

# The Freestone

Spring 1994

Colorado State University English Department Newsletter

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Sarita Zornek Crawford, a GTA in the English Department, successfully balances school, work and raising two young sons.

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Salwa Al-Sarhi, a Fulbright Scholar from Yemen, left her homeland in search of new challenges.

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## Alumnus Wins Pulitzer

by Chad Davis

In April, the Pulitzer Prize for poetry was awarded to Yusef Komunyakaa for his book *Neon Vernacular: New and Selected Poems*. In 1981, a veteran of the Vietnam War and aspiring poet, he received his Master's degree in English from Colorado State University.

While Komunyakaa's stay at CSU predated the MFA program by several years, his Masters studies focused on poetry. Bill Tremblay, a professor in the MFA program, served as his adviser. The writing that Komunyakaa did at CSU, Tremblay explains, "had to do with his childhood, growing up in a creole culture that had a lot of magic and hoodoo in it. What he needed to do then was to get back in touch with his roots in the rural South."

Tremblay and his colleagues in the English Department were excited at the news of the award. Even though Komunyakaa wasn't technically a product of the MFA program, his success reflects well on the department and faculty. "We are elated that our program in creative writing will be known as a place where a Pulitzer Prize winner learned his craft," said Tremblay.

Komunyakaa grew up in Bugalosa, Louisiana, a small rural town. Although he was interested in literature at an early age, like many young African-Americans of his generation, he spent his "college years" in Vietnam. His experiences in that war have become the driving force of his poetry.

While the writing in the early years didn't center on his Vietnam experiences, he has become a well-known Vietnam poet. In the words of John Clark Pratt, himself a veteran, writer, and scholar of Vietnam, "Komunyakaa is recognized as one of the premiere writers of the Vietnam experience." Pratt notes, "Two Pulitzers in the last three years have gone to Vietnam veterans who write about the war."

After leaving CSU, Komunyakaa went to the University of California at Irvine. He earned his MFA there, and is currently a professor at the University of Indiana. Over the past 13 years, in addition to his most recent book, Komunyakaa has written five other volumes of poetry: *Lost in the Bonewheel Factory*, *Magic City*, *Copacetic*, *Dien Cai Dau*, and *I Apologize for the Eyes in My Head*.

## Ph.D. Program in the Works

by Carol Sue Koch

A Ph.D. program appears to be in the works for the English Department. The proposed program will draw from three key areas of the Department: literature, composition, and linguistics. Currently, the program proposal has been completed and has started the long road to official approval. According to Graduate Coordinator, Dr. Carol Cantrell, this Ph.D. in Discourse Studies takes advantage of the amicable working relationship that exists between these departmental divisions.

As the proposal outline states, the need for this type of program stems from developments in the discipline of English that have focused research and discussion on "new ways of understanding the practical and theoretical questions of how readers, writers, texts, and

society are interrelated." The proposed program consists of three core areas: reading/writing theory and rhetoric, linguistic theory, and literary theory. Candidates must demonstrate familiarity in all areas, but development of a concentration that incorporates two of these three areas will be the student's focus.

Crossing boundaries through an interdisciplinary approach and a commitment to promoting diversity remain central components of the proposal. The interdisciplinary approach supports the department's desire to create an integrated program. The proposed program bases itself in the English Department but also draws from other departments at Colorado State University, including the departments of Speech Communication and

Continued on page 15

## BRIEFLY

### Reid On Committee

Assistant Professor LouAnn Reid was appointed to the National Council of Teachers of English Information Literacy Committee in February. The committee will gather materials on the role of information literacy in English and language arts and maintain liaison with relevant NCTE subgroups that are advancing information literacy.



*The Freestone* is published annually by the English Department at Colorado State University. If you have any comments, suggestions, or know of news items that should be included in the fall edition, please write to Mike Palmquist at Department of English, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523 or call (303) 491-7253. Mike can also be reached on the internet at [mpalmquist@vines.colostate.edu](mailto:mpalmquist@vines.colostate.edu).

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**About *Freestone*:** We chose the name *Freestone*-- which refers to a mountain stream with a bed composed of slowly shifting stones-- because it is an apt metaphor for the nature of change in English departments. Except during the spring runoff (or massive budget reallocations), those changes typically come slowly, and aren't always noticed by a student who is here for only four or five years. Nonetheless, over time, accumulated changes can result in profound differences.

# American Studies Blurs Departmental Lines

by Jeff Corney

Promoting a movement toward breaking down departmental barriers and fostering interdisciplinary educational opportunities, Colorado State University has established an American Studies program. The program was spearheaded and designed by English professor, Bruce Rhonda.

The program, housed in the College of Liberal Arts, is funded through a \$107,574 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The College of Liberal Arts will contribute an additional \$47,265 to help with startup costs.

The program focuses on cultural issues that affect students and society. Material for courses will be drawn from a variety of disciplines, but integrated into a cohesive program of study. Those disciplines include anthropol-

ogy, history, literature, political science, and sociology.

Four concentrations of study are available to students majoring in this program. These include: American Images: Theory, Expression and Experience; American Institutions: Public Values and Public Life; American Pluralism: Race, Class, Gender, Ethnicity; and American Regions: The Trans-Mississippi West.

This spring, six international educators visited the CSU campus as part of a national tour of American educational institutions that teach American Studies. They were interested in how our schools integrate different disciplines into cultural studies about the American West.

Members of the tour met with faculty, visited classes, and learned how the American Studies program will be put together at CSU.

## Freestoners Meet the Moose



photo by Ward Swinson

The Freestone staff gathers around "The Moose," a sculpture located just west of the Eddy Building.

# Intensive English Program Helps Vietnamese Educator

By Tim Richard

Since his return from Vietnam in September 1993, Intensive English Program Director Charles Brainer has been attempting to bring a Ho Chi Minh University scholar to work on a Master's degree at Colorado State University. His desire to do so stems from his commitment to sharing information between educators in Vietnam and the United States.

Brainer toured schools and libraries in Vietnam from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) as a participant in the People to People International exchange program.

His hosts welcomed ideas from him and 16 fellow travelers on how to improve their education system. The Vietnamese showed interest in modeling their education system on that of the United States.

Although plans are not complete, the prospective student has applied and been admitted to CSU, and final arrangements are being made for financing her studies. The student, whose name is being withheld pending finalization of plans, will probably



An inside look at a Vietnamese classroom.

photo by Charles Brainer

work closely with CSU faculty on projects that will give her direct experience in areas she can apply to building programs back in Vietnam.

"We're excited about bringing her to CSU," Brainer says. "She will be able to go back to extend and multiply efforts now being made, either as a teacher's training director, or as a curriculum planner."

## Research Center Awarded Grant

by Carter True

In December 1992, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education named Colorado State University's Center for Research on Writing and Communication Technologies a Program of Excellence. The Center, housed in the College of Liberal Arts, is staffed by faculty and graduate students from the departments of English, Technical Journalism, and Speech.

The award carries with it a five-year, \$250,000 grant to develop, implement, and evaluate a computer-supported Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program at CSU. Development of this program is now under way.

The focal point of the WAC program will be an online writing center, which will allow students, faculty, and writing center staff to discuss writing using the campus computer network.

"This award recognizes the potential this program has to benefit the entire state," says Mike Palmquist, Center Co-Director. "We

hope this program will serve as a national model for integrating computer support and network-based instruction into WAC."

The online writing center will allow students to seek help with their writing while they are actually in the process of writing. For instance, if a student runs into difficulties, she has easy access to a hypertext program she can use to review writing conventions, model texts, and discipline-specific writing strategies. If she chooses, she can also turn to interactive writing exercises, where she can practice different approaches to saying what she wants to say.

If the student would like comments or suggestions on what she has written, she has that option also; she can send her paper across the network to get advice from her classmates, her teacher, or tutors in the writing center. In addition, she can send electronic mail to ask specific questions, use a chat program to get instant advice from a tutor in the writing center, or use electronic bulletin boards where she can leave more general questions or comments for her classmates or teacher.

