me to support organizations that are committed to social justice. I have two degrees in English from SLU and have been working in communications in Chicago on and off since 2004, recently joining DePaul University in their Office of Public Relations and Communications."

Daniel Schoen, B.A., 2007: "When I graduated I moved down to Central America and taught English for a year and traveled. It was a great experience. When I returned home I worked in the public school system as a teachers' assistant and had great experiences working with children in the classroom. For the past few years I have worked in sales, and currently work in sales at a mobile event start-up in San Francisco."

Steve Sulewski, B.A., 2007: "I have used my English degree within the field of Catholic education. I do not have an education degree nor am I certified; however, I have been a high school sophomore and freshman English Lit instructor, a middle school reading instructor, and (for three years and counting) have served low income graduates in their respective high schools (talk about back door access all around the city!) - this includes networking with administrators and various departments, gaining me a unique perspective."

Jessica Courtway, B.A., 2011: "I'm in my third year of law school at Washington University. I have accepted a job as a litigation associate at Greensfelder, Hemker & Gale - a firm in downtown St. Louis. I'll start this fall after my last year of law school. It's a great firm and I'm excited to begin my career there."

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Future Alumni: Undergraduate vs Faculty Bowling!

Our Undergraduate English Club sponsors our annual undergraduate vs. faculty bowl-off. This event is a great way for students and faculty to get together, have fun, and show off their bowling skills at the Moolah Lanes. Unfortunately for the faculty, the undergrads won a resounding victory in the 2013 competition!

Pictured: Alyssa Weiss, Chester Yap 2015, Alex Gromacki 2016, Dr. Toby Benis, Nate Van Haute 2016, Dr. Jonathan Sawday, Dr. Paul Acker, Genevieve Knab 2013, Alexander Ocasio 2009, Dr. Joya Uraizee, Dr. Ruth Evans, and Colin Pajda 2013.
Some faculty highlights from the past year

Paul Acker’s co-edited volume *Revisiting the Poetic Edda: Essays on Old Norse Heroic Legend* was published by Routledge. Our award-winning novelist, Saher Alam, is working on a new book called *Them*, a collection of five interlinked stories following the lives of two writers through their early courtship and later into their marriage. Saher also works as the faculty adviser to the Department’s innovative on-line creative journal, *Kiln* (http://www.slu.edu/organizations/kiln/index.html). Ray Benoit continued his research on American fiction, working in 2013 on Thomas Pynchon and Flannery O’Connor. Toby Benis edited an issue of *The Wordsworth Circle*, devoted to papers in Romanticism presented at the 2013 MLA convention. Hal Bush’s latest book, entitled *Continuing Bonds: Parental Grief and Nineteenth-Century American Authorship* will shortly appear with the University of Alabama Press. Vincent Casaregola has been working on a new book on Hollywood’s representation of American business. Stephen Casmier’s current project is on the press, race, and African American Literature. Ellen Crowell was invited to curate the first ever faculty-curated exhibition at the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library in Los Angeles. Ruth Evans’s edited book, *Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex: New Interdisciplinary Essays*, was re-published this year. Ruth is the Executive Director of The New Chaucer Society, one of the world’s leading scholarly organizations for the study of medieval literature and culture. Rachel Greenwald Smith has completed a book, *Impersonal Feelings: Affect and American Literature in the Age of Neoliberalism*. Tony Hasler’s translation and edition of George Heym’s *Diaries, Dreams and Sketches* was awarded a book contract with Carcanet Press. When the book appears, it will be the first full edition of this major early 20th-century German poet’s diaries. Georgia Johnston won a highly prestigious Fulbright award, which will support her work in London in the coming year. Janice McIntire-Strasburg is researching the writings of the 19th-century Southwestern humor writer Joseph Glover Baldwin, a project she pursued last summer in the New York Public Library. Devin Johnston, as well as running our successful Sheila Nolan Whalen series, which brings creative writers to SLU to present their work, was appointed Poet-in-Residence at the University of Technology, Sydney, Australia. His fifth book of poetry, *Far-Fetched*, is under contract with Farrar, Straus and Giroux of New York. Paul Lynch published his first book, *After Pedagogy: The Experience of Teaching*. Nathan Grant continued to edit one of America’s leading academic journals, *The African American Review*. The final issue of the journal in 2013 was a Roundtable special section on *Characters of Blood: Black Heroism in the Transatlantic Imagination*, by Celeste-Marie Bernier. In the journal’s 45-year history, this is the first time that so many UK and US scholars have combined efforts on a single project. (Continued on back page)

