

The Freestone

A Publication of the Colorado State University English Department

Spring 1998

The Year of the Flood



Drowned in the Deluge

By Mary Graziano

The morning of Tuesday July 29th arrived, finding us not in the townhouse we owned, but across the street, sleeping on a neighbor's floor. Just ten hours earlier, the Spring Creek flood sent a river of water through the home I own with my fiancé Steve, filling it to a depth of ten feet.

We had little more than minutes to take what we could from our finished basement. Our dash toward higher ground ended quickly when the car got stuck—and later washed away—in a rising current that moved so fast it nearly swept my legs out from under me. Our hosts, heretofore strangers, had the good fortune to live on slightly higher ground just across the street, so they graciously took in our dog, cat and both of us.

We spent a sleepless night trying to comprehend reality: All of our most important belongings—our offices, our entertainment system, most of our books—were sitting under water. Now we had the dreaded task of returning to inspect the damage.

To our surprise, most of the water was gone, apparently emptying via the bathtub, sink and other drains. The air in the house felt warm and thick from the 100 percent humidity. Grass hung from the basement ceiling, and covering the carpet was a three-inch layer of weeds and mud trans-

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Almost High and Dry

By George Finnell

If an observant person were to look at Eddy Hall in its present condition, think back to the summer flood of 1997, and add the two together, the sum would be pretty easy to compute: The English department on the third floor escaped the damage of the garden level that housed the philosophy and foreign languages departments. The Ivory Tower, it seems, is the safest place to sit while the world's waters churl and churn. Monty, I'll take floor number three!

The wrath of Spring Creek left the English department relatively unscathed compared to others like the neighboring education department, whose lower level computer lab ended up a pile of broken glass, cracked plastic and tangled wires, all which had to be removed by shovel. The computer labs in Eddy were networking themselves away a week after the deluge ruined the foreign language computer lab in the basement.

English professors did not have to grab the nearest, thickest Norton Anthology as a personal flotation device in order to escape their offices. However, English Professor Ellen Brinks had five boxes of her personal books stored in the basement mailroom, all of which the flood drowned. Anyone in the English department can feel her loss since English lives revolve around books. It would be like losing a pet or a friend.

Brinks' books were not the only casualties to affect the English department. The adolescent literature collection in Morgan Library that professors Gilbert Findlay and Bill McBride worked hard for many years to compile did not swim well enough to escape the flood waters that welled up in the basement in that hapless building. However, during the reorganizing of stacks in Morgan, someone had the foresight to move nearly all the literature collections



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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 next edition, please write to Mike Palmquist at the Department of English, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523 or call (970)491-7253. Palmquist can also be reached on the Internet at: mpalmquist@vines.colostate.edu.

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And the Awards go to...

The Freestone would like to congratulate the following faculty members for their outstanding performance this year.

Donna LeCourt

for the Excellence in Teaching Award from the College of Liberal Arts

"Teaching is what got me interested in higher education in the first place and what I consider the most rewarding and important part of my work. As a result, this award was particularly meaningful. I only hope I can continue to live up to it."

Charles Smith

for the Stern Distinguished Faculty Award

"It was good of the department to nominate me and a surprise to receive the award. We achieve little by ourselves. I am grateful to so many colleagues and students in the department and around campus for making my years at CSU rewarding. In particular I want to thank the Chairs under whom I was so fortunate to serve, the members of the Awards Committee, Kate Kiefer who drafted the nomination and contributed so much to a decade-long project we worked on together, and my wife who shared the highs and the lows of 29 years at CSU."

John Calderazzo

for an CSU Alumni Association "Best Teacher" Award

"I was very pleased to get this award because I love teaching, I think it's a great profession to devote big chunks of my life to, and it absorbs as much of my energy as I can throw into it. It's a privilege also to get to discuss great books and exciting writing—from beginners as well as from the famous—with enthusiastic young people."



The 1998 Freestone Staff

Top left to right: Raleigh Gould and Todd Forkner

Bottom left to right: Donna Duncan and Kathryn Morgan

The Times, They Are A-Changin'

By Karen Marcus

Ask a graduate student in CSU's English department for an example of a text, and you will receive any one of a variety of answers: films, visual art, books, plays, situations, classrooms. But when English Professor Charles Smith was in school, during the 1960s, the only "texts" were contained in "a collection of certain literary works thought to comprise the body of material anyone studying literature should know about." We recognize this collection as the literary canon. "One of the important contributions of the newer approaches," states Smith, "has been to widen the range of texts appropriate for study and hence to the widening (or elimination) of the canon." This change is one of many occurring in English departments over the last several decades.