## BRIEFLY

### Two Join CSU Faculty

The English Department welcomed two new faculty members in the Fall of 1993.

Donna LeCourt earned a Ph.D. in English, with a focus on composition and rhetoric, at The Ohio State University. Her emphasis at CSU is in multicultural literacy and the connections between critical theory and composition. She was a finalist for the Outstanding Dissertation Award at the 1994 Conference on College Composition and Communication.

LouAnn Reid earned a Ph.D. in English Education from New York University. Her work involves developing cooperative projects between the University and public school teachers. In February she was appointed to the NCTE Information Literacy Committee.

### IEP Pilots New Course

The Intensive English Program (IEP) and the Chemistry Department are co-piloting an interdisciplinary course designed to train international students in communication skills.

IEP Director Charles Brainer says the new course demonstrates the English Department's willingness to pool knowledge and services from which international students campus-wide can benefit.

### AWP Honors Three

Three CSU MFA students were recently chosen among the winners of this spring's Associated Writers Program Intro contest. Alissa Reardon's poem "Sister," Anthony Vigil's poem "La Boda Chicana Globville ColorAztlán," and M. Evelina Galang's non-fiction essay "Mix Like Stir-Fry" will all be published in selected literary journals in recognition of their achievements.

# Cowell, Whitaker Proud of Department Success

by Jay Dipaola

A small wooden plaque on the wall of Pattie Cowell's office reads: "Idealism increases in direct proportion to one's distance from the problem." Professor Cowell, half-way into her first five-year term as head of Colorado State University's English Department, inherited the plaque from her predecessor, Rosemary Whitaker. Its words reflect an understanding, tempered by a sense of humor, that Cowell and Whitaker share, along with their backgrounds as Americanists. As heads of one of CSU's largest departments, these two chairs have had a unique opportunity to influence its course.

Pattie Cowell assumed the leadership of the department in 1991, following Rosemary Whitaker's 11-year term. Whitaker, in turn, had succeeded John Pratt as chair. Many of the policies and philosophies that define the department were initiated by Whitaker and Pratt. For instance, they foresaw a highly interactive peer review system for faculty, including yearly evaluations for non-tenured members and five-year, in-depth evaluations by committee for tenured members. The system has encouraged an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect for each member's particular discipline and teaching style, while allowing the freedom required to complete projects and research without constant supervision.

"Our faculty members are professionals," Whitaker said. "This type of interactive support promotes confidence, for the members themselves and ultimately for the students." Whitaker believes good policies make departmental harmony possible.

"Within this agricultural and technological university, our department is regarded as one of the best," she said. "We've earned this regard, and we're proud of it and of our

students."

Rosemary Whitaker maintains a strong presence in the Eddy Building, despite having stepped down as chair. She is currently teaching half-time on transitional retirement.

Pride in the department is evident in Pattie Cowell as well. She attributes much of what she calls its "momentum" to the efforts of her predecessors. "Rosemary operated on principles of consistency and fairness," Cowell said. With such a sound base Cowell now sees the department as having become a "symbiotic" entity.

Cowell discussed a number of projects currently in the works that involve the English program. Principle among these are the push for the Ph.D. program in Discourse Studies, the development of the Center for Literary Publishing, and the development of the Center for Research on Writing and Communication Technologies. The latter, a

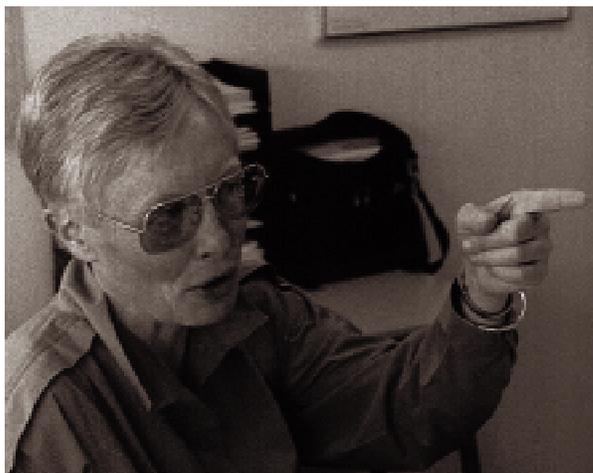
program jointly staffed by English and Technical Journalism faculty, has earned the designation "Statewide Center of Excellence" from the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. In addition, Cowell cited the success of the MFA program and the national recognition of the *Colorado Review* literary magazine as examples of the energy and talent of the department.

For Cowell, representing the department is a privilege. She is clearly excited by the developments within it and by her involvement in its continual creation. She feels her job is one that consistently allows her to "reshape" herself. In fact, it may be the part she enjoys the most.

Both Pattie Cowell and Rosemary Whitaker see English and the liberal arts as the core of the university. Under their skilled direction, this fact has become evident to observers outside the department as well.

*"Our department is regarded as one of the best. We've earned this regard, and we're proud of it and of our students."*

**-Rosemary Whitaker-**



**Pattie Cowell became department chair in 1991.** photo by Tim Richard

# Literary Magazines Provide Opportunities For Students

## *Greyrock Review*

by Chris Burns

For a young writer, the excitement of being published can be tremendous. The *Greyrock Review*, Colorado State University's undergraduate literary magazine provides young writers with just that opportunity.

For 12 years, the *Greyrock* has provided countless undergraduate writers of fiction and poetry a chance to have their work judged outside of a classroom setting, a chance to be published.

"It's a good opportunity for students," managing editor Barb Godlew said. "It's the only ASCSU-funded publication for students to put their creative works into."

Competition for a place in the book is fairly rigorous. This year the *Greyrock* received approximately 70 prose fiction pieces and 270 poems. Of those submissions there is only room for 10 fiction pieces and 20 poems.

But despite its obvious popularity with writers on campus, the *Greyrock* is facing difficult budget challenges. In the past, ASCSU has substantially funded the *Greyrock Review*. However, this year, despite a request for \$2,000, only \$700 was allocated for production of the *Greyrock*.

Godlew said that members of the College Republicans charged the *Greyrock Review* with publishing obscene works. She believes those charges are directly related to the decrease in ASCSU funding.

"They (the College Republicans) seem to be opposed to anything that's not conservative in nature," Godlew said. "It's as if they think we have some sort of political agenda."

In response to the budget cut, the *Greyrock* staff has implemented a number of new fundraising methods. Campus organizations and individuals may sponsor a page for \$10. Also, a raffle using donated items as prizes is being conducted.

## *Colorado Review*

by Bronwyn Shone

For graduate students in the Colorado State English Department, the *Colorado Review* isn't just a credit to their department, but an excellent opportunity.

Five poems published in the *Colorado Review* have won the Best American Poetry Award. Eight short stories have been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and one short story appeared in last year's Pulitzer Prize winning collection.

The accomplishments of the *Colorado Review* are due in large part to the participation of CSU graduate students.

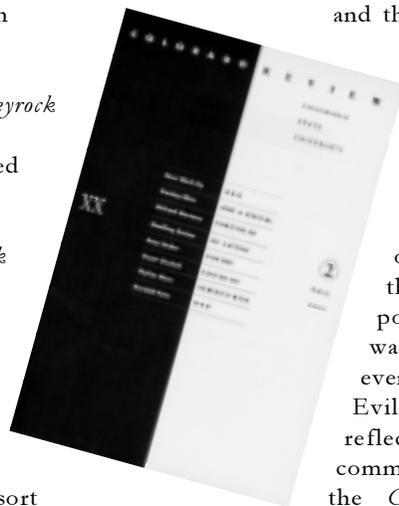
"The *Colorado Review* is meant to be a publishing laboratory," editor David Milofsky said. "We really couldn't put it out without student help, and I wouldn't want to."

The managing editor, copy editors, first readers and book review editor are all students who practice and learn proofreading, editing and public relations skills.