To Our Alumni:
The English Department would like to include YOUR NEWS in our next edition of *Stylus*!

Name: ________________________________________________________________
Class of: _____________

Address: __________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

Email: ________________________________________________________@__________________ . ________

Please share your career news for Stylus: _________________________________________________________
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Are there events or program features that you would like to support (e.g., creative readings, student prizes, scholarships, research)? _________________________________________________________
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You are also welcome to email your responses, as well as any questions you may have, to english.slu@gmail.com.
Some Faculty highlights of the past year (Continued)

If the Department could offer a prize for the most imaginative title of a conference paper given by faculty in the year, then it would surely have been won by Nathaniel Rivers, whose “Traffic Jams, Fog, and Road Kill: Recomposing Attention on the Interstate” was given at the Western States Rhetoric and Literacy Conference at the University of Utah. Together with Paul Lynch, Nathaniel also edited a book The Object of Rhetoric: Assembling and Disassembling Bruno Latour which is now under review by a university press. Paul and Nathaniel were joint editors of the Kenneth Burke Journal, and together they are organizing a conference here at SLU on Burke’s work later this year. Jennifer Rust’s, The Body in Mystery: the Political Theology of the Corpus Mysticum in the Literature of Reformation was published by Northwestern University Press. Jonathan Sawday’s radio essay on the Renaissance magician, Dr John Dee, was broadcast by the BBC in the UK, and he was invited to give keynote lectures in Edinburgh, Scotland, and at the Royal Flemish Academy in Brussels, Belgium during the year. Jim Scott finished a screenplay, Vietnam Postscript, which adapts to film form a memoir by Prof. Timothy Lomperis of SLU. Jim’s script has been tentatively accepted for production by Media Fusion Entertainment, of New Orleans. A recent article by Donald Stump on the Elizabethan poet and courtier, Sir Philip Sidney, won the annual Gerald R. Rubio Award from the International Sidney Society. Anne Stiles, who runs the Department’s 1818 program, published two co-edited two books in 2013: Literature, Neurology, and Neuroscience: Historical and Literary Connections and Literature, and Neurology, and Neuroscience: Neurological and Psychiatric Disorders. Joya Uraizee is working on a book on children’s involvement in violent conflicts in Africa, Asia and South America, and she is editing Sweet Rice, or My Life as a Child Soldier, a memoir written by a reformed child soldier from Sierra Leone. Sara van den Berg edited a special issue of Religion and Literature in 2013, when she was also a Visiting Research Fellow on the History of Pain Project at Birkbeck College, University of London. Sara is in charge of local arrangements for the 42nd annual meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America, held, for the first time ever, here in St. Louis, with the SLU English Department taking a leading role in the event. Joe Weixlmann published a book, Conversations with Percival Everett. Phyllis Weliver, as well as being a visiting scholar at St Catharine’s College, at the University of Cambridge, also published a co-edited book, Words and Notes in the Long Nineteenth Century.

The Department hosted a number of visitors over the year. They included: Professor Renata Salecl of the University of Ljubljana, Professor Carolyn Dinshaw of New York University, and Dr. Michael Ward of Oxford University. Amongst the visiting poets and writers whom we welcomed under the auspices of the Sheila Nolan Whalen series were the short story writer Naama Goldstein (author of The Place Will Comfort You), the poet and critic Maureen N. McLane from New York, and the poet Jennifer Moxley from Maine.

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