Hello again! The electronic version of our annual newsletter welcomes you. This year has been extraordinarily busy, with the arrival of a new president and other administrators, the opening of the new Somerset building and the consolidation of departments due to the sale of Suffolk buildings. The English Department is still “in lone splendor” on the eighth floor of 73 Tremont, and we invite you to visit us whenever you wish.

Now, let’s begin with our traditional opening, A Message from the Chairman, Quentin Miller:

The American Dream is based on mobility. Still, it seems that few of us love to move: The boxes! The packing tape! And it always seems to happen on the hottest day of the year. The English Department wasn’t given a choice last summer, though, and we dutifully weeded through our books and lecture notes, slimming down to fit into our new space on the 8th floor of 73 Tremont. We’re settled in now, and our new home is terrific. We are living the dream. Special thanks go to Peter Jeffreys, who decorated our new space with some stellar, distinctive literary prints with the help of students and our cheerful office assistants, Kelly Hoarty and Alix Jerome. Students have started to congregate in our various open spaces, one of which houses a jigsaw puzzle that we can put together when we’re not reading books or engaged in scintillating conversation. But great spaces are nothing without great people. This year we had some special guests: visiting scholars from China (Wang Yue) and India (Rupendra Guha-Majumdar), and novelist and essayist James Carroll, our distinguished scholar who will be leaving us for a stint in New York after nearly a decade in residence here. Our newest full-time creative writing colleague Amy Monticello rolled up her sleeves right away and co-sponsored a hugely popular open mic storytelling event in September. In addition to our typical docket of impressive poets and fiction writings, including the fabulous Maxine Hong Kingston, the English department sponsored visits by a storyteller, filmmakers, a transgender activist, and literary scholars.

We also had a record number of students complete honors theses, and the public event in April at which they presented their research was a thrilling culmination of hard work. We honored our graduating seniors by hosting a brunch in the Poetry Center just before graduation. Looking back, we were awfully busy this year; maybe that move energized us! If you haven’t stopped by our new space yet, please do! If you’re not in the area, you’ve got to do what people in the 21st century do and keep up with us on social media. We have a Facebook page that I urge you to join so you can stay informed about the many cool things we’re doing, and so you can share your news with us. Or if Facebook is not your thing, please take a few moments to contact your favorite professor to let him or her know what you’re up to: we’re extremely proud of our graduates and we want to hear from you! ~ Q. Miller
The list of faculty activities, presentations and publications is impressive... Let’s begin with Quentin Miller. He continued to publish on James Baldwin, one of his main authors of interest. Last June he co-hosted a conference on Baldwin in Montpellier, France. He contributed essays to The Cambridge Companion to James Baldwin, to African American Review on the relationship of Baldwin’s original script to Spike Lee’s film Malcolm X, and to a new volume on teaching the works of Amiri Baraka. He gave talks on Baldwin in the context of recent police murders to a group of high school students and at the American Literature Association convention in Boston. He also published an essay on Bob Dylan as a blueprint for characters in recent novels by Don DeLillo, Jonathan Lethem, and Jonathan Franzen, and another essay on post-Vietnam novels by Tim O’Brien and Bobbie Ann Mason. He gave a conference paper on John Updike’s representation on the Internet and he supervised the work of Wang Yue, a Chinese scholar studying Updike as a scholar in residence at Suffolk. Finally, he published a number of short stories, both in online venues and in traditional print journals. (A related item was the appearance last January of Distinguished Visiting Scholars Karen Thorsen and Doug Dempsey to discuss their documentary film, James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket.)

Fred Marchant may have retired, but he is as prolific as ever. In addition to participating in Poetry on the “T,” he contributed a poem to Common Threads, published by the Massachusetts Poetry organization, and participated in the Poets’ Theatre evening of international poetry. He also volunteered to be a guest speaker for the Sigma Tau Delta initiation ceremony.

Rich Miller has been busily redesigning the first-year writing program to fit a new era. English 101, 102 and 103 no longer exist, replaced instead by WRI 101, 102 and H103. The purpose is to better prepare students for writing in their future Suffolk courses. Meanwhile, Rich has been chasing Vintage guitar tone with a new addition to his stringed family: an Epiphine Les Paul Custom modified with Lindy Fralin humbuckers. He invites us (dares us?) to catch him at a blues jam at Chan’s in Somerville.

Jennifer Barber, editor of the literary magazine Salamander, published at Suffolk, has won the second annual Tenth Grade Prize for her book Works on Paper, “informed by Jewish history and prayer, modern motherhood, and the natural world. This is the latest in a series of awards and prizes she has received for her poetry. Her translations of poems by the French poet Emmanuel Merle have been accepted for publication by The Massachusetts Review, Upstreet, Metamorphoses, and Modern Poetry in Translation. Jennifer is proud to note that a Salamander author, Carys Davies, whose short story was published in issue #38, recently won the 25,000 euro Frank O’Connor short story award, the largest award given to collections from the UK.