Some courses have been redesigned to accommodate the shifting awareness away from New Criticism and toward a multiplicity of readings, voices and approaches. Gilbert Findlay, for example, now teaches a Shakespeare course that includes viewing film versions of Shakespeare's plays, as well as taking into account feminist interpretations and economic considerations.

"Theory is really important. There has been a major shift in literary studies from a general focus on texts in and of themselves toward a larger concern with culture and society. But that doesn't mean that we're no longer interested

"English majors have always been more marketable than they're given credit for."

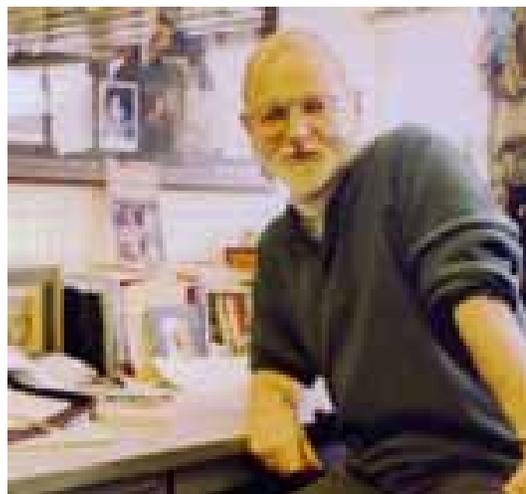
in texts," explains English Professor Mike Palmquist. Palmquist observes that we are seeing the return of close reading; theory is now used as another tool for reading text. "Despite differences in the way they approach texts," explains Palmquist, "most

scholars in English continue to be centrally concerned with reading and writing texts."

In the past, literature was the main focus of English departments. Now, says Palmquist, reading and writing are approached from different perspectives. "You can walk down the hallway and talk to a creative writer, a linguist, a theorist, an education expert, a composition professor, etc."

This variety of approaches brings with it additional changes. Smith mentions that more works by women writers and other excluded groups are studied, and American literature is studied for its own merits rather than as a "step-child" of English literature. Additionally, the period as an organizing principle for courses is being broken down in favor of the genre.

The reasons for these changes are varied. Findlay notes that the curriculum is subject to the specialties of the faculty. For example, a professor who specializes in Middle Eastern literature will propose and teach a course in Middle Eastern literature. However, if that professor leaves the department, the department will not necessarily try to



Gilbert Findlay

replace that specialty. Findlay cites trends in PhD programs as another influence. When new professors are hired, they bring with them their entire educational background, including coursework in theory, which recent PhD recipients have been exposed to.

Another change taking place in and out of English departments is the current widespread development of technology. The availability of new technologies affects the way material is presented, as well as the kinds of information students have access to. Palmquist adds, "Our department has gained standing in the university because we have a leadership role in technology." Indeed, some recent MA recipients in English now hold such positions as Web Developer, Web Designer, Technical Writer, and Electronic Communications Project Manager.

"Our department has gained standing in the University because we have a leadership role in technology."

And how do an increase in the use of technology, exposure to theory and more American literature affect English students' ability to function in the "real world" after graduation? Smith comments, "The world we live in is the world that gets taught in the classes." Therefore, although the world has changed a lot, students' relationship to the world is about the same as it traditionally has

been. Palmquist believes, "English majors have always been more marketable than they're given credit for." English majors are found in fields ranging from government to health. And, despite the grumblings in Eddy Hall about the apparent uselessness of a degree in English, Findlay assures us, "I have a feeling most people find something to do." But just maybe not what they thought.

The changes in English departments over the next fifty years remain to be seen. Smith muses, "It's going to be a new world. It's going to be really interesting."

Paradigm Shifts and Unknown Frontiers: the Evolution of Creative Science Writing

By Megan L. Doney

Had it not been for a fortuitous meeting at a Tai Chi class, David Mogen and Gerry Callahan might never have collaborated on an interdisciplinary class that became E641—*Creative Science Writing*. First taught in the spring of 1994, the class has changed from an experimental course to a fully approved interdisciplinary course that brings together students from the sciences and the humanities. The course emphasizes that the actual goals of research are quite similar, despite differences in academic study.

At the time of their first meeting, English professor David Mogen was teaching a course titled *Nature and Human Nature* and designing a curriculum for teaching across the disciplines. Gerry Callahan, of the pathology department, wanted to teach a writing class, as he was frustrated by the science graduate students' lack of writing know-how.

"Originally, the title of the class was *Frontiers in Biology, Literature and Philosophy*," recalls Mogen. "I envisioned it as a philosophy and literature course with writing assignments." Callahan, on the other hand, imagined a writing class with philosophical and literary studies.

Initially, the two attempted to teach