

Department of English Newsletter



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
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Doctoral student and author Tenille Campbell speaks about her poetic project, “matriarch rising,” at the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre during a joint Literature Matters and Graduate Works in Progress talk in November. Tenille’s College of Arts and Science Alumni of Influence Award was also formally presented at this event. Photo by Kristen McEwen

2024-2025

Welcome to the USask English Department annual newsletter.

We are delighted to highlight some of the key events from 2024-25. Inside, you will find news of faculty research grants; reports of teaching awards and awards earned by students; profiles of accomplished alumni of our English literature and MFA in Writing programs; news from our undergraduate and graduate student associations; notable events including Writing North, the Millard Lecture, and Literature Matters; new books by members of the department; acknowledgement of the retirement of long-time faculty member Richard Harris; and a tribute to former faculty member Lewis Horne, who died earlier this year.

Thank you to MFA in Writing Intern Kyle Jansen, Alumnus Dorian Geiger, STM faculty member Michael Cichon, Professor Emeritus Doug Thorpe, and members of the Outreach Committee for their contributions to this newsletter.

— Outreach and Engagement Chair / Newsletter Editor Wendy Roy

Our Department’s vision is to be a place where many peoples come together to engage in mutually respectful relations and dialogues. We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is Treaty Six territory and traditional Metis homeland, and we acknowledge the diverse Indigenous peoples whose footsteps have marked this territory for centuries.

Recent Research Awards

Canada Research Chair Dr. Kristina Bidwell

Dr. Kristina Bidwell was awarded a 2024 SSHRC Reconciliation Network Grant, as principal investigator for the collaborative project “‘We’re Still Here’: Amplifying Urban Indigenous Stories in Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and St. John’s through Indigenous-led Partnerships.” The project aims to amplify stories of Indigenous communities that have been excluded from processes of reconciliation and, in response to Call to Action 65, expand public and scholarly understanding of reconciliation. It focuses on the challenge of understanding what reconciliation means for the Métis of the prairies and for Newfoundland and Labrador Indigenous peoples, both of whom were left out of federal processes of reconciliation. These communities have experienced efforts at assimilation and erasure in ways that are distinct within Canada and often not understood by scholars or the public. Both have called to be considered through an expansive reconciliation grounded in Indigenous voices, knowledges, and stories. Responding to these calls, the project will show how a practice centred on Indigenous storytelling can transform settler-centred narratives of belonging, ownership, and reconciliation in three distinct communities – the cities of Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and St. John’s. The Indigenous-led network includes four Indigenous community organizations; two Indigenous-led arts organizations; two universities; and a team of 17 storytellers, students, and scholars (including Dr. Jenna Hunnef), of whom the majority are Indigenous.



Congratulations to Kristina and Erin Ackerman, who won the ACCUTE 2024 F.E.L. Priestley Prize for the best essay published last year in *English Studies in Canada*, “(Re)mapping Métis Relationships in Cherie Dimaline’s *Empire of Wild*.”

Dr. Jerry White

Dr. Jerry White was awarded a 2024 SSHRC Insight Grant for “Non-Separatist Separatists: A European Tendency.” The project examines groups whose tactics and rhetoric resemble those of separatists but who are seeking *closer* integration into their nations. It has three strands: the Gaeltacht civil rights movement in Ireland, where the residents of Irish-Gaelic-speaking communities sought to shore up their place in Irish life as a whole; the Jura separatist movement, which sought a new

Francophone canton of Jura that would be separate from the majority-German canton of Berne, but which never sought to leave Switzerland and indeed relied on idealism around federalism as central to Swiss identity; and Catalan speakers in France, whose activists have long criticized any attempts to conflate them with the Catalan separatists just south of them and have sought instead greater recognition of their place in the culture of France.



Excellence in Teaching

Celebrating Teaching Award Winners

Congratulations to this year's teaching award winners!

Senior PhD student **Ian Moy** won the inaugural Lesley Biggs Early Career Teaching Fellowship for 2024. The College of Arts and Science prize, named for retired history professor Lesley Biggs, awards new university teachers \$1,500 to support a project in teaching and learning. Ian's project involved using Generative AI as a tool in the classroom to support students' learning. In his application, Ian wrote, "My approach to this challenge is to have students engage with GenAI in a structured, controlled way that allows me to assess their work with the knowledge of which elements are generated by AI and which are their own. It is my aim to use this opportunity as a test-pilot for the English Department of USask and assess how these ways of using GenAI are effective or not, and to provide a foundation for those who wish to replicate or expand on my ideas." As part of his fellowship, Ian taught a first-year class. He also received a SoTL Flicker grant of \$2,500 from the Jane and Ron Graham Centre for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. His work on the project was mentored by Ann Martin and Lindsey Banco.



Faculty member **Brad Congdon** was awarded a University of Saskatchewan Faculty Fellowship for 2024-2026. In this round, the award mandated nominees to reflect on and share issues related to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). The first year of the fellowship involved discussing key issues in EDI, Indigenization, and Open Educational practices among the cohort of six fellows, with the goal of creating or revising a syllabus to better integrate those principles. Brad revised his first-year courses, giving students greater freedom of choice in their assessments while still making sure that they met departmental requirements, and looking for ways to ensure accessibility of course materials and assessments, diversify the reading list, and (where applicable) provide local context for Indigenous issues. For example, in teaching *The Marrow Thieves*, Brad considered local experiences of residential schools, including through *The Education of Augie Merasty: A Residential School Memoir*, co-written by former faculty member David Carpenter. He also hosted a "potluck pedagogy" to share teaching