Each spring the *Colorado Review*, along with the Tattered Cover Bookstore and the Oxford Hotel,

sponsors the Evil Companions Literary Award. The Evil Companions Award goes to a writer who is from or is writing about the West. This year, poet James Galvin was honored at the event. The success of Evil Companions Award reflects the local community's support of the *Colorado Review*.

Readership has grown significantly in the past two years. The review currently has over 700 subscribers. Short term goals include increasing subscriptions to 1,000, raising payments to authors, and increasing the number of prizes offered to outstanding writers.



*The accomplishments of the Colorado Review are due in large part to the participation of CSU graduate students.*

# Former Nurse Finding Success in CSU English Department

by Sarita Zornek Crawford

*"Writing was my favorite thing in high school, but in the little town in Illinois where I come from, there were only two career options for women: farming and nursing. Naturally, I chose nursing."*

-Barb Godlew-

"A day in the life" of Barb Godlew starts at about 5:30 a.m. whether she wants to get up or not. "I wake up like clockwork. It comes from my years of nursing. I had to get up early to be 'ready to cut' at 7 a.m." Parking is next to impossible at Colorado State University, so to beat the crowd, Godlew drives to campus at 7:30 and drinks coffee, studies, or does crossword puzzles until her 9 a.m. class.

In addition to carrying a full course load, for the past two years Godlew has worked on the *Greyrock Review*, CSU's undergraduate literary magazine. This year she serves as editor.

Before returning to college, Godlew worked for 12 years as an Operating Room Nurse. "I knew I wanted to make a career change, but I didn't know what I wanted to do," says Godlew. "My husband, Scott, encouraged me to take some classes anyway." Godlew muddled through some business and computer courses and finally found her niche in English composition. "Finally, I was doing something I really loved," says Godlew. "Writing was my favorite thing in high school, but in the little town in Illinois where I come from, there were only two career options for women: farming and nursing. Naturally, I chose nursing."

How is Godlew's educational experience different the second time around? "I study harder now than I did in nursing school. In those days, my parents paid for my education, and I was happy making C's. Now, it's my money I'm spending. I try to take classes that relate to what I do. I also get to know my professors, and I see them as real people--not the Nazi prison guards I remember from nursing school."

Godlew's dedication and hard work have paid off. She has received several academic awards, including: the Westfall Memorial Scholarship, the Wyrick (English Dept.) Scholarship, and two Creative and Performing Arts Scholarships. She has also published

some fiction and poetry pieces in the *Greyrock Review*.

Now that Godlew has found her track, she plans to pursue a career in writing and perhaps teaching college English. "I love writing, literature and words--how they go together. I especially like to write creative non-fiction. It's comfortable," she says, "like an old shoe."

Throughout our interview Godlew peppered her conversation with metaphor. "It is important to choose your words carefully," she says.

"Mark Twain once said, 'The difference between a good word and the right word is like the difference between a firefly and lightning.'"

Though Godlew has many interests, her mind is always on writing. "I go skiing, camping, and fishing. I like to quilt, and I read a lot, but my favorite pastime is people-watching and eavesdropping. I can't help it," she says. "As an Operating Room Nurse, I had to listen to several conversations at once and respond to all of them. Consequently, I am always aware of sounds going on all around me, not just the immediate conversation I am engaged in. Once, while eating dinner with Scott in a restaurant, I overheard an older couple talking about

their transvestite son. My eavesdropping embarrassed Scott, but I thought it made a great topic for a short story."

Scott lives and works two hours away in Colorado Springs. "After being apart all week," Godlew says, "I relish our time together on weekends." Following graduation this spring, Godlew says she will take a year off with Scott before beginning graduate work. Her plans are to go for an MFA or a Ph.D. in composition rhetoric, perhaps at CSU or Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, where she has already been accepted. "I am lucky that we have been able to maintain a good relationship in spite of geographical distance," says Godlew. "Scott supports my work at CSU. He's a great guy, and he's my best friend."



photo by Tim Richard

**Barb Godlew is editor of the Greyrock Review.**

# Rural Backgrounds Lead to New Friendship

by Steve Hill

It's difficult for Wendi Marak to relate to the Hispanic culture Sonya Heite grew up with in New Mexico. Likewise, it's difficult for Sonya Heite to relate to the cold temperatures Wendi Marak grew up with in Montana. But when they met in a Western Literature course, Wendi and Sonya quickly found that more often than not, they stood on common ground. The friendship that followed was a natural.



photo by Tim Richard

**Sonya Heite (left) and Wendi Marak (right) developed a close friendship in Jim Work's Western literature class.**

"There are just some people, that after you talk to them for a while, you can tell they've been raised like you and their family life is similar to your own," Heite said. "There are just some people you can relate to."

Relating to one another comes easily for these two. After all, not many English majors come from a western, agricultural background. In fact, as a result of their backgrounds, each of them occasionally feels out of place.

"Sometimes I fit in a lot better with people in animal sciences," Heite joked.

However, one place where each of them feels at home is in Jim Work's Western Literature course. They can relate to the writing of Ivan Doig, Leslie Silko and Mari Sandoz in ways their classmates simply can't.

For Wendi Marak, it was Ivan Doig's *English Creek* that conjured up memories of home.

"From the moment I picked up the book, I was just enamored with it. It made me so homesick," she said. "Other people in the class were saying, 'He doesn't seem to be going anywhere. He seems pretty wordy.' That's when it struck me that he talks like somebody from a small town in Montana. I guess that's why I really liked it."

Sonya Heite shares Wendi's enthusiasm for Western Literature. Their friendship grew

when the two began to spend time together after Work's class, telling their own stories of life in the West.

Sonya enjoyed seeing the West through her new friend's eyes. Wendi told of her family's trials leaving Europe, arriving at Ellis Island and then crossing the great plains to Montana.

"I was really blessed to come from people that live for a long time," Wendi said. "I knew six of my eight great-grandparents, so I have all of these stories about the immigrant experience."

Sonya would often reciprocate by telling stories of her family's life in the Southwest. For several years, the focus of the family business was running cattle from her uncle's ranch in Mexico across the border to the United States. For Wendi, these stories were incredibly enlightening, especially considering she's never traveled south of Denver.

"We read a couple novels about New Mexico and the Southwest," Wendi said. "The whole sand thing was really foreign to me, but for Sonya, it was old home week. It was interesting."

According to Wendi, it was even more interesting to realize that someone considered the Western stories they had been reading all of their lives to be literature.

"To find out this was actually literature was a real validating experience."

*"There are just some people, that after you talk to them for a while, you can tell they've been raised like you and their family life is similar to your own."*

- Sonya Heite -



# Department Survey Bombs

Mark Bruce

We read surveys all the time. In the papers: “Studies Link Hovering In Mid-Air In Sterile Plastic Suit To Bone Cancer.” In the tabloids: “Our Readers Polled: 97% Believe Tanya Harding Responsible For Ice Age.” In women’s magazines: “To Shave Or Not To Shave: 101 Slightly Post-Pubescent Boys Speak Out On Their Favorite Celebrity Hairstyles.” Ad infinitum.

The point of surveys is to look for patterns among large groups of people that might explain their behavior. What similar background do mass murderers have? What’s the underlying motivation for people who go into hairdressing? So, when we did a survey of English students at Colorado State University, we naturally expected to come up with something enlightening—something in our cumulative pasts, our motivations, our interests, that might explain why we’re all here. After carefully preparing the surveys and tabulating the data, this is what we found: Zip.

So the best we can do is give you an idea of the range of responses we received. We started with the basic “personal stats” questions, and didn’t find anything there. Though the department does have its share of native Coloradoans, there are too many folks from the midwestern and eastern states to form a pattern. Age doesn’t seem to matter, either—we ranged from 23 to 41.

We expected great things from questions about people’s motivations for choosing CSU. Mountains, we thought, the fine air, the friendly people—all might attract students. Wrong. One needed to escape from the East. One says he wasn’t warned. We did get a few responses about the fine faculty and academic programs—and even two about the mountains. One inspired student wrote, “God made me come here.”