Leslie Eckel has published a book, Atlantic Citizens: Nineteenth-Century American Writers at Work in the World, as well as the articles “Atlantic Literature and the Global Chaosmos” in Atlantic Studies and “Gender” in the book Ralph Waldo Emerson in Context. She also presented a paper on “The Utopian Singularity of Thoreau” at the American Literature Association conference.


Cornell Review Press published Peter Jeffreys’ book, Reframing Decadence: C.P. Cavafy’s Imaginary Portraits, showing Cavafy’s creative indebtedness to British and French avant-garde aesthetes. In a Boston Globe article on the unveiling of a statue of Edgar Allan Poe in Park Square, Boston, a Suffolk student was quoted as saying that Prof. Jeffreys “always pushes us to the breaking point while discussing Poe’s poems and short stories, which makes us want to read more and analyze each piece as close as we can.”

Elif Arnbuster invited the first openly transgender U.S. Navel Seal (Ret.) Kristin Beck, to Suffolk as a Distinguished Visiting Scholar. Beck attended classes and gave presentations, and is the subject of a feature film by CNN entitled “Lady Valor.” Elif also co-hosted the international conference of the Nineteenth Century Studies Association in Boston, which featured 300 presentations on the topic, “Material Culture/Material Worlds.” She also presented a paper, “A Tale of Two Lillies.” At the American Literature Association conference, she presented a paper entitled “Swamps and Orange Trees: Race and Reconstruction in Stowe’s Palmetto Leaves.”

In October, Marlene McKinley and her husband, the noted classical composer William Thomas McKinley, attended a performance of McKinley’s “Haiku Cycle.” The ten poems of the cycle were written by Marlene. A second performance was part of a benefit concert for the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Marlene continues to serve as the advisor for Sigma Tau Delta, the English honor society, and recently held the annual initiation ceremony to induct new members.

The visiting scholar Wang (Susan) Yue presented a paper, “Embracing Death: Aging in John Updike’s Late Works” at the American Literature Association conference.

Former chairman Tony Merzlak has entered the phased retirement section of his career. He looks forward to more time for reading and writing, and for travel with his partner, Pat Geran. They have already been to France, Italy, Austria and the Netherlands, with more of Europe to come. But he also looks forward to a few more chances to teach his courses in Shakespeare and the Romantic poets.

Forty-four years ago, Prof. Edward Clark, who had begun to teach courses in African American literature, created what is now called the Clark Collection of African American Literature, housed in and funded by Suffolk University. It currently consists of works by 1400 African American authors and 6000 related works by writers of all races. It became a cooperative project of Suffolk, the Museum of African American History, and the Boston African American National Historic Site of the National Park Service. Prof. Clark is now retiring from “a labor of love” and thanks everyone who participated in the ongoing project.

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Suffolk University English Department

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To mark the passing of beloved teacher and friend, Prof. Peter Caputo, on Christmas Day, 2013, a special memorial was held at 73 Tremont. This year another gathering was held, this time to celebrate the posthumous release of Peter’s book, *Saint Medusa*. Other special events held during the school year include the Mandl Lecture in which Prof. Paul Lewis of Boston College spoke on “Literary Boston 1789-1850; an Imaginary Walking Tour.” Also, the faculty held an Open House each semester to familiarize students with the faculty and staff offices on the 8th floor.

“What to Do with an English Major” was the title of another meeting, featuring alumna Kerry Kurzziel as one of the guest speakers. A related topic was the subject of another gathering: “Gratitude School – Questions Answered.” The Visiting Scholars Rupendra Guha Majumdar and Wang Yue were part of an Asian Studies Program panel examining “Education, Career and Life in a Changing World.” The two award-winning creators of the documentary on James Baldwin, Karen Thorsen and Doug Dempsey, were part of a panel examining “Creating a Creative Career.” The Poetry Center throughout the school year invited poets to come, read and discuss their works with an attentive audience. Finally, the department’s newest event was the Graduating English Majors Brunch, hosted by Quentin Miller so the faculty could give graduating seniors a hearty Bon Voyage.

Yet More Faculty/Staff News

Joseph DeQuattro has three poems, “Potholes,” “Vitality in Nature,” and Brooklyn, America” appearing in the current issue of *Verse-Virtual Magazine*. Jeffrey Ousborne’s article, “‘Something Different That Still Spells Law’: Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar and the Fate of the Radio Detective,” appeared in the spring issue of *Studies in Popular Culture*. The Poetry Center’s Reading series presented Gregory Lawless, Jon Lee, and Anna Ross reading from their works.

Gregory Lawless had a banner year: He won the Orphic Prize for Poetry and the Red Mountain Prize for Poetry. His poems have appeared in several publications, and he became poetry editor of *Pangyrus*. He also gave a reading as part of a NESAD exhibit on nature.

Alumni/ae News and Student Happenings

Congratulations to alumnus Corey Howard for his poem being published in the May issue of WritingRaw.com. In January, 2003, alumna Lynda McGuirk suffered a traumatic brain injury in a motor vehicle accident. After a long rehabilitation program, she was able to reenter her life successfully. To help others survive and surmount similar injuries, she wrote and published a book *Survive and Thrive: My Traumatic Brain Injury Style Guide* to help others reclaim their lives. It is available from Amazon.