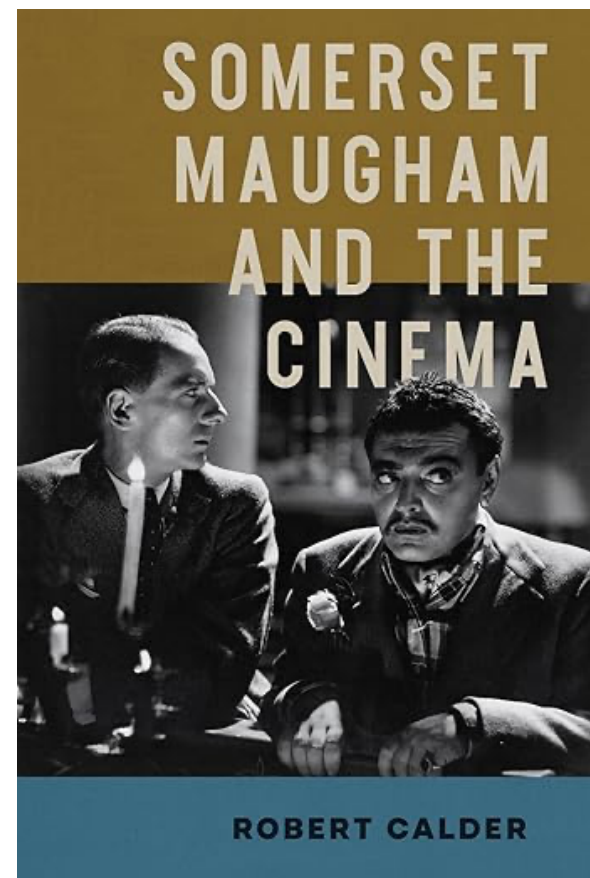
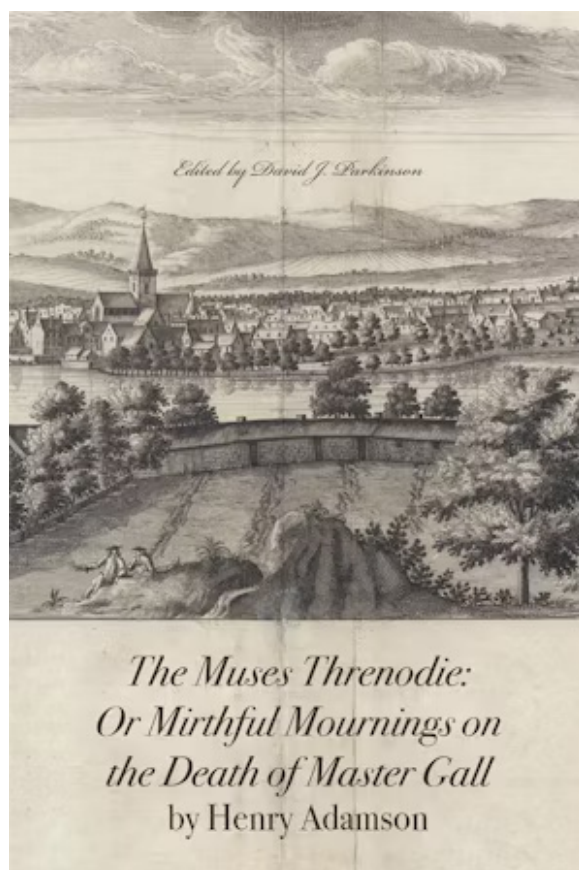
tips, strategies, and experiences, in the hopes of contributing to the overall teaching and learning community of the department. In the next year of the fellowship, he will work with his cohort to create an open resource related to EDI. This summer, he will work with RA Gideon Umezurike to conduct a landscape review of the department's first-year syllabi, to get a clearer idea of how we approach EDI with students at the introductory level.

Faculty member **Brent Nelson** won a 2024-2025 University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU) Teaching Excellence award. Selected by students, the award recognizes instructors at the university who have demonstrated enthusiasm, organization, and fairness in evaluation, providing exceptional commitment and support to their classrooms. Brent won for work in his Honours Seminar on More's Utopia and the invention of imagined worlds.



New Books

Congratulations to members and former members of our department who published new books in 2024-2025: Jerry White's *It's Nation Time: A Progressive Defence* (2024); Robert Calder's *Somerset Maugham and the Cinema* (2024); David Parkinson's edition of *The Muses of Threnodie*; and David Carpenter's story collection *Hello* (2025). Congratulations also to former sessional lecturer Betty Ternier Daniels for *Grounds for Murder* (2024); MFA in Writing sessional lecturer Meredith Hambrock for *She's a Lamb!* (2025), and MFA in Writing alumnus Tea Gerbeza for *How I Bend Into More* (2025).



Book Award Nominations

A number of people connected to the department have been short-listed for this year's Saskatchewan Book Awards:

- Jerry White, *It's Nation Time: A Progressive Defence*
- Cynthia Wallace, *The Literary Afterlives of Simone Weil*
- Robert Calder, *Somerset Maugham and the Cinema*
- Guy Vanderhaeghe, *Because Somebody Asked Me To*
- Betty Ternier Daniels, *Grounds for Murder*
- Jade McDougall (illustrator), *Growing Up Métis* (by Cort Dogniez)
- Adam Pottle, *The Black Drum*
- Alexandra Popoff, *Ayn Rand: Writing a Gospel of Success*

Congratulations! The award winners will be announced May 9, 2025.

Notable Events

Honours Colloquium

The 16th Annual Honours Colloquium featured two panels of original undergraduate research. The Honours students shared their ten-minute presentations at a gathering February 7, 2025, at the Diefenbaker Canada Centre.

The first panel, “The Haunts of Fools, Footballers, and Ghosts,” was chaired by faculty member Jenna Hunnef, and the second panel, “Postcolonial Identities,” by STM faculty Kylee-Anne Hingston. A packed crowd of faculty, fellow students, friends, and family were in attendance.

Warm congratulations to BA Honours and Double Honours students for accomplishing this part of their degrees.



Honours and Double Honours students presented to a full house at the Diefenbaker Canada Centre.

Thank you to student presenters, panel chairs, audience members, the Undergraduate Chair, and the Office Co-ordinator for their part in the success of this event.



Honours students Ben Jorgenson, Arin Bear, Becca Andelyn, Ollie Risling, Elisabeth Bauman, Maheen Abbas, and Jessie Warkentine at the 2025 Honours Colloquium. Photos by Brent Nelson

Notable Events

The 2025 Millard Lecture

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

PETER MILLARD LECTURE

Thursday, Jan. 30, 2025


3:30 pm

Admin C280
(CONVOCATION GREEN ROOM)

LIAM Ó LAOGHAIRE, QUI ÊTES-VOUS?: LANGUAGE, NATIONALISM, AND THE ODD BEDFELLOWS OF 1940S IRISH FILM CULTURE

The Peter Millard Lecture will feature a talk by Professor Jerry White about the early work of Liam O’Leary, today mostly remembered as the founder of the Irish Film Institute and a sort of grandfather-figure for Irish film culture.

The Peter Millard Lecture honours Dr. Peter Millard (1932-2001). Dr. Millard, head of the English Department (1985-91), was highly influential in gay and human rights. USask established the Peter Millard Scholarship (1994), Canada’s first university-administered scholarship for research in gay and lesbian studies.



JERRY WHITE

Other notable events in 2024 included talks by well-known writers from the community who have contributed to our department: Guy Vanderhaeghe in conversation with Kate O’Gorman at STM about his new book, *Because Somebody Asked Me To*, and Yann Martel, 2024 recipient of a USask Honorary Doctor of Letters, discussing the roles books can play as well as his next two writing projects.



Guy Vanderhaeghe. (Photo: David Stobbe)

Celebrating Guy Vanderhaeghe: Writer, Teacher



Yann Martel is an internationally bestselling author and a spring 2024 recipient of an Honorary Doctor of Letters from the University of Saskatchewan. (Photo: Pabitra Das)

Yann Martel on Writing and Making Sense of it All

The 2025 Peter Millard Lecture was presented by Dr. Jerry White and featured a discussion of Liam O’Leary, language, nationalism, and 1940s Irish film culture. The annual lecture celebrates Dr. Peter Millard (1932-2001), head of the Department of English from 1985 to 1991, who was influential in gay rights and human rights.