OK. So maybe asking about CSU itself wasn’t the best question. There has to be, we said, something common about what draws people to English studies in general. Well, one person wrote, “It’s more fun than accounting.” One said it was a silly question. Several just kinda liked it. Several expressed a general affinity for reading and writing. For others, English offered some unique opportunities. Teaching was a big one; some liked the fact that English bridges several disciplines; and one answer deserves a full quote: “Because words (especially polysyllabic ones without obvious signifieds or polysyllabic ones with the strength of Atlas so they can carry worlds full of contextual meaning) are my joy and my sorrow.”

We asked about hobbies and interests, too, and once again found all the pattern and regularity of a Brazilian jungle. Among the most

interesting responses: film critic, Sherlock Holmes, bouldering (*bouldering?*), fashion design, bowing with American flat bow and self-made arrows, iguanas, surfing, figuring out how to live on a T.A. salary, computers, fencing, tomahawk throwing, black-powder rifle smithing, “Please! Not in public!” Sorrowfully, we moved on to the next question.

There were several questions about favorites—foods, movies, etc. In the “Food” category we got everything from Baklava to chocolate to homemade granola. For “Books,” we got poetry anthologies, *Ulysses*, *Mating* (by Norman Kush), the *Book of Kells*, and we could go on nearly forever—but suffice it to say that no two entries were the same. For “Movies,” we got everything from *Cabaret* and *Apocalypse Now* to *Highlander*. For “Writers,” we got a smattering similar to the book category, with one interesting twist—*no one* listed the writer of their favorite book as their favorite writer. So much for internal consistency.

The only responses with any consistency at all were those to questions about “your best and worst moments at CSU.” Teaching CO150 and taking comps, though, showed up most often in *both* categories. Tests and papers showed up in the “worst” categories fairly often as well, and the most consistent best moment was “moments of good conversation.” Several worst moments, too, were classified as “unprintable” by several of the respondents, or, as one put it, “It’s buried so deep in my unconscious that I’m sure only hypnosis would bring it out.”

But by far the most staggeringly diverse set of responses were the answers to our question about “unusual family traditions or stories.” Several of these deserve full treatment: “On St. Patrick’s Day we always sacrifice the youngest child.”; “Right.” “My Haitian half contains several members of organized crime.” And, the granddaddy of ‘em all: “Aunt Edith buried her car, had an affair with a boy of 17 when she was 50, and willed the boy the buried car when she died. She was a Quaker woman who never married.” We can’t help but think that these could shed some light on the responses in some of the previous categories.

With the responses to that last question, we decided, once and for all, to give up the business of surveying English students. Trying to find something homogenous about English students, we finally concluded, is about as productive as finding the position and velocity of a particle—our own method always seemed to knock the answers out of the way. Somehow, though, we were glad the study failed.

*So, when we did a survey of English students at CSU, we naturally expected to come up with something enlightening-- something in our cumulative pasts, our motivations, our interests that might explain why we're all here.*

# Review Award Celebrates Western Literary Tradition

by Mike Palmquist

The 1994 Evil Companions Literary Award was presented to poet James Galvin at a formal reception on April 21st. Galvin, a permanent member of the faculty at the Iowa Writers' Workshop, was honored for a substantial body of work—both poetry and fiction—that explores Western themes.

Following the presentation of the award, Galvin read selections from his poetry and from his first book of prose, *The Meadow*. A memoir set in the Medicine Bow Range north of Fort Collins, *The Meadow* has been widely praised by critics, as have his earlier books of poetry.

"The Evil Companions Literary Award goes to a person who writes about the West, is from the West, or both," said David Milofsky, editor of the *Colorado Review* and member of the committee that selected Galvin for the award. "Galvin meets both criteria. He is a native of Denver and, through his books of poetry and *The Meadow*, he has established himself as a voice for the Western idea that the land shapes the people, not the other way around."

Co-sponsored by the *Colorado Review*, the Tattered Cover Bookstore, and the Oxford Hotel, the award is named for a group of Denver journalists who, in time honored fashion, gathered together in the 1950s and '60s to drink and discuss writing. In commemoration of those gatherings, attendees of this year's celebration enjoyed a special "Evil Companions Ale" brewed by Wynkoop Brewery, a year's subscription to the *Colorado Review*, and an evening of conversation about writing.

The event also celebrates another time honored tradition: the relationship between artist and patron. "Art in this country is supported by private gifts," observed Milofsky. "Michelangelo had his patrons and we have ours—in this case, the Tattered Cover, the Oxford Hotel, and everyone who turned out for this year's ceremony."

That patronage provides an opportunity not only for an enjoyable evening centered around great writing, but for an important learning experience for the graduate students who staff the *Colorado Review* and helped plan the event. "The Evil Companions Literary Award is an extension of the teaching we do in our literary editing internship," said

Milofsky. "It provides an excellent opportunity for our students to learn about working with our patrons and it gives them an understanding of the complex preparations that go into an event of this size."

The award also provides an opportunity for the *Colorado Review* and the MFA program to reach out to constituencies around the State. "This is an excellent way to reach outside the University and establish connections with the larger Colorado writing community," noted department chair Pattie Cowell. "It gives us an opportunity to establish ties that are both financially and educationally rewarding."

Milofsky concurs, calling attention to the ways the Evil Companions Award helps the University address its institutional goals. "A very important thing for CSU is to establish a presence in Denver," he said. "The *Colorado Review* in general and the Evil Companions Literary Award in particular helps us accomplish that." In addition, the MFA program—the only one in Colorado and one of only five in the Rocky Mountain region—also benefits from publicity surrounding the event. This year, the event was covered by the *Denver Post*, among other state papers.

Reaching out to the larger Colorado community has its downsides, however. "For me, it's been very anxiety promoting," said Milofsky. "For three weeks ahead of time, I was lurching on Maalox—it wasn't clear that we would be able to break even on the event." Fortunately, Milofsky has been able to put the Maalox away. Ticket sales were up substantially over last year and the future of the fundraising event appears bright—as does the future of the *Colorado Review*.

Institutional, educational, and financial concerns aside, the event also measured up on a more subjective criterion. "There was a really good feeling about this event," said English professor Carol Cantrell, a member of the *Review's* Advisory Board. "It was a lot of fun. The food was fabulous. And it was a great opportunity to see our graduate students dressed up.

"And the faculty, of course, looked dignified as always."

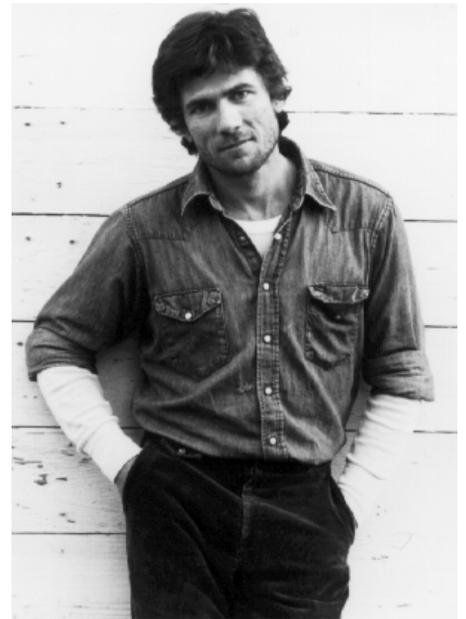


photo by Stefani Karakas

Poet James Galvin, winner of the 1994 Evil Companions Literary Award.

*"The Evil Companions Literary Award is an extension of the teaching we do in our literary editing internship."*

-David Milofsky-

# Recent Publications by



**CHRIS GOOLD, COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT**, is teaching women's literature and topic courses at Fort Lewis College in Durango since receiving her M.A. in 1992. She also has published two books and

dozens of articles in regional magazines "working local markets," as she puts it. Her most recent work is a number of articles for a special publication entitled *Noxious Weeds: Changing the Face of Southwest Colorado*, published this spring by a non-profit conservation organization.

