

# The Reavis Newsletter

Volume 46, Issue 1, Winter 2012 - 2013

## Department of English Northern Illinois University

### From the Chair

Amy Levin

Welcome to the *Reavis Newsletter*. Since I became chair on July 1, we have experienced a great deal of excitement! Physical changes include a new look for the undergraduate English suite and a roof replacement for Reavis Hall. Programmatic changes are occurring as well. Phil Eubanks left the chair's office after five successful years; Kathleen Renk and Betty Birner stepped down as undergraduate and graduate studies directors. New faces in departmental administration include Mark Van Wiene, director of graduate studies, and Brad Peters, director of undergraduate studies. Michael Day continues as our nationally recognized director of first-year composition. The new team is working on an undergraduate certificate in writing, changes to the teacher certification program to accommodate new state regulations, a review of the graduate admissions process, and improved strategies for recruitment and retention. To keep up with us, please "friend" the NIU English Department Facebook page.

### Bob Self Recognized With College Award

On October 12, retired professor Robert Self received a Distinguished Faculty Award from the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. Every year, this award recognizes five or six faculty members who are known for their research, engagement with students, and commitment to the institution.

While at NIU, Self published two books on film director Robert Altman; was instrumental in developing our outstanding film and literature curriculum; and served as director of the freshman English program, director of graduate studies in English, and associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. Under his supervision, NIU became one of the first universities to commit to using computers for first-year writing. Many current and former



students also remember him as a founder of the media and culture summer program in Ireland.

Summarizing the joys of his career at NIU, Self commented, "My students and my colleagues here have been great sources of inspiration and insight and support. They have helped to fulfill and to sustain the ideals that carried me into the field of college teaching in the first place."

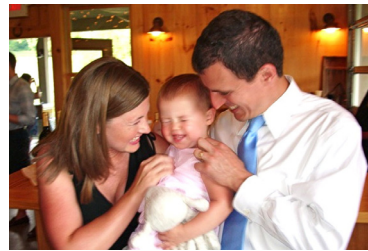
As part of the award celebrations, Bob spoke and led a discussion after a showing of Altman's 1974 film "Nashville." The film, one of Bob's favorites, remains timely because of its treatment of election politics, super celebrities, and violence in the United States.

### Renaissance in the English Department

In August, the English Department welcomed two Renaissance specialists—Lara Crowley and Tim Crowley. The Crowleys moved from Lubbock, Texas, with their daughter Marianne.

Lara Crowley received her PhD from the University of Maryland in 2007 and was an assistant professor at Texas Tech from fall 2008 until 2012. Lara is editing a digital version of Donne's prose poems and paradoxes. Her

project involves studying 430 handwritten versions of these texts, including several she discovered as part of a previous project in order to firmly establish Donne's authorship. She will also provide variants, images of texts, and other ancillary material. At NIU, Lara has been impressed by her students' enthusiasm, which further stimulates her own.



Tim Crowley received his PhD from the University of Maryland in 2009, and he was an assistant professor of English at Texas Tech from 2010 to 2012. Tim specializes in the sixteenth century; he is completing a book manuscript on the enticing topic of secret marriage, law, and politics in Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* and Spanish chivalric romance.

In addition to conducting archival research in the U.S., Spain, and London, he lived and taught at a school for underprivileged boys in Ecuador for a year. An enthusiastic teacher, Tim is excited by "conversations between texts and readers, both within and across times and cultures"—a walk down the hall outside his classroom reveals students participating eagerly in a lively discussion.

All of the Crowleys are enjoying the move to Illinois. According to Lara, "My family and I have been awestruck by the fall colors in this region. My two-year old daughter is becoming a big Huskies fan, having already cheered on the team at her first NIU football game."

### Tate Tutors at Workshop

Sassalee Tate, winner of the Queen Victoria Hardison Award for Excellence in Tutoring, first encountered the Writers' Workshop as a student enrolled in English 103P. Excelling in her composition courses, Sassalee became a Workshop tutor, guiding CHANCE students through undergraduate and graduate careers at Northern. She says that in the Workshop, "Students have the opportunity to expand their patterns of thinking, are introduced to various ways of forming and executing their thoughts, and profit from the exposure to a wider array of words. By the end of the semester, they have a much better comprehension of their weaknesses and how to address them and, consequently, are capable of producing stronger papers." A testament to the positive impact of the Workshop, students continue to seek the input of their tutors throughout their academic careers at NIU.

In 1968, NIU instituted the Deacon Davis CHANCE Program to encourage college enrollment for promising, at-risk students from historically underrepresented schools in northern Illinois.

## From Altgeld Hall to Indonesia: Macdonald

Faculty member Doris Macdonald is spending a great deal of time in Altgeld Hall these days, punctuated by an October trip to Indonesia.

President Peters recognized Macdonald's organizational talents and knowledge of university processes by appointing her chair of the Steering Committee for the Higher Learning Commission review. This process involves extensive data collection from across campus in preparation for

the HLC team's visit in 2014. Macdonald also led a two-week workshop for English as



a Foreign Language (EFL) lecturers and graduate students at the Universitas Negeri Makassar (UNM) in Indonesia. She was delighted to reconnect with scholars she mentored two years ago at a professional development program sponsored by NIU's Southeast Asian Studies program.

## Awards and Scholarships, Spring 2012

We are grateful to all of our donors for making these scholarships and awards possible.

**Excellence in Tutoring Award** (University Writing Center): Sarah Greenwood

**Queen Victoria Hardison Award** for excellence in tutoring in the Writers' Workshop (CHANCE students): Shane Winterhalter

**Mae Thomas Award** for first-year composition writing in Communication Skills classes: Rochelle Lipscomb, Deanna Paige, Jasmine Williams, Avonnaah Whitfield

**Maude Uland Award** for critical first-year composition writing: Rachel Tarant, Sarah Trygsstad, John Bauer-Buis, Jacqueline Laude, Andrea Winder

**Jan Kiergaard Award** for Excellence in First-Year Composition, ESL classes: Ateeqa Roslan

**Y 1 Writes Award** (ENGL 103, 104, and 105): John Becker, MJ Halco, Charles Besenhoffer

**Showcase Award** for Excellence in First-Year Composition: Micah Haji-Sheikh, Allison McKenzie, Ruthie Motyl, Matea Pejic, Kayla Nebel, Kaitlyn Cosentino, Bailey Johnson, Steven Kaehn, Kanika Singh

**Director's Outstanding Graduate Assistant Award** for Excellence in Teaching First-Year Composition: Clare Foland

**Graduate Director's Award** for Exemplary Contribution to the Program: Zachary Wendler

**Robert T. Self Award** in Literature and Film: Amanda Roberts

**Arnold B. Fox Award** for graduate research writing: Amanda Smothers and Zachary Wendler (Fall 2011), Elizabeth Bowman and Clare Foland (Spring 2012)

**Orville Baker Essay Award** for undergraduate upper-division essay writing: Alexander Lempke

**Patricia L. Francis Award** for service to the Department of English: Jan Vander Meer

**Jenefer M. Giannasi Award** for excellence in teaching first-year composition: Mark Kotarba

**Jeannie A. Hains Award** for students in the teacher certification program: Jillian Knapczyk and Lorena Lule

**Richard H. Howland Award** for undergraduate poetry writing: Amy Curtis and Trevor Nelson

**Harlan Teller Award** for Best Dissertation: Paula Morrow

### Scholarships

**Robert T. Self Scholarship** for summer study in Ireland: Maureen Cooke

**Orville and Adra Baker Scholarship** for returning undergraduate English majors: Alexander Lempke and Megan Szmyd

**Russell & Jeanne Durning Family Endowment** for summer study in Oxford, England: Elizabeth Howard

**John C. and Judith M. Gurley Endowed English Scholarship** for English majors pursuing degrees in a professional field: Mary Bonvillain

**Charles W. Hagelman Scholarship Endowment** for summer study in Oxford, England: Sylvia Flowers and Michael Schmidt

**Rosalie Hewitt Scholarship in English:** Mary Bonvillain

**David and Linda Nelson Endowed Scholarship in English** for teacher certification students in their student-teaching semester: Jessica Cimms (Spring 2012), Kaitlin Hoff (Fall 2012)

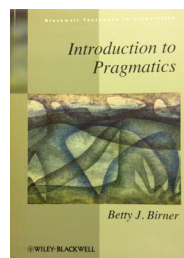
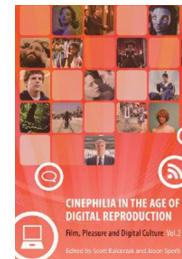
**Gustaaf Van Cromphout Dissertation Support Scholarship:** Brian Edwards

**Lynne Waldeland Scholarship in English** for new undergraduates who declare English as a major: Dana Peterson

## Faculty Books Published in 2012

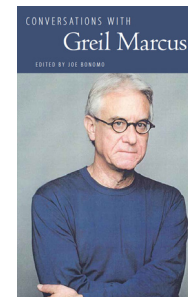
**Scott Balcerzak** and Jason Sperb, eds.

*Cinephilia in the Age of Digital Reproduction, Volume 2: Film, Pleasure, and Digital Culture.* (Wallflower)



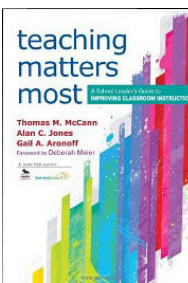
**Betty Birner** ▲  
*Introduction to Pragmatics*  
(Wiley-Blackwell)

**Joseph Bonomo, ed.**  
*Conversations with Greil Marcus*  
(Mississippi) ▼



**John Knapp, ed.**  
*Family: Critical Insights* (Salem) ◀

**Thomas McCann, Alan Jones, and Gail Aronoff**  
*Teaching Matters Most* (Corwin)



## In Memoriam

**Clifford Caruthers** (1935-2012). After earning his Ph.D. in English from the University of Missouri-Columbia, Dr. Carruthers taught at several universities, including fourteen years at NIU. He specialized in British romanticism, western literature, and sports literature. His accomplishments included editing three volumes of Ring Lardner's correspondence. Caruthers was a college baseball player as a young man and a St. Louis Cardinals fan all of his life.

## Well-Loved Professors Retire

**Sean Shesgreen** came to NIU in 1970 after completing his doctorate at Northwestern. He recalls, “When I came to NIU to interview, I went to the ‘office’ number Charles Hagelman gave me. I knocked loudly but got no response. Then I read the lettering on the door: ‘Custodian.’—I had been sent to the janitor’s closet. Not a propitious beginning, I thought. How wrong I was; my 43 years at NIU were sublime.”

Shesgreen is justifiably proud of his classroom teaching and the achievements of his students, including “Zunaira Malik’s first prize for the Women’s History Month Essay Contest for ‘I do,’ on a Muslim woman’s views of arranged marriage (2002); Val Ebel’s admission to two medical schools and her \$10,000 scholarship to Rush in Chicago (2009); Dr. Kelly Wezner’s tenure-track job at Murray State University (2009).”

Shesgreen has earned national attention as a scholar. In a *New York Times Book Review*, Steve Coates extolled Shesgreen’s “elegant and thoroughly unpretentious prose.” Recently, Shesgreen received recognition for a controversial article on the Norton anthologies.

Shesgreen is keeping busy now that he is retired: “I went to Montpellier, France, for 9 weeks, where I lived with a French family, enrolled in language school, and joined a restaurant to learn to cook.”

**Mark Kipperman** came to NIU in 1986 after teaching at Princeton University for six years. He received his doctorate at the University of Pennsylvania.

Kipperman published articles on Keats and the Romantics. Students enjoyed his classes on nineteenth-century British literature; he also taught Shakespeare for non-majors. His favorite classroom experience took place “teaching a Keats seminar for graduate and undergraduate students one summer at Naperville campus. I learned so much from those students as we intensely explored one poet’s extraordinary life, his great poetry, and the history of critical works and approaches.”

Like Shesgreen, Kipperman plans multiple activities for his retirement, ranging from reading mystery novels by Scandinavian authors to sky-watching with the Naperville Astronomy Club.

## Alumni Doings

### 1930s

**Clarissa M. (McLaughlin) Jahn**, BA 1938, of Taylor Ridge, Illinois, at 95, enjoys letters from friends in many lands; virus-free, hacker-proof books, Jeopardy, her own home, her own cooking, and her old blue jeans.

### 1950s

**Peter Davies**, BS 1959 (PhD, Yale University), of Germantown, New York, is a gallery owner and farmer. He recently published *The Tribal Eye* (Rizzoli Books) and *Antique Kilims of Anotolia* (W.W. Norton).

**Richard D. Jones**, BA 1952, taught high school in Tucson, earned a PhD in anthropology in Arizona, taught at Drury College from 1968 to 1975, then became a tuberculosis control manager in San Diego County.

### 1960s

**David J. Armstrong**, BA 1968, MA 1970, retired as Pastor of the Congregational Church of Chester, Vermont, after 11 years’ service. He served as a minister for 27 years.

**David J. Johnson**, BA 1969, MA 1971, of Westerville, Ohio, retired after 38 years as an English professor and department chair at Edison Community College.

### 1970s

**John J. Cebula**, BA 1972, MA 1974, of Glen Ellyn, Illinois, retired from Glenbard District 87 and teaches composition at College of DuPage. He conducts biographical and bibliographical research on local figures.

**Karl Elder**, BA 1971, MS in Education 1974, of Sheboygan, Wisconsin, is Lakeland College’s Fessler Professor of Creative Writing and Poet in Residence. He received the Christopher Latham Sholes Award (Council for Wisconsin Writers) for outstanding encouragement of Wisconsin writers.

**Christopher D. Guerin**, BA 1975, MA 1977, of Ft. Wayne, Indiana, is Director of Program Development at Sweetwater Music Instruments & Pro Sound. He served 20 years as president of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic Orchestra. A poet and blogger, he has also reviewed books at [popmatters.com](http://popmatters.com).

**John R. Manderino**, BA 1974, of Buxton, Maine, is a writer and teacher. He recently published a novel titled *The H-Bomb and the Jesus Rock*, a novel set during the Cuban missile crisis (Academy Chicago Publishers).

**Dave Oliphant**, PhD 1975, of Cedar Park, Texas, is retired from the University of Texas at Austin. He published his 27th book, a verse biography of Texas jazz great Kenny Dorham (*Wings*). In 2009, he published *Harbingers of Books to Come: A Texan’s Literary Life* (*Wings*).

### 1980s

**David R. Hands**, BA 1988, of Peoria, Illinois, owns 10 Great Clips franchises. He was married in 2000. He and his wife had twins—a boy and a girl—in 2005.

**Thomas Hansen**, MA 1983, completed his Ph.D. in Higher Education at Loyola University of Chicago in 2010. He continues to work in grant writing and education-related consulting.

**John L. Steen**, BA 1986, of Glen Ellyn, Illinois, is a pianist after the second Viennese school and a realistic-naïve painter.

### 1990s

**Doug Feldman**, BA 1992, published his 9th book, *Gibson’s Last Stand: The Rise, Fall, and Near-Misses of the St. Louis Cardinals, 1969-1975* (Missouri). He is a professor in the College of Education at Northern Kentucky University and a Cincinnati Reds scorer for MLB.com.

**Colleen Murphy Klein**, MA 1992, of Brookfield, Wisconsin, is Vice President of Professional Development, National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA).

**Sean P. Porter**, BA 1998, of Griffin, Georgia, is the proud father of a baby boy, Ian Everette, and is writing a book.

**Phyllis Reed**, BA 1975, MA 1995, Seoul, Korea, teaches 8<sup>th</sup> grade language arts for the Dept. of Defense Education Activity, Seoul American Middle School, Yongsan Army Base. She has also been a team leader and department chair.

**Jennifer Kearney**, BA 1997, Romeoville, Illinois, opened a new general practice law firm, Glockzin & Kearney. She was selected by *SuperLawyers Magazine* as a Rising Star in Illinois for 2012.

**Tom** (PhD 1980) **and Marlene Liszka** were honored on their retirement from Univ. of Pennsylvania, Altoona, with the establishment of the Liszka Awards for student writing in literature and theater, along with the Kjell Meling Award for Distinction in the Arts and Humanities.

### 2000s

**Sangwook Kim**, PhD 2006, is faculty at Kyung Hee University, Seoul, Korea. He has recently published essays in *Comparative Critical Studies* and in *Critical Insights: Family* (Salem).



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