Research Seminars

The research committee hosted two Research Seminars during 2024-2025, providing an opportunity for faculty members to present their research-in-progress to their colleagues and to get advice and suggestions about how to improve their essays and grant applications.

- **November:** Kandice Sharren and Parastoo Tahmasbi, “Henry Colburn’s American Tales”
- **March:** Jenna Hunnef, “The Reanimating Spirit of Zitkala-Ša’s *American Indian Stories*”

Literature Matters: Literature in the Community

Our literature in the community lecture series, hosted by the Outreach Committee, featured seven fascinating events with faculty, emeritus professors, and students, most at Grace-Westminster social hall.

- September:** Brad Congdon “ ‘Holy Mackerel! What a Show!’: Spectacle and Spectatorship in Giant Monster Films”
- October:** Yin Liu, “Why Writing Is Like Death (in Early Medieval England)”
- November:** Tenille Campbell, “matriarch rising”
- January:** Brent Nelson, “Sustainably Don(n)e: Taking Care of Digital Literary Resources”
- February:** Lisa Vargo, “Listening to the Voices of Children in William Blake’s *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*”
- March:** Peter Robinson, “The Greatest Australian Poet Who Never Was”
- May:** Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan panel with Jessica McDonald, Kayvon Khoshkam, and Alyson Cook: “Concept, Adaptation, and Taking Liberties with Shakespeare’s Plays”

LITERATURE MATTERS: LITERATURE IN THE COMMUNITY SERIES

SEP 25

‘HOLY MACKEREL! WHAT A SHOW!’

SPECTACLE AND SPECTATORSHIP IN GIANT MONSTER FILMS

WITH BRAD CONGDON

Wednesday, Sept. 25, 2024
7:30 pm

Grace-Westminster United Church Social Hall
505 10th Street East
Saskatoon



Brad Congdon will be presenting this Literature Matters event.

When a character in 1933's *King Kong* first encounters the giant ape, he shouts, "We came here to get a moving picture, and we've found something worth more than all the movies in the world!" We all know how that works out for Kong. From the beginning, giant monster films have focused on the twinned themes of exploitation and spectacle. This talk discusses kaiju ("giant monster") films such as *Godzilla*, *King Kong*, and *Nope* to analyze how filmmakers have used monsters to embody historical, cultural, and systemic fears and anxieties.





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LITERATURE MATTERS: LITERATURE IN THE COMMUNITY SERIES


OCT 23

WHY WRITING IS LIKE DEATH (IN EARLY MEDIEVAL ENGLAND)

WITH YIN LIU


Wednesday, Oct. 23, 2024
7:30 pm

Grace-Westminster United Church Social Hall
505 10th Street East, Saskatoon



Pottery cremation urn from Loveden Hill in the collection of the British Museum.

What do some chatty inanimate objects, an Old English poem in Italy, a stone memorial in Scotland, a fictional sword hit, and a poem by Robert Browning have in common? They presuppose a metaphorical equivalence of writing with death, an idea I will explore with respect to various texts and textual objects mostly from early medieval England. We'll also consider the implications of this idea for us – not as writers, but as readers.



LITERATURE MATTERS / WORKS IN PROGRESS

NOV 20

MATRIARCH RISING

POETRY READING AND DISCUSSION BY TENILLE CAMPBELL

Wednesday, Nov. 20, 2024
4:30 pm

Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre



Tenille Campbell is an award-winning author of poetry and a PhD candidate in the Department of English.

In this dual Literature Matters: Literature in the Community and PhD Works in Progress event, Tenille Campbell (Dene/Métis) will read from and discuss the collection of poetry she is preparing for her creative PhD thesis in the Department of English. Her poems touch on themes of Indigenous feminism, aunthood, transitional roles of women, and self-love.



LITERATURE MATTERS: LITERATURE IN THE COMMUNITY SERIES


JAN 22

SUSTAINABLY DON(N)E: TAKING CARE OF DIGITAL LITERARY RESOURCES

BRENT NELSON
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, USASK

Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2025
7:30 pm

Grace-Westminster United Church Social Hall
505 10th Street East
Saskatoon



The last 30 years have seen an accumulation of open-access digital resources, but how sustainable are these resources?

In the year 2025, we find ourselves at risk of losing large swathes of our digital cultural heritage. The last thirty years have seen an accumulation of open-access digital resources, many of them built by individuals or groups of scholars, but how sustainable are these resources? What happens when funding for developing and maintaining them runs out and/or the faculty champion of the project retires or leaves the host institution? This paper will present the case of one such project, DigitalDonne, which is poised to be removed from the university servers that developed and supported it. But we have a plan! And we have a cross-sector partnership to implement that plan and to address the question of sustainability in digital scholarly resources.

LITERATURE MATTERS: LITERATURE IN THE COMMUNITY SERIES


FEB 26

Listening to the Voices of Children in William Blake’s *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*

LISA VARGO
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, USASK

Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2025
7:30 pm

Grace-Westminster United Church Social Hall
505 10th Street East
Saskatoon



William Blake’s *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* bring together word and visual image in a manner that suggests how complexity lies within simplicity. This talk will introduce Blake’s ideas of innocence and vision and explore how the voice of the child in “The Lamb” and “The Chimney Sweeper” serves as a vehicle for political and social protest. We will put on our “double vision” glasses and have some fun along with enlightenment.

LITERATURE MATTERS: LITERATURE IN THE COMMUNITY SERIES

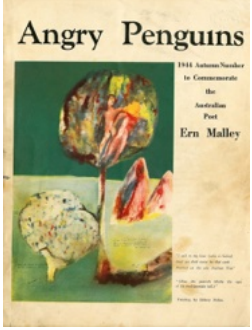
MAR 19

The Greatest Australian Poet Who Never Was

PETER ROBINSON
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, USASK

Wednesday, March 19, 2025
7:30 pm

Grace-Westminster United Church Social Hall
505 10th Street East
Saskatoon



In 1944, the Australian literary magazine *Angry Penguins* published a special number “to Commemorate the Australian Poet Ern Malley.” Inside, readers found 17 poems by a completely unknown poet, Ernest (“Ern”) Lalor Malley, and an introduction by the editor of *Angry Penguins*, Max Harris. Harris’s introduction tells the brief story of Ern’s unhappy life: he worked as a garage mechanic and insurance salesman and died of Graves disease aged just 25, his poetry unknown. Yet Harris declared him a “great poet,” “one of the most outstanding poets we have produced here.” What a story! Australia’s own John Keats! And then it all went wrong.