**MARTIN BUCCO, PROFESSOR**, is author of the critical work *Main Street: The Revolt of Carol Kennicott*. Recent material includes the book review "Visions of Presence in Modern American Poetry by Nathan A. Scott." His work-in-progress is entitled *Sinclair Lewis' Literary Opinion*.



**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR LESLIE BECKER** has been busy. Her story "Twilight on the El Camino" will appear in *Contemporary West Coast Stories*. "The Personals" received special mention in *Pushcart Prize, Best of the Small Presses*. Her proposal "The Excitement Begins: Opening Strategies and Poetry Exercises" has been accepted by the pedagogy panel at the 1994 Associated Writing Programs conference. *Gettysburg Review* is also publishing her story "Wicked."



A short story by **UNDERGRADUATE JEFFREY BARNES** (teaching and creative writing concentration) entitled "Making of a

Rapist" will appear this summer in the first issue of *Signature: Writing of the New West*.



**PROFESSOR CAROL CANTRELL's** essay "Women and Language in Susan Griffin's *Woman and Nature*" will appear in this summer's issue of *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*. The

essay later will be reprinted in a collection of writings about feminism and ecology by the Indiana University Press.

The first chapter of **ASSISTANT PROFESSOR STEVE SCHWARTZ'** novel *Therapy* will be excerpted in the June issue of *Redbook* about the same time that the novel will reach bookstore shelves.

**PROFESSOR JAMES WORK** will soon write a scholarly introduction for a new edition of Zane Grey's *Riders of the Purple Sage*, to be published next year by the University of Nebraska Press.

**MFA GRADUATE STUDENT M. EVELINA GALANG's** short story "Our Fathers" will appear in *Riksha: Asian American Notes and Images*. *The Crescent Review* will soon publish her short story "Talk to me, Milagros." She has also published in *Mid American Review*, *Amerasia Journal*, and *Special Edition Press*. Her non-fiction essay "Mix Like Stir-Fry" was recently chosen as an Associated Writing Awards winner.



*Boy's Life* features an article by **INSTRUCTOR LARRY WILAND** entitled "Paddle Power" as its April 1994 cover story.

# Department Writers

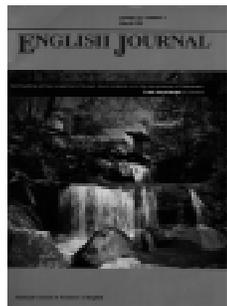
**PROFESSOR MARY CROW** went to Turkey and Israel this May to research a travel book that will explore the role of women in the peace process in Israel and the role of women in the spiritual life of Turkey.



**PROFESSOR SUE ELLEN CAMPBELL's** essay "Feasting in the Wilderness: The Language of Food in American Wilderness Narratives" appears in the Spring 1994 issue of *American Literary History*.

*RE Arts & Letters (REAL)* will publish in an upcoming issue poems by **MFA GRADUATE STUDENT DEANNA LUDWIN:** "Transgression at St. Mary's College," "Revising Browning: Porphyria Escapes (Her Ex-Lover Writes to her from Prison)," and "White House Etiquette."

**PROFESSOR JOHN CLARK PRATT** is currently revising and updating his critical edition of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. He has also contracted with Penguin to edit a critical edition of Graham Green's *The Quiet American*.



**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR LOUANN REID** has published a number of articles in the past year, among them her contribution to the *English Journal* entitled "A Symposium: Making Small Groups Work."

She also spent a busy spring presenting papers at conferences held by The Colorado Language Society and the National Council of Teachers of English. Reid is editor of *Statement: The Journal for the Colorado State Arts Society*.

**INSTRUCTOR DANIEL ROBINSON** has been invited to read his story, "Muted

People," at the Hemingway Day's Short Story Festival this July in Key West. **PROFESSOR WARD SWINSON** recently wrote three notes on Ulysses for the *James Joyce Quarterly*: "Buck Mulligan's Clothes Philosophy," "A Game of Chess," and "The Twelve 'New Nine Muses.'"

**MFA GRADUATE STUDENT DANIEL KOEN's** poem "Something to be repeated" was published in this winter's issue of *The Portland Review*. Another poem, "My Father," will appear in an upcoming issue of *Signature: Writing of the New West*.



**INSTRUCTOR MARY GOLDEN's** essay "Bluelight" made a notable appearance in *Best American Essays, 1992*. Her story "A Coyote is Looking Across the Water" will be published in *Circle of Women*

*Anthology* (Viking Press). The story also appeared in a recent issue of *Northwest Review*. Golden is a 1989 MFA graduate. Her current work-in-progress is a collection of essays about growing up on a Washington ranch.

In October, Utah State University Press will publish **PROFESSOR WILLIAM TREMBLAY's** new historical novel, *The June Rise: The Apocryphal Letters of Joseph Antoine Janis*.

It chronicles Janis' mountain man life, his marriage with First Elk Woman, an Oglala holy woman, and the trouble that comes to them during events after Little Big Horn.





# The Myth of Grad Hell

**Chad Davis**

About a week ago I found myself in one of Fort Collins' many coffee shops sharing a table with three Colorado State University graduate students. I say I "found" myself there because that is what it seemed like. Just after refilling my thick porcelain cup with a rather esoteric strain of coffee (something called the "Kenyan Plateau/Jamaican Blue Mountain Breakfast Blend"), I got a strange feeling that not only had I never been there *before*, but that I shouldn't be there at all. The radical opposite of *deja vu*? Amnesia? The last thing I remember was finishing my undergrad degree and making some sketchy plans about grad school . . . but suddenly I found myself in this coffee shop with some people who talked as if we were school chums, grad students from the CSU English Department. Was this *really* my life?

I gathered that it was. I also gathered that it wasn't all that pleasant a life to live. I tried to be subtle and not let on that I had no idea who they all were and how I had come to be here with them. Chances were I had just lapsed into a touch of insanity, if there is such a thing. I tried to play it cool. A friendly but tired young man looked at me over his glasses expectantly, "Well, Chad?"

I'd been intent on my inner panic; I scrambled, "Uh . . . sure, I guess so."

Apparently satisfied, he turned back to the other two people, who also looked tired. They went on and on about how much work they had to do. In the upcoming week alone, it seemed that one poor student had three papers to write, five novels & twenty-eight poems to read, and, I'm almost positive, twelve oral reports to give (three of which were not only on the same day, but for the same class!!!).

I quietly tilted my head down to stare into my coffee. "My God!" I thought. "How the hell have I gotten myself into this?" I searched the dark surface, the swirling steam, the melancholy fragrance; I searched for answers.

I still couldn't remember anything, but it did kind of make sense (not the missing seven months, just the anguished nature of this place). Last summer I was definitely scared of grad school. I knew it would be this way. I knew it would be a long, tortuous hell. Almost everything I heard about grad school was negative. The pressure, the cutthroat environment, the oppressive advisers, the sheer tonnage of daily reading, etc.

This wasn't all my imagination either. True story: my friend Jeff's older brother went crazy in the middle of law school. One day he

just went into the closet (naked), where he stayed until his mother brought him a glass of chocolate milk (from Missouri--1,300 miles).

Suddenly I found myself saying, "Well, I gotta go now . . ."

"Ah," I thought to myself (about myself). "It must be time to go read my own three novels for tomorrow."

But I continued (aloud), "Yeah, I gotta get out to Horsetooth so I can run and climb before it gets dark. See you guys later."

And I walked out the door.

"Wait a minute," I thought to myself as my body pedaled its way down La Porte street, *sans* backpack full of books. "What am I doing? I should be studying, I should be reading, I should be suffering for God's sake! This isn't right, why does it appear that I'm trying to enjoy myself."

And then, I woke up. No, not in bed. But right there on my bike. I suddenly regained those missing months and I remembered everything. I remembered the day before, for instance, when I rode down the same street. And I remembered the day before that and the day before that and, clear back to August, I remembered a nearly endless sequence of similar days. Riding my bike, climbing, running, fishing, ENJOYING myself.

But I also distinctly remembered going to classes, sometimes even two or three times a day! And writing papers, sometimes two or three a month! And reading at night, sometimes for two or three hours! And I remember going to the library, sometimes two or three times in one week! But not this overwhelming hell I had fabricated with the help of a few friends, a few too many cups of coffee, one puffy, under-boiled, stale bagel, and the potent effects of the "group-whine mentality."

The sad truth is, I like grad school. Sure, the work IS difficult, and takes a significant part of every day. But not the whole day! I even find myself having much more free time than as an undergraduate. And I like my classes now. I read things I would read whether I was in grad school or not (if I would read at all, that is). As long as I stay on top of things and keep priorities clear, I think I'll really enjoy my graduate studies. I certainly am so far.

But I'll be the first to admit that you CAN make it bad for yourself. Again, it's all about priorities, and maintaining a clear head. And, in my case, maintaining a clear head means that I *have* to run and climb. A lot!

*I tried to be subtle and not let on that I had no idea who they all were and how I had come to be here with them.*

# Pratt's Life Enters New Phase

by Robert White

*"Well, Bob. I'm glad you got this awful, cliché-ridden, juvenile, improbable, unconvincing, illogical piece of writing out of your system. Now it's time to go on to bigger and better things, such as writing honestly and truly about something you know. This sketch is too bad to put a grade on. Please don't rewrite it."*

Such was Professor John Clark Pratt's unambiguous written response to a story I wrote in a creative writing course many years ago. When I heard he was entering transitional retirement, I decided to visit him to thank him for that solid kick in the pants, and to find out more about the man who made it very clear to me that creative writing requires much more than just inspiration or peyote.

Pratt was invited to Colorado State University in 1974 to serve as the Chairman of the Department of English with the hopes of making a good department better. Indeed, during his five year term as Chair, the composition placement examination and GTA training program were established. He also set into motion the computerization of the composition program and administered the department through some of the most difficult, turbulent years in the University's history. The frustrations of working under a chaotic administration convinced Pratt to resign his post at the end of his contract, and to focus on teaching and writing.

When he came to Fort Collins 20 years ago, Pratt brought with him a remarkable personal history. His academic achievements included an M.A. from Columbia University and a Ph.D. from Princeton. He had been a Professor of English at the Air Force Academy, worked with Ken Kesey as editor of the 1973 edition of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and had just seen his first novel, *The Laotian Fragments*, go to press at Viking. Fulbright Lectureships at the University of Lisbon and the State University of Leningrad, coupled with the writing of numerous reviews, forwards, and introductions kept Pratt fully occupied during his first decade at CSU.

His service as a command pilot during the Vietnam War supplied him with the experiences which helped create his first novel, and which



**John Clark Pratt**

would profoundly influence most of his future writing. Yet the work which demanded the most from his time and energy was *Vietnam Voices: Perspectives on the War Years, 1941-82*. This work has been considered both a history and a study in political science. Yet he explains that the true identity of this book is revealed through its collage-style depiction of "the absolute fiction of the reality of the time."

The influence of Vietnam also led him to create *E247: Vietnam War in Fiction*, a unique course based entirely upon a sequence of 11 novels which chronologically represent the diverse themes and attitudes of the war. Similarly, Pratt has helped bring some distinction to CSU's Morgan Library which now holds the largest collection of Vietnam War literature in the United States.

Working with students, however, has served as his greatest achievement and pleasure. He had never intended to teach creative writing, but as the only one in the department at that time with a published novel he was actively encouraged. His involvement paid off quickly as he was able to arrange for a scholarship which helped to bring a new student to the department, Yusef Komunyakaa, a Vietnam veteran who would subsequently win the 1994 Pulitzer Prize for poetry. Since then, Pratt has been instrumental in turning a collection of creative writing workshops into one of the most strenuous MFA programs in the nation.

One of the strengths of that program is the diversity of the professors who run it. Pratt's approach stresses the importance of reading zealously, of editing and rewriting (except in his comments to me above), and adhering to the very un-Beat belief that there is no writing--there is only rewriting. Still, he recognizes that "you ultimately must have a drive which nobody can teach you." What he tries to teach his students is the ability to recognize within themselves that driving need to write, to create. If they find it, he pushes them to extend themselves, to do what they don't think they can do, to shun complacency.

Ironically, Pratt admits that such a drive finally eludes him. "I am too many different people," he says. And with too many distractions he isn't able to fully devote himself to his own work-in-progress, tentatively titled *Academe*. His distractions include working on a new critical edition of Graham Greene's *The Quiet American*, an update of *Cuckoo's Nest*, and the creation of an on-demand computer publishing company. And he claims that he has never felt overworked. Apparently, transitional retirement means much more to him than just mowing the lawn.

*"This sketch is too bad to put a grade on. Please don't rewrite it."*

-John Clark Pratt -

# Carol Mitchell's Classroom Anything But Traditional

by Steph Davis

Carol Mitchell wears a small gold pendant of a round-breasted, full-bellied figure around her neck. As she points out in her lecture about goddess religions (one she has given at college campuses, local high schools and Catholic churches), it should not be mistaken for a fertility figure or an erotic symbol. Even the ancient Greeks, she says, knew that early women had more rights and power before the Golden Age; these little figures are the vestiges of goddess worship.

Goddess myths and symbols are just a few of Mitchell's eclectic interests, and she is certainly not easy to categorize. When she is asked to define herself, her face brightens into its customary smile.

With a Ph.D. in folklore, and a thesis on the differences between male and female joke-telling, she teaches courses ranging from Asian and epic literature to myth and metaphor. "I'm interested in ways of seeing culture through literature," she says.

Apparently many others are too; her courses are among the most popular on both the graduate and undergraduate level. This is partly due to the current interest in using literature as a means to study culture, but also because students know that Mitchell's courses are anything but traditional.

A typical day in class finds Mitchell sitting in a circle of desks with her students. Dressed in a draped Indian garment, or a many-colored sweater and skirt, she facilitates a lively exchange of ideas and opinions. Her earrings swing as she turns to answer a question. "Is it okay if I change the subject?" asks a student. "Of course," Mitchell laughs, "go right ahead!"

When Mitchell arrived at Colorado State University in 1970, literature was seen as a vehicle for studying aesthetics; the cultural

angle was not yet evident--neither was feminism or multi-culturalism. After a trip to the CSU bookstore where she found only one book by a female author in the entire English section, Mitchell met with other female faculty members to create a canon of female writers.

While engaged in a department-wide push toward equal pay, she went to the mass registration at Moby Gym with a survey. Over 500 students responded that they would be very interested in taking courses such as "Images of Women" or "Female Writers." Armed with these results, Mitchell proposed a women's literature course at the next faculty meeting; it has been taught every semester since.

As student and faculty interest in multi-culturalism grew, Mitchell was selected as one of four faculty members to take a Fulbright trip to India, she began teaching Asian literature courses, and from there she moved into epic literature, and mythology.

Mitchell has always followed her interests. She loves what folklorists call "little tradition"--that is, the rituals of everyday life in cultures. When asked what her overall goal as a professor is, she laughs again. "Being a professor lets me read more, pursue

my interests in Asia, and in women and goddesses."

This summer her interests in women and goddesses will take her traipsing over England and Ireland on a "Goddess Tour" to experience the history and environs of ancient myths. She hopes that this will lead to yet another unique course offering and also to a book about interpretations, images, and myths of goddesses.

What angle Mitchell will take with this book is anyone's guess. From an author whose published works include essays on joke-telling and what she calls "a fan letter to Leslie Marmon Silko," anything is possible.

*"Being a professor lets me read more, pursue my interests in Asia, and in women and goddesses."*

-Carol Mitchell-



photo by Tim Richard

**Carol Mitchell played a vital role in getting women's literature into the CSU curriculum.**

# Mom/Grad Student Toys With Studies, Family

by Cathy Nichols

Graduate school has been likened to a game of strategy and skill. For Sarita Zornek Crawford, that game is played with real toys. As a Graduate Teaching Assistant in the English Department and a single parent, Crawford not only juggles a dual concentration in Communication Development and TESL, but also balances time between her two sons, Scott and Micah.

Her career plans include teaching English in the United States and abroad and spending time in various parts of the world learning and writing about different cultures.

She is currently involved in a language preservation project at the Tesuque pueblo in New Mexico. With the number of fluent Tewa speakers dwindling, the tribe is in danger of losing its native language. Crawford is using methods of second language acquisition to help devise instruction programs to enable younger members of the tribe to maintain this essential aspect of their culture.



photo by Chad Davis

**Sarita Zornek Crawford and her two sons, Scott (left) and Micah (right).**

In conjunction with the Tesuque project and her graduate studies at Colorado State University, Crawford was recently chosen as the English Department's Cross-Cultural Understanding Scholar for 1994. She is also the recipient of the American Business

Women's Association Stephen Bufton National Scholarship.

Time and stress management are essential to Crawford's success since she juggles the demands of full time graduate school and teaching composition with the full time demands of bringing up two young sons. She credits her success to blurring the boundaries between work and play.

"When I get stressed out, my children tell me I haven't been playing enough, and they offer me their toys."

In fact, Crawford keeps a box of toys in her office for stress relieving mini-breaks. She says, "Taking breaks and using the creative half of my brain helps me to relax and to refocus my energy. I often find that playing with toys helps me to keep working and to solve problems in new and different ways."

*"When I get stressed out, my children tell me I haven't been playing enough, and they share their toys with me."*

- Sarita Zornek Crawford -

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## **Ph. D. Program,** *Continued from page 1*

Technical Journalism.

The program also responds directly to Colorado State's "Commitment to Diversity" plan. It specifically addresses the plan's stated goal of providing "educational experiences which will create an understanding of and respect for diversity, and thus change the campus climate." The program strives to meet these important goals, and the program's emphasis on language and linguistic communities are central to understanding diversity.

While many English departments contain some elements of this program in their graduate course of study, no program exists in Colorado which unifies all of the elements and make their integration the focus.

The English Department has been shaping

itself for the implementation of this Ph.D. program for several years. In addition to the faculty in place when the planning of the program began, new faculty hires have built the base for the program. The recent designation of the Center for Research on Writing and Communication Technologies as a program of excellence testifies to the strength of the Department. The Center will offer doctoral candidates an opportunity to work with faculty on funded research projects.

At this point in the implementation process, area universities are being asked to respond to the proposal as it makes its way through the curriculum review at CSU. Ultimately, the program will seek approval from the Colorado Commission on Higher Education before final implementation.

# New Course Merges English With Science

by Bronwyn Shone

*"This is an interdisciplinary course that will help science students deal with science in a more creative way, especially dealing with cultural and ethical issues."*

-David Mogen-

An introductory quote in the "Tao of Physics" neatly summarizes the intent of a new interdisciplinary course offered to graduate students: "In the history of human thinking the most fruitful developments frequently take place at those points where two different lines of thought meet." *Biomedical Frontiers in Literature, Philosophy, and Science*, a course developed by professors David Mogen of the English Department and Gerald Callahan of the Department of Pathology, attempts to explore the points at which science and literature intersect.

The two professors met at a Tai Chi class and discovered that they both shared an interest in science, literature, and philosophy and agreed that most modern scientific writing is flat--scientists are not given the skills to communicate their excitement of discovery. Conversely, writers are generally unfamiliar with the sciences and their impact on philosophy, culture and modern issues. Out of their discussions, the course was born.

The course explores the science of art and the art of science, bringing the two disciplines together on the points they have in common--discovery, observation, and interpretation. The course is designed to initially explore general world views and philosophies that shape scientists and writers. From this wide circle it moves toward specific scientific material such as immunology, Callahan's specialty in the Pathology Department.

Mogen had started the course by teaching philosophical world views such as the Western world view, the yin/yang, and Native American world view. A knowledge of world views gives the science writer a wider range of options for expressing and interpreting results. The course has three basic elements in its progression from studying the general to the specific: readings, both scientific and non-scientific; writing, including student workshops; and guest speakers from both departments.

Books that have been used in the class cover a range of topics. *Ceremony*, by Leslie Marmon Silko, is about a young Native American man returning home to his reservation after WWII. *The Tao of Physics*, by Fritjof Capra, has also been used to approach science in a philosophical light. *The Code of Codes* is a

more scientifically based book about the Human Genome Project. These texts help illustrate different world views that scientists and writers often share. They also mirror the course's progress from studying philosophical and world views to specific scientific material.

Throughout, students are experimenting with different kinds of writing, trying their hand at poetry, creative nonfiction, science fiction and personal essays, culminating in a piece on immunology that can be written in any form the student chooses. The writing is always about scientific topics or somehow relating to science, even if on a very personal level, such as writing that deals with a relative's death from cancer. Students must also keep a journal for the duration of the course. The final project will be a revision of any one of their first drafts.

Guest speakers from English and the sciences have also been a major part of the class, providing expertise and sharing interest in their fields. For many students, this was their first exposure to writing creatively and the guest lecturers introduced their topics colorfully, such as a lecture on nonfiction essay writing given by John Calderazzo. He used a book called *Flattened Fauna*, complete with pictures of road-killed rodents, to illustrate writing based on science. Poet Bill Tremblay had students write about a large piece of twisted driftwood he brought to class.

In addition to in-depth study of science and writing, the course provides opportunities for interaction between students from two departments who wouldn't normally communicate with each other. An English student says, "We do a lot of different things, but the part I really enjoy is just talking to the science students, learning what they think of us, writing and science."

Mogen says, "This is a creative interdisciplinary course that will help science students deal with science in a more creative way, especially dealing with cultural and ethical issues. Literature and writing students get a more concrete sense of what scientists do and get to share in the excitement and interest of science."

Perhaps the most valuable lesson taught in the course is that experiment and discovery and the excitement inherent in each, are found in all disciplines.

# Grad Students Help Youth Earn To Learn

by Tim Richard

Eleven-year-old Nicholas goes to work every Tuesday afternoon. From his fifth-grade classroom at Dunn Elementary School in Fort Collins he walks down the hall to where MFA candidate Alissa Reardon waits to discuss his latest job.

This week's topic is *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, and Nicholas has plenty to say. After all, he's paid to summarize the novel and share thoughts on it. Eight books at \$1.50 each. That makes \$12 in 10 weeks.

Nicholas and five schoolmates participate in *Kids at Work*, an outreach program begun by Colorado State Creative Writing

Professor Mary Crow and fifth-grade teacher Elaine Bonny.

Crow delegates the operation of the small, but growing program to four Colorado State MFA graduate students. Carrie Frasier coordinates the program, while Reardon, Kim Fortier, and Anne Dudley serve as mentor/role models to the grade schoolers.

The mentors and their students meet weekly to choose and discuss books, and to talk about how to develop good reading habits.

"The kids like books, but they don't normally get to talk about them with anyone," Reardon remarks. "With us they have an adult to themselves for a whole hour."

When Crow and Bonny tried to raise start-up money for Kids at Work they found how controversial the idea of paying kids to read is. One organization stipulated that its donation pay only for books, not for cash to children.

Despite the resistance, Crow feels strongly enough about the program's positive benefits that she hopes to expand. Already a database is set up to track participating students' test scores in reading, writing, and the humanities.

"We have every intention of following them through high school to see what kind of graduation success rates they have," she says. Positive reports from that survey would attract funds and enable other schools to participate, she adds.

More funding would also allow them to offer alternatives to paying cash, such as going to plays or museums with mentors.

Proof for Crow that the program works showed in the students' faces during the last year-end award ceremony. Each child received a certificate, while trophies went to the three who read the most.

"You talk about self-esteem," she remarks. "You should've seen those kids, and how proud they were."

For more information about Kids at Work, or to donate, contact Carrie Frasier at (303) 491-6843 or the English Department at (303) 491-6428.

*"The kids like books, but they don't normally get to talk about them with anyone. With us they have an adult to themselves for a whole hour."*

-Alissa Reardon -



photo by Tim Richard

**Carrie Frasier, Kim Fortier, and Alissa Reardon discuss the Kids at Work program.**

## Today's assignment is...

Kids at Work mentor Kim Fortier believes reading and writing helps build self-esteem. To motivate creative expression, she and fellow mentor, Anne Dudley, assign a variety of exercises. In one, kids imagine an abstract word, in concrete terms, then write a poem, such as the following:

### LOVE

Lights on you being cared for.  
Colors bright white and being  
snug in my  
pillows and blankets.  
And being warm.  
And the words  
she says make me happy, like  
I love you.  
Good-night.  
See you tomorrow.

by Daniel, age 10

# Fulbright Scholar Seeks MA

by Michael Hood

I met Salwa Al-Sarhi last August, after a class we had together on feminist critical theory. Touching my sleeve as I left the classroom, she asked, "What is this? Women don't feel that they have equal rights here?" I stopped in my tracks and turned to her tongue-tied, unable to respond to a question that I believed had an obvious answer. Instead of answering her, I studied the intricate pattern of the scarf she wore around her head (a Hajeb, I would soon learn) and the slightly stilted accent in her voice. "Do you want to go get some coffee?" I replied. We sat in front of the student center, talking about the condition of women in her culture and in mine. It was the beginning of a friendship.

Salwa comes from Yemen, a small, primarily Islamic nation south of Saudi Arabia on the Red Sea. The fourth of 16 children, Salwa attended the University of San'a where she graduated at the age of eighteen with a degree in English Literature. After teaching high school English for one year and working for the Peace Corps in Yemen for four years, Salwa felt that Yemen had no more challenges for a young woman.

"So how did you find your way to CSU?" I ask her over coffee. She looks at me carefully, as if to make sure that she is understood. "I applied for a scholarship . . . Have you ever heard of . . . What is it called . . . Fulbright?" "You're on a Fulbright?" I reply, hiding my smile behind my coffee cup.

It's hard for me to imagine the difficulties Salwa faces as she adjusts to the culture of the United States. For example, in Yemen, the public has never seen her face--it remained veiled in the tradition of Islam, and she could express herself only with her eyes.

"It is so strange, to smile at people and be able to see them react to my smile. But it is also strange that people treat me differently. They see me wearing the Hajeb and think I'm different. They are curious about me and my culture, and that's okay, but I wish people would talk to me like they would talk to anyone else. I'm really not that different."

But it's getting better, she tells me, as

people get to know her as a person rather than as a foreign student.

We talk about her home. "It was difficult leaving my family," she recently told me. She finds it odd that American families aren't closer and larger, that children often don't get along with their parents. In her culture, families seem to be closer, more supportive. She misses her family terribly, but receives one letter every month from each sibling--even her two-year-old brother, Fawaz, manages to scribble a few words in Arabic. "In this country everyone wants to be so independent. I don't understand why."

She blinks at me as I try to explain how families are perceived here. I get confused. I'd much rather talk about her writing.

Writing in Arabic, Salwa has published short fiction and poetry in Yemen. Feeling that her opportunities as a writer were limited in Yemen, she cites freedom of expression as one of her major reasons for coming to America. "I wrote under a pseudonym," she explains. "I didn't feel free to express myself, my ideas were too controversial. Here I can write about anything." Salwa tells me that when she was writing in Arabic, she frequently criticized her native culture, particularly regarding the treatment of women.

"Do you know that, in Yemen, women aren't supposed to talk to men in public? Even eye contact can be dangerous."

Writing in English, Salwa approaches her culture differently. "I'm more sympathetic to my own culture when I write in English, more reflective on the positive things. There is so much that is beautiful about my home that I would like to introduce to people." Salwa is taking writing workshops in addition to her literature courses, perfecting her art in a second language. She recently read some of her new poetry at a reading sponsored by the Organization of Graduate Student Writers.

Talking about her future plans, Salwa is elusive, and I get the feeling that she doesn't like to plan too far ahead. "I plan to distinguish myself as a writer in English and become a citizen of the world," she tells me

*"I'm more sympathetic to my own culture when I write in English, more reflective on the positive things. There is so much about my home that I would like to introduce to people."*

-Salwa Al-Sarhi-



photo by Tim Richard  
**Salwa Al-Sarhi came to the U.S. seeking new challenges.**

*Continued on page 19*



# Peering Through the Fence

**Jim Gallagher**

When I first came to Colorado State there was a joke passed around among graduate students at parties, potlucks, and in the halls of the Eddy Building. It went something like this, “What does an English graduate say at his new job?” And the punchline was, “Do you want fries with that?” We’d chuckle, roll our eyes or shake our heads, and walk away with a feeling of kinship regardless of what our individual concentrations in the graduate school were.

Recently, I had an experience as a representative to the creative writing program’s committee meetings that brought that joke back into primary focus. The University was hiring a new poetry professor. As I sat in the committee meetings and watched the applications amass to over 200, a sneaky little demon of doom placed an arm around my shoulders and whispered in my ear, “You’ll never get a job in this market.”

I suppose out of subconscious desperation I launched into a memory from a couple of summers ago. I was working for a carpenter (he had a master’s in chemical engineering) who recounted a conversation he’d had with someone we were working for. When they asked him what he thought I’d do once I graduated he told them, “Oh, he’ll probably get his contractor’s license, work for me for a couple of years and then strike out on his own.” I wasn’t insulted; in fact, I laughed comfortably and began to consider the possibility. Today, pondering my marketability, I contemplate the high probability of my return to that world of hammers, saws, and wood.

Since I came to graduate school with a trade I feel a sense of comfort in knowing somehow I’ll get by. But many of my friends don’t have something to fall back on, so I set out to ask them of their hopes for the near future. I received as many different responses as the number of people I asked: one says she’d be happy to waitress all her life, another would like an editing or copy-editing job, still another (who’d graduated) was working at Kinkos, my best friend from grad school here is working a cloud seeding project in rural

Utah, and a couple of people plan to move back to their parent’s “until something turns up.” I called my best friend from undergrad back home--she now publishes pamphlets for a dental company--and we collaborated on where people had gone: one was scheduling bands at a nightclub, another was in film school in New York, one was murdered, a couple died . . . Oh, where do we go from here?

At this point it could be easy to be thoroughly discouraged and figure English graduates have as much chance of finding jobs in their fields as the Denver International Airport did of being completed on time. But I know people from here who have found success--people with teaching jobs at Aims Community College, a fiction writer who graduated last year is teaching at a community college in Vermont, someone who graduated in the seventies has been teaching at the Loft in Minnesota, some undergraduates I’ve known are teaching high school as are some of the graduates. I also know graduate students who’ve gone on for their Ph.D.’s and a couple considering law school (I’ve seen the advertisements from law schools and they’re very encouraging of English majors--though I don’t know why someone would want to enter a field that has as many members as there are pizza places in a college town). And, to give justice to the difficulty of finding jobs in other fields, I know as many people from other majors working as carpenters, restaurant managers, or waitstaff.

We come to school for as many reasons as the directions we may end up taking afterward. I came here after eight years as a carpenter and may be one again after I graduate, but I spent my time here exploring a side of myself I’d have regretted not looking into. I’d been on the other side of the carpentry fence before I came here and kept wondering if I was on the wrong side of my intellectual construction. Previously, with my education in English I’d only had cracks in the fence boards to peer through--now that I’ve climbed over to examine the grass beyond my boundary I can rest easy on whichever side I land.

*What does an English graduate say at his new job? . . . Do you want fries with that?*

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**Fulbright Scholar,** *Continued from page 18*

with a smile.

Her writing touches upon human conditions that we all feel, regardless of our cultural background. She helps us understand that much of what we feel is universal.

Salwa says that she’s really not that

different, but I disagree. She is a celebration of difference, living proof of the rich and wonderful diversity of our world. And as our friendship grows, I’m thankful for the fact that she is different, for the intangible newness, for the fresh perspectives she has brought to me.

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May 2, 1994



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Thanks,

*The Freestone Staff*

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