Alethea Stoltzfus spent the last year in Hamburg, Germany, having been selected for the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Program. She credits professors Leslie Eckel and Bryan Trabold with helping her hone her application. Also, “being at a school as diverse as Suffolk and in a city as diverse as Boston helped to prepare [her] for the experience of living and working abroad.” Finally, Myriam LeBrun, 2014, was offered a job at a law firm immediately after graduation, and has just completed her paralegal work at BU. Her boss loves Shakespeare and so their conversations were perfect for an English major! Best wishes to Kelly Hoarty as she leaves her job as office assistant to take a position at another institution!

And a great wish for happiness shouting out to our office manager, Alexandra (Alix) Jerome as she prepares for her upcoming wedding. We know she will look beautiful in her gown of tulle.

Department Activities

The Department now requires honors theses from students wishing to graduate with honors. Peter Jeffreys and Elf Armbruster were the honors coordinators for this year’s presentations.

The students were Stefani Falkowski, Emily Harding, Lindsey Nolette, Mollie Chandler, Mary Boutet, Rachel Fund, and Kelly Flores. Congratulations to you all! Each year the department designates scholarships and awards. Here is a listing of this year’s recipients and their awards. The Frances Hansen Merzlak Award to Jenn Robertson; The Stanley Vogel Scholarship Fund to Jeremy O’Brien and Brianna Dewalt and Jason Kleckner; The Robert K. Johnson Poetry Prize to Mollie Chandler; The Creative Writing Prize to Gabrielle Winant; The Harry Zohn Trustee Scholarship to Elizabeth Hurley; The Ella M. Murphy Scholarship Fund to Emma Hughes; The Rosalie L. Warren Prize to Lindsey Nolette; The Peter Caputo Scholarship to Robert Heap; The Recognition Day Scholarship to Maria Perfetti; The Recognition Day Achievement Award to Robert Simmons and Emma Tarquinio and Stefani Falkowski and Mary Boutet; The Peter Caputo Memorial Prize to Kelly Flores.

In Memoriam

On behalf of faculty, staff and students, we offer our deep condolences to the family and friends of Prof. Ann Hughes, Prof. Oktay Sinanoglu, William Thomas McKinley, Prof. Mary Kennedy, and Kathleen Ann (Foley) Devanna. Prof. Ann Hughes was a member of the Suffolk faculty for several decades before her retirement. Her students spoke of her as a wonderful teacher, master of her subjects and dedicated to her students while expecting the best from them. Her colleagues and students will always remember her hearty laugh and warm smile. She was proud of her two courses, *The Old Testament* and *The New Testament* and she used to laugh about Samson being a klutz. (The courses have gone untaught since her retirement.) Her great love was the state of Maine, its history, traditions and people and naturally she retired to live in Portland with her husband Philip, a retired adjunct professor, and her daughter Alexandra, a nurse.
A few years ago, she made a special return trip to Suffolk to deliver a lecture on a Maine shipyard and to greet her friends. Her sickness came on suddenly around Christmas time and surprised everyone because she had just mailed her Christmas letters, hand-written, to her friends, full of joy and good news. Fortunately, she was tremendously aided during her sudden, fast decline by Alexandra, who forced the doctors, hospital and hospice to keep Ann as comfortable as possible. As Gerry Richman says, Ann remains part of our fondest Suffolk memories.

**William Thomas McKinley**, the husband of **Prof. Marlene McKinley**, was an internationally known composer of classical and jazz compositions. Often he and Marlene travelled to New York to attend the first performance of one of his compositions, in venues like Carnegie Hall, and featuring such prominent musicians as the clarinetist Richard Stoltzman, and the conductors Gerard Schwarz and Gunther Schuller. For several of his compositions, Marlene wrote the texts and accompanied her husband as co-author.

**Prof. Elif Armbruster**’s father was the eminent professor of molecular biology and biophysics **Oktay Sinanoglu**. Among his many honors, he was twice nominated for the Nobel Prize, and in a biography, the author called Prof. Sinanoglu “the Turkish Einstein.” Elif notes that, in addition to a lifetime teaching at Yale, he was also an avid aviator, sailor, and writer and reader of poetry, and will be deeply missed.

**As her daughter wrote in a letter to Quentin Miller, Adjunct Professor Mary Kennedy** had a zest for life and was a very active personality. She had been scheduled to teach a writing seminar beginning in January 2015 and continue her second career of giving lectures on board cruise ships. She was also a carillonneur for St. Stephens Carillon, “entertaining carillonneurs from around the world.” She leaves her husband Donald, her daughter Jocelyn, and her son Benjamin.

**Kathleen Ann Devanna** was the mother of **Deanna Stanford** who was our former office manager and is now an adjunct professor of English. After the passing of her mother, Deanna wrote that Mrs. Devanna “always had an optimistic view on life and a radiant smile that embraced all who were lucky enough to experience it.”

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