LITERATURE MATTERS: LITERATURE IN THE COMMUNITY SERIES


MAY 07

Concept, Adaptation, and Taking Liberties with Shakespeare’s Plays

A PANEL DISCUSSION LED BY JESSICA MCDONALD WITH KAYVON KHOSHKAM AND ALYSON COOK FROM SHAKESPEARE ON THE SASKATCHEWAN

Wednesday, May 7, 2025
7:30 pm

Grace-Westminster United Church Social Hall
505 10th Street East, Saskatoon



The 2024 production of *Hamlet* at Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan featured a Roaring 20s theme. (Photo: King Rose Visuals).

How do we adapt Shakespeare’s plays for a contemporary audience while staying true to their essence? Where is the line between interpretation and adaptation, and what are the ethical implications of changing a work without its author’s consent? You are invited to a thought-provoking panel discussion on the art, responsibility, and risks of reimagining the Bard today. Our discussion will take place in the context of the 40th season of Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan, which will feature *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *The Tragedy of Richard the II*.

MFA Notable Events

Writing North

Writing North 15 took place January 24-25, 2025, hosted by the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild and the MFA in Writing Program of the USask Department of English. This year's festival revolved around the theme *Coming Home*.

The featured talk by Canadian author Jane Urquhart, "Further Migrations: How Ancestral Family Rumours Become Fiction," explored the inspirations for her 2024 novel *In Winter I Get Up at Night*. In addition to being long-listed for the 2024 Giller Prize, Urquhart's novel was named one of the *Globe and Mail*'s best books of the year and is an international bestseller. Her presentation detailed remembered stories and childhood rumours, including the family lore of a Saskatchewan tornado that became part of her best-selling book. See 2025 MFA intern Kyle Jansen's [article](#) about Urquhart's talk.

Also featured in *Coming Home* were interactive talks with Lisa Bird-Wilson on prose and Sarah Ens on poetry, as well as a panel discussion featuring all three authors hosted by Rachel Laverdiere.



Jane Urquhart at Writing North 2025

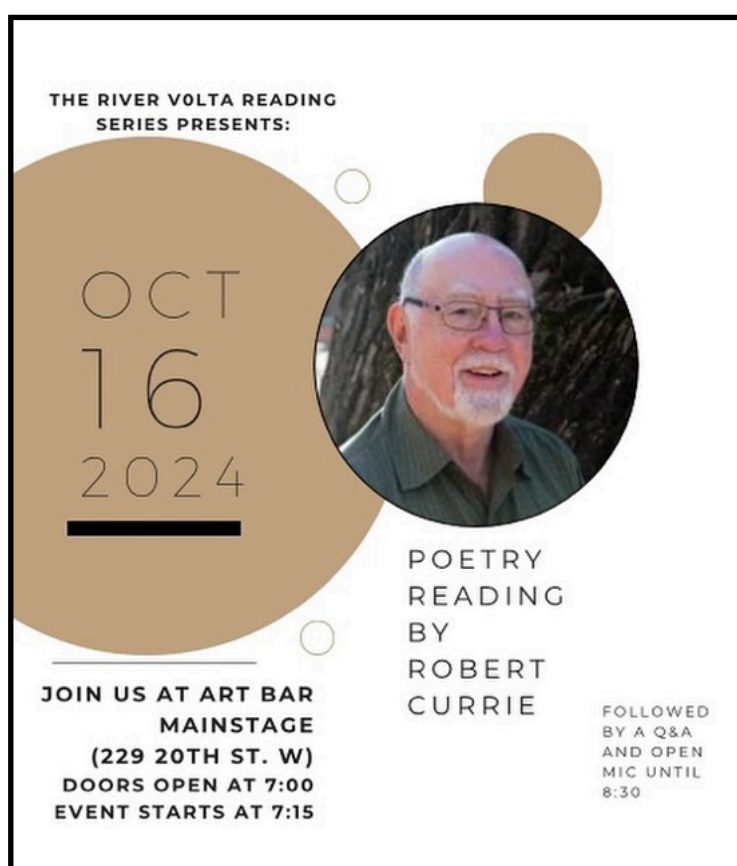
Wendy Roy photo

MFA Notable Events

River Volta Reading Series

The 12th yearly River Volta Reading Series was organized by MFA in Writing students Aaron Kurmey, Rachael Carline, Wren Mynhardt, and Carolyn Gibbons.

Featured artists included Robert Currie; Jerilyn Alderman-Hansson; Taidgh Lynch, Sara Krahn, and Josiah Nelson; Elena Bentley and Meredith Hambrock; and the 2025 graduates of the MFA in Writing Program. See the [article](#) by MFA intern Kyle Jansen on the March River Volta event.



Alumni Spotlight - MFA in Writing Graduates

Writing After Writing – *BTWN* Magazine

By Kyle Jansen

What does one do upon graduating with a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Saskatchewan? Is it more education? What about finding work? These questions, and more, can produce anxiety, not due to doors closing, but due to so many doors opening. One path might be to start your own literary magazine. Since the MFA's inception, several magazines have emerged from the USask MFA in Writing, such as *Untethered*, *Quagmire*, and *The Anti-Languorous Project*. Two MFA graduates, Aliza Prodaniuk and Delane Just, responded to the questions above by making the dream of starting a magazine come true. Recently, I spoke with one of the magazine's founders, Aliza Prodaniuk, and its fiction editor, Gunnar Ohberg, about their experiences.

Aliza and *BTWN* co-founder Delane met in the MFA program at the University of Saskatchewan, during the tumultuous beginnings of the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of the self-described “COVID Cohort,” the students were spread across the globe, only meeting for their first time upon graduation in 2022. But distance didn't stop them from getting involved in literary publications. Aliza and Delane became involved with the MFA in Writing River Volta Reading Series, also teaming up as editor and co-editor of the Department of English graduate-student-run magazine, *The Fieldstone Review*. The MFA in Writing is also where they met much of their current team for *BTWN*, and before this, they established a writing group that carried them through both personal and professional endeavours.

Aliza told me that many in the COVID Cohort knew they wanted to formulate a project at some point. She said the staff at *BTWN* enjoys writing alternative genre work, but found that few publishers are willing to take on genre-bending projects or works that push thematic boundaries. This provided an opportunity to create *BTWN*, and their desire to provide a space for alternate genre work has proven successful. Gunnar, the fiction editor, wrote to me about their steadily growing influx of submissions from year to year, writing, “My personal goal is to help *BTWN* solidify a reputation for high-quality and wholly original short stories on par with [other] esteemed literary magazines.” Aliza also stated that *BTWN* is receiving support from an original cohort MFA member who anonymously donates money towards a yearly literary award. This past year they also received their first publication grant from SK Arts.

So again, what do you do with an MFA in Writing? Well, you write. Whether it's in your home, on a plane, or in a café, what inspired you to sit down and create art doesn't need to be contained within a single place. With the MFA in Writing comes skills that you can take everywhere. Because once you're a writer, you're always a writer.

BTWN magazine can be found in a digital format at www.btwnmagazine.ca.



Alumni Spotlight - English Graduate (B.A.)

An Interview with Dorian Geiger

Tell us a bit about where you are and what you are doing now.

I'm based in Queens, New York, where I've lived for the past decade with my partner, Erica, our cat Gilbert, and an unruly jungle of houseplants. I currently work as an evening metro reporter at *The New York Post* and as a senior producer for *Al Jazeera English* in the mornings.

How did you get to this place in your life?

Journalism — and more broadly, storytelling — are my greatest passions. I see what I do as a solemn duty: informing the public through accurate, honest, and dispassionate reporting. I believe, without question, that an independent, free press is one of the essential pillars of a stable, functioning democracy. But the path that brought me here? That's a funny story. I grew up on a wheat farm outside Leader, Saskatchewan. In 2005, I started in the College of Agriculture at the U of S — partly from family pressure, partly from not knowing what else to do. I gave it my best shot, but within months I was in the Dean's office, contesting my expulsion. That detour led me to Open Studies, and eventually, the English Department in 2006. I'd always been a reader and writing came naturally. Once I found myself reading Canadian Lit and dystopian sci-fi, I got hooked — at first thinking I'd become a novelist.

In 2007, my calculus shifted. I began writing for *The Sheaf*, the iconic U of S student newspaper. I published my first article — a bad one — about the Toronto Blue Jays. Then-sports editor, Devin Heroux, now a *CBC* national reporter, edited it. It ran with the byline "Jordan Geiger." Copy editors may have been in short supply that week. In 2009, I became sports editor of *The Sheaf*, a role I held for two years. Those were some of the best and most formative years of my life. I was glued to our newsroom in the Memorial Union Building, bouncing between there, the English Department, and Louis' Pub, where I wrote and edited many articles — often over a pint of Great Western. I was lucky enough to cover a number of major sporting events like the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics, and I wrote about everything from trying out for (and being rejected by) the [Huskies' cheer team](#), to profiling imprisoned, and wildly talented local [Indigenous writers](#), and I once interviewed [Dan Akroyd](#) about aliens at an 8th Street liquor store.

I later took my first full-time job as a sports reporter at *The Prince Albert Herald*, then moved west to become editor-in-chief of *The Lake Cowichan Gazette* on Vancouver Island. I eventually returned to Saskatoon to report for *Metro News*, then moved to Halifax in 2012 to pursue a Bachelor of Journalism at the University of King's College. A year later, I enrolled at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, packed everything into my car, and bolted for New York. I haven't looked back since.

What do you remember most about your time as a student of the Department of English? Are there particular classes or professors that had an impact on you?

Essays, lots of essays! All kidding aside, it's where I found myself as a writer.

Professor Wendy Roy had the biggest impact on my journey. I landed in her Canadian Lit class after flunking out of Agriculture — late and uncertain — and she welcomed me with open arms, perhaps not realizing what a chore I'd be. She challenged me relentlessly and helped me grow from a mediocre writer to a polished one. She also sparked my interest in Indigenous literatures. Writers like Maria Campbell and Tomson Highway, especially *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, had a profound effect on how I understood my own identity as a Canadian. Wendy and I remain in touch. In 2016, she and her husband, Garth, visited New York, and when we got together for dinner, I had the surreal pleasure of introducing her to our former Mayor Bill De Blasio, who was at the same restaurant.

(Interview continued on next page...)



Interview with Dorian Geiger - continued

Then there's Terence James Matheson, who taught satire and dystopian fiction with such dry wit, he often had me, and his other pupils guffawing down the hallway. His classes — filled with Orwell, Huxley, and Tevis — stuck with me. Once, he brought a banjo to class. And of course, Saskatchewan author, Guy Vanderhaeghe, whose creative writing class taught me something I carry to this day: writing success comes down to years of rejection and persistence. Decades on, I see what he meant!

What about your involvement with Inspired Minds?

Inspired Minds was one of the most meaningful projects I've ever worked on — and it wouldn't have happened without Cory Cardinal. In my senior year, while interning at the Saskatchewan Literacy Network as part of an English Career Internship course led by Professor Kathleen James-Cavan, I was building a first-ever database of Indigenous writers in the province. One day, I opened a letter from the Saskatoon Provincial Correctional Centre. It was from Cory. He described himself as “a poetic street survival advocate” and enclosed haunting poems about homelessness, addiction, and generational trauma. I was floored by the raw talent. Cory had also enclosed *Creative Escape*, a published anthology of inmate writing — much of it strikingly good, and much of it by Indigenous men. I wanted to include Cory and his peers in the database, but his incarceration posed obvious barriers. That got me thinking.

I arranged a visit to the Correctional Centre, where I met Diann Block, a corrections worker who had founded *Creative Escape* as a writing contest. That meeting sparked a collaboration involving U of S English professors, students, *Sheaf* journalists, and incarcerated writers — and remains one of my proudest accomplishments as a student.

Others saw the project's potential, too. Professor Nancy Van Styvendale and her grad student Allison Piché helped turn that first workshop into a university class, pairing English students with incarcerated writers. *Inspired Minds* has since grown into a program in both Saskatchewan and Alberta.

I'm deeply proud of their work — and in awe of how far this initiative has come. It created space for voices often ignored by mainstream academia, and all of it began with Cory. The son of Residential School survivors, Cory was the most prolific writer I've ever known. A gifted lyricist and visual artist, he sometimes wrote on his own skin when he ran out of paper.

After his release, Cory remained prolific. His work nearly landed him a book deal and brought him into classrooms at the U of S and beyond. The late Wes Funk mentored him. Last year, a university student in the Netherlands reached out — they were writing their bachelor's thesis on Cory's work. Cory died in 2021 at the age of 38. He lived a turbulent, passionate life, and no one has had a greater impact on my career. I'll always be grateful to him — and to the U of S English Department for supporting his work.

Do you have advice for students in the department who are thinking of a career in journalism?

Absolutely! Get involved with *The Sheaf*. Go to news meetings, pitch stories, go to student press conferences, and play around with different mediums of storytelling like podcasting or photography. Journalism isn't just about writing. Figure out what makes you tick. Be curious. Talk to strangers. Read the news every day. Travel.

It's not a guaranteed pathway to riches — media is a feast-or-famine game. But if you love storytelling, there's no better job. If you're seriously considering a career in journalism, drop me a line — I'd love to chat.

Alumni Awards

Former English and MFA student **Cameron Muir** was awarded the 2024 [Copland Prize](#) in Humanities, in recognition of his studies in the Department of History.

MFA in Writing alumnus **Owen Schalk** won the 2024 *Humber Literary Review* Emerging Writers Fiction Contest, for his short story “Speaking in Regrets.”

Alumni of Influence Award

Tenille Campbell (Dene/Métis), who is completing a creative-critical PhD dissertation in the Department of English, was awarded a College of Arts and Science Alumni of Influence Award in 2024. Tenille is a previous graduate of USask, with a BA Honours in English. She is a professional photographer and an award-winning poet with two published collections: *#IndianLovePoems* and *Nedi Nezu*. Her work currently focuses on desire, joy, and matriarchy.

Tenille read from and discussed her PhD project, the poetry collection “matriarch rising,” at a combined Works in Progress / Literature Matters talk in November (below). She was introduced by her supervisor, Kristina Bidwell, and her award was presented by Dean Brooke Milne (right).



Kristen McEwen photos



Celebrating an Alumni Donor

Our sincere thanks to distinguished alumnus Sharon Butala, who has generously endowed a new scholarship, the Sharon Butala Award in Writing. An award-winning author of many books, Sharon attended the University of Saskatchewan, where her studies formed the foundation of her long writing career. Her work has been shortlisted for a Governor General's award three times: for *Queen of the Headaches* (fiction), *The Perfection of the Morning*, and *Where I Live Now* (non-fiction). She is an officer of the Order of Canada and has received a Saskatchewan Order of Merit.

The Sharon Butala Scholarship is intended for a student in the MFA in Writing program who has been out of high school for more than six years. The first recipient of the award is Robert Benz. During the 1980s, Robert was a bush pilot in northern Saskatchewan and the Territories. He holds a B.A. Honours in English (1991) and began his MFA in Writing studies in 2023. Since 1991, he has acted on stages across western Canada. He writes poetry and lyrical short stories, and he has recently had work published in *New Welsh Review*, *The Dalhousie Review*, *The Antigonish Review*, and *The New Quarterly*. Congratulations, Robert!



Student Association News

English Course Council

The focus of the English Course Council this past year was on creating opportunities for graduate students to connect with one another outside of the classroom, with the Council planning and hosting a number of social events over the Fall and Winter semesters. We organized an informal coffee and cards hour in December, followed by a Reading Week write-in in February. In March, Vice-President/Finance Haonan Yang arranged a tour of the Ukrainian Museum of Canada to emphasize our solidarity with Ukraine, especially given the deep historical and familial ties Saskatchewan and Ukraine have with each other. The Council's final event of the year was a potluck and trivia night, planned with and co-hosted by the English Undergraduate Society, at the GSA Commons on April 11. We thank everyone who had a hand in making these events happen and everyone who made the time to come.

The theme for the 2025 issue of the graduate-student run literary journal, *The Fieldstone Review*, led by editor-in-chief Jenna Miller, is COLOUR in all its complexity. This year, we offered a \$100 cash prize for the best submission.

Elections for next year's Council will be held in September 2025. More information about the election process will be made available then.

— ECC President Nicole Jacobson

English Undergraduate Society

I am incredibly proud of what the English Undergraduate Society has accomplished this year. When I first joined this club two and a half years ago, it had been decimated by the pandemic. Over the past two years, I have worked to expand our influence, building a community of English majors to make the most of our university experience by connecting with like-minded individuals. Last year, as Vice-President, I worked alongside Erin Paulhus, and this year, I worked alongside VP Communications Maheen Abbas. I am so proud of both these women. With their help, the EUS is now at an all-time-high: I am pleased to announce that we have more than filled our 2025-2026 executive roles, with seven talented incoming executive members.

This year, the EUS hosted many successful events and fundraisers. We began our year with a welcome event, meeting a new "crop of recruits" interested in joining the club. Next, we hosted our annual Meet the Profs event in October. Professor Brent Nelson won our door prize, and he only had to spend around \$40 on raffle tickets to do it. In February, we had many fundraising events — a bake sale, our annual book sale, and merch! We sold over 40 pieces of merch this year, and are very pleased to see people sporting their EUS attire. Finally, we ended with our second annual Humanities Formal, in collaboration with Write on USask and the Linguistics Students Committee. We hosted around 140 attendees, had a live performance from Buttercream the Band (special shoutout to their lead singer/our secretary Sam Tabalbag), and used decorations from and raffled off tickets to Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan. It was a phenomenal way to end the year.

I will miss the EUS dearly, and will always look upon my year as president fondly. Dare I say, the EUS is the best student group this university has ever produced.

— EUS President Becca Andelyn

Graduate Student Awards

Congratulations to graduate students who received Department, College, and University awards in 2024-25:

- Walter S. Buchanan Book Prize:
Cara Schwartz
- Dr. Edward McCourt Memorial Award:
Jasmine Redford
Cara Schwartz
- Ron George Graduate Award in English Literature:
Jolena Klymyshyn
- MacKenzie Scholarship:
Rahul Gautham Veliyil Edwin
- Edward McCourt Fellowship:
Bailey Schaan
- Susan Willigar Prize:
Tenille Campbell
- Kathleen Fraser Prescott Daykin Scholarship:
Robert Benz
Carolyn Gibbins
Shayne Metcalfe
- Elizabeth Brewster Memorial Scholarship:
Robert Benz
- Hantelman Humanities Scholarship:
Ethan Klein
Ava McLean
- GSA Award for Research Excellence in Humanities, Arts, Social Science, Law, or Education:
Hamid Yari
- Lesley Biggs Early Career Teaching Fellowship (inaugural award):
Ian Moy
- Sharon Butala Award in Writing (inaugural award):
Robert Benz

And awards from outside the university:

- Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship:
Gwen Rose
- SSHRC Graduate Awards:
MA Program: **Bailey Schaan, Erin Paulus**
PhD Program (continuing): **Jasmine Redford, Chelsea Belcourt**
- Digital Research Alliance of Canada EDI Champions Grant:
Liv Abram
- 2024 SSHRC Storytellers Challenge:
Liv Abram with Leah Alfred-Olmedo (UBC)

Undergraduate Student Awards

The Department of English was delighted to honour the 2024–2025 undergraduate award recipients on April 3.

The event brought together students, faculty, family, and friends to celebrate the achievements of award recipients.

Congratulations to all who won awards!



Students at Awards Reception. Front row: Karis Oscienny, Arin Bear, Maheen Abbas, Bailey Schaan, Elisabeth Bauman, Abigail Williamson. Back row: Jessie Warkentine, Becca Andelyn, Erin Paulus, Emily Zbaraschuk, Conall Wagner, and Ollie Risling.

Hannon Scholarship:

Maheen Abbas
Becca Andelyn
Elisabeth Bauman
Arin Bear
Karis Oscienny
Ollie Risling
Conall Wagner
Jessie Warkentine
Abigail Williamson
Emily Zbaraschuk
Emily Zepick

Reginald JG Bateman
Memorial Scholarship:

Becca Andelyn

JB McGeachy Prize in English:

Toni Elliott

Roscoe R. Miller Scholarship:

Emily Zbaraschuk

S. Bychinsky Award for
Excellence in Critical Writing:

Emily Zbaraschuk

Elizabeth Brewster
Memorial Scholarship:

Emily Zbaraschuk

Mary Lou Ogle Award for
the Study of Communications:

Ollie Risling

Hannon Travel Scholarship:

Becca Andelyn

Award for Excellence
in English Studies:

Bailey Schaan

Avie Bennett Prize
in Canadian Literature:

Maheen Abbas

Yuans Award
In Canadian Literature:

Erin Paulhus

Ronald and Mary Dyck
Memorial Award:

Karis Oscienny



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Undergraduate Student Highlights

Career Internship Poster Event



Students in the Honours Career Internship presented and explained posters outlining their projects at the Undergraduate Awards celebration April 3.

Photos by Wendy Roy and Sarah Powrie



Faculty member Jenna Hunnef with intern Kyle Jansen.



Interns Maheen Abbas and Jessie Warkentine with faculty member Jessica McDonald.



Internship co-ordinator Sarah Powrie of STM with intern Arin Bear.



Faculty member Kandice Sharren, MA student Erin Paulhus, and intern Becca Andelyn.

Undergraduate Student Highlights

Humanities Formal



English students who attended the second annual Humanities Formal on March 20, 2025, included (left) incoming and outgoing EUS executive members Nina Pham, Clara Nakoneshny, Becca Andelyn, and Maheen Abbas. Below, EUS secretary Sam Tabalbag sings with Buttercream the Band at the Formal.



Other News and Events



EUS executive members Jessie Warkentine and Becca Andelyn greet students at the English Department table at the fall 2024 orientation, held in the Bowl.

The new EUS executive for 2025-2026:



Co-Presidents: Conall Wagner and Nina Pham
V-P Communications: Calla Potter
V-P Finance: Kristine Jones del Socorro
Secretary: Carrie Poitras
Advertising Coordinator: Anna Selinger
Events Coordinator: Mel L'Hirondelle

Graduate Student Highlights

Writing North and Hannon Travel

MA student Erin Paulhus talks about her trip to England with a Hannon Travel Scholarship in summer 2024. Erin researched Shakespeare's plays, in anticipation of her MA project on Shakespeare in Canadian Literature.



MFA in Writing students gather at Writing North, with MFA in Writing Director Jeanette Lynes and English / Women's and Gender Studies faculty member Marie Lovrod. Front row: Rachael Carline, Tia Hendricks, Veronica Fabian, and Jeanette Lynes. Back row: Aaron Kurmeyer, Marie Lovrod, Jolena Klymyshyn, Shayne Metcalfe, Mikayla Marin, Carolyn Gibbons, and Douglas MacDonald.

Graduate Works in Progress Talks

A number of PhD students presented Works in Progress talks in 2024-25 as part of their doctoral programs. The talks were on a variety of fascinating topics:

Tricia Monsour, "Creating a Scholarly Edition of Jane Harvey's Gothic Historical Novel, *The Castle of Tynemouth* (1806)" (September)

Joel Salt, "'God suspends mee betweene Heaven and Earth': Liminality in the Prose Works of John Donne" (October)

Tenille Campbell, "matriarch rising" (November)

Amanda Burrows-Peterson, "Dangerous Power: Representations of Women and Magic in Middle English Romances" (February)

Elyn Achtymichuk-Hardy, "Sex, Sadism, and Snobbery in the James Bond Franchise: Interrogating the 'Bondian' Formula" (March)

Andrej Kis, "Adapting to Change: Rootedness in Thompson's *Lark Rise to Candleford* and Herriot's *All Creatures Great and Small*" (March)

Megan Solberg, "'What's the good of your writing?': Women Artists and Gendered Shame in Modernist Fiction" (April)

Welcoming New Staff

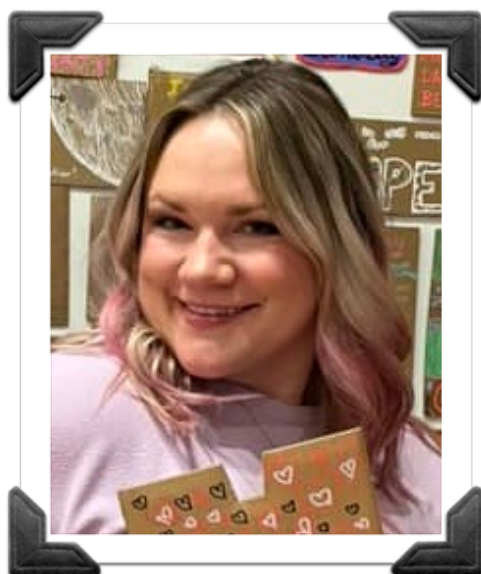
A warm welcome to Sarah Zdunich, who joined the Department of English as Office Co-ordinator last fall. Sarah came to us from the College of Medicine, where she had worked as an administrative assistant since 2017. She has a Diploma in Administrative Assistance and is currently a part-time student at USask, studying for a BA in the Department of Sociology. She lives with her husband, two sons, and their dog south of Saskatoon. We have appreciated Sarah's quiet confidence and competence in her often busy and complex job.

Sarah is on parental leave starting at the end of April, and during that time, we welcome back our former Office Co-ordinator Diana Tegenkamp. Looking forward to working with you again, Diana!



Sarah Zdunich

Inspired Minds



Jessica McDonald

Department of English faculty member Jessica McDonald continued her work in 2024-2025 with the Inspired Minds: All Nations Creative Writing program, part of the U of Alberta [Light Fires: Indigenous Prison Arts and Education Project](#). Jessica first got involved in 2020, and since 2022, she has co-facilitated a number of writing classes at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre, as well as recruiting and training volunteers, transcribing work for publications and awards, and sourcing books and other materials for the SCC library. In fall 2024, she co-facilitated a creative writing class with Darla Read, a Communications Officer with the USask Teaching, Learning, and Student Experience team.

As Darla notes about her experiences, "Some people are surprised when I say how much I look forward to going to the correctional centre every week to facilitate the creative writing class — a statement I know drips with privilege, since I can leave the jail after my visit, while the class participants cannot.

"We are all human beings, and we all seek connection. Reading and writing are great ways to connect with and learn from each other. I learn just as much in these sessions as the incarcerated folks, but that isn't why I am there. I am there because I believe in our shared humanity, and I believe that the most marginalized in our community are deserving of programming such as this: where for a little over an hour a week, they aren't seen as inmates but as the complex people they are. In a recent session, we asked the folks what was one thing they'd like people on the outside to understand about being incarcerated. One guy wrote that everybody has a story and asked people not to judge a book by its cover or even by one chapter, because they are just part of a very long story. I couldn't have written it better myself."

Darla continues, "More than once, we facilitators have been thanked for treating the folks at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre as human beings. That simultaneously breaks my heart and affirms the importance of this work. I've now co-facilitated two eight-week sessions; I am looking forward to a third this spring, and my long-term plan is to continue to volunteer and to help build capacity to ensure this important program continues as long as possible. If you would like to hear more, I would love to hear from you and tell you all about it."

Jessica notes that the program is regularly looking to recruit volunteers to facilitate creative writing classes: "You don't have to be a creative writer — just someone who is interested in the arts and wants to volunteer in the prison setting to read, write, learn, and partake in critical and intellectual conversations with the class participants."



Darla Read

Honouring Retirees

Richard Harris

By Michael Cichon

In June 2024 and after 51 years of teaching at the University of Saskatchewan, Richard L. Harris retired from his post as Professor in the Department of English. Richard earned his PhD in 1970 from the University of Iowa and came to the U of S in 1973 after working as Visiting Assistant Professor, University of Missouri-St. Louis, 1972 to 1973, and Foreign Lektor, Umea University, Sweden, 1970 to 1972.

Richard is the author of the monograph *Wisdom of the North: Proverbial Allusion and Patterning in the Icelandic Saga* (Cornell 2023), the editor of “A Chorus of Grammars”: *The Correspondence of George Hickes and His Collaborators on the Thesaurus linguarum septentrionalium* (Toronto 1992), and the creator and compiler of the online *Concordance to the Proverbs and Proverbial Materials of the Old Icelandic Sagas*. He has written more than 20 refereed book chapters, journal articles, and contributions to conference proceedings, and he has consistently attended and presented at national and international conferences almost yearly for the past 50 years.

Richard’s vocation has been teaching, and he happily boasts that he has spent his working life teaching the “Boys and Girls of Saskatchewan.” Over the course of his long career, Richard taught general linguistics, the introduction to English linguistics, and the history of the English language, as well as every iteration of first-year literature and composition courses from the year-long English 102 and subsequent 110 classes to the half classes that now permeate departmental 100-level offerings. Old English and Old Norse/Icelandic classes were his passion, and he taught these at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Richard also originated courses about Old Norse mythology and the heroes of the ancient north, which continue to be popular today. Students recall that Richard’s classes were a delightful blend of his genuine academic seriousness and his playfulness, both of which were often filtered through his slightly mischievous sense of humour. He was always welcoming when they visited him in his office, where he would engage in conversations on all sorts of topics, from Old English and Old Icelandic literature to Swedish fiddle tunes.

Mr. Harris (he insisted on ‘Mr.’ instead of “Dr.”, not holding well with rank or titles) was very generous to his students, and with his wife, Michelle, held regular gatherings at his home, Heorot, where there was much feasting and fine drink. Sometimes these gatherings included local musicians, and the evenings would be spent sharing music, great conversation, and every now and again, a game of Risk. Retirement will allow Richard more time with his libraries in Asquith and Spruce Pine, NC, time to read and write, and a long-anticipated return to Swedish fiddle music.

Sincere thanks and many congratulations on a well-earned retirement!



In Memoriam

Lewis Horne

By Doug Thorpe

We have lost a much-valued colleague with the death on January 25 of Lew Horne, at age 92. Lew joined the Department of English in 1971 and retired as a full Professor in 1996. His retirement years were spent in Eugene, Oregon, where he and his wife, Sandy, were sustained by their ever-growing extended family (four daughters and nine grandchildren).

Lew was born and raised in Mesa, Arizona, and completed his first degree at Arizona State U. After two years in the U.S. Army, served doing peacekeeping work in Germany, and another two years of teaching high school, Lew decided to pursue graduate studies at the U of Michigan, studying with John Arthos and R. H. Super. He completed his PhD with a dissertation on "Growth and Awareness in the Novels of Hawthorne and Hardy" in 1966. After five years teaching at Colorado College, Lew and Sandy and the first three of their daughters migrated north, and Lew joined us at the U of Saskatchewan.

From the start of his career, Lew devoted his energies as a writer to three different genres: scholarly essays, mostly on 19th-century fiction; poetry; and short stories. The C.V. he attached to his U of S job application chronicled his accomplishments in all three areas, a pattern that persisted. A multi-talented and determined writer, Lew achieved remarkable success publishing in a wide variety of outlets. His scholarly articles appeared in the best journals (*Studies in the Novel*, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, *Dickens Studies Annual*) and typically featured a close reading of literary texts, carefully nuanced in their attention to larger issues of theme and genre and particular instances of fictional technique. He studied both canonical and less well-known texts, as in his analysis of the generic blend of tragedy and melodrama in Wilkie Collins' *No Name*.

Lew's creative work appeared in a broad range of journals and magazines, both American (*Ascent*, *Georgia Review*, *Southern Humanities Review*, *Connecticut Review*) and Canadian (*The Dalhousie Review*, *University of Windsor Review*, *The Fiddlehead*, *Ontario Review*). A selection of his poems was published in Saskatoon by Thistledown Press in 1982 as *The Seventh Day*. Two of his stories were republished in influential American anthologies, one in the 1974 edition of *Best American Short Stories* and another in the 1987 edition of *Prize Stories: The O. Henry Awards*. Lew's stories followed the north-south axis that marked his career, both in subject matter and place of publication. One story, "What Do Ducks Do in Winter," is set in Saskatoon in late winter, with the ice-covered landscape functioning as both thematic motif and driver of plot. This story first appeared in an American journal, *Ascent*, then was re-published in Geoff Ursell's 1982 *Saskatchewan Gold: 25 Stories of the New West* (Coteau Books). Eleven years later, Lew made it the title story of an anthology published by an American publisher, *What Do Ducks Do in Winter? And Other Western Stories* (Signature Books, 1993). The use of the term "Western" values region over nationality and points to a continuity of experience that Lew saw in his life on both sides of the border.

Speaking personally, I would like to pay tribute to Lew's practice as a teacher. In the summer of 1972, I had just finished first year and still had no idea what to major in. When a friend heard of my interest in 19th-century literature, he noted, "they've got a new guy doing the Victorian course and he's really good." So that September I showed up in Lew's class, and that experience, more than any other, determined my future direction. Lew was a provocative teacher, articulating key ideas with clarity and yet probing larger issues. I was fascinated by the way he organized the readings in thematic clusters, so that an author was presented multiple times, re-positioned in fresh contexts, always juxtaposed against surprising companion texts. Some of the ideas sown in that course sprouted later in my PhD dissertation research. Apart from the content of the course, Lew's manner as a teacher was enormously influential. Years later, when I was teaching, I found myself continually drawing on methods that Lew had modelled. I was also fortunate to have Lew as a peer observer of my teaching. Lew was the most perceptive observer I ever had, and the most helpful mentor, offering practical advice on how to use one's voice, frame ideas, offer student feedback – in short, how to sustain the best persona as a teacher. Long after Lew left our university, I still found myself being mindful of his advice.

Colleagues will remember Lew as a modest man who listened attentively in meetings but rarely spoke. He was not a strident presence, but all who worked closely with him knew the depth and the range of his thinking. He was also the only colleague I knew who never applied for a sabbatical. When I asked him about that, he said simply that he enjoyed teaching and found Saskatoon a congenial place in which to write. We were fortunate to have him with us for that quarter century, and his writings, together with memories of his presence, will help sustain those of us who knew him.



Photo by Ron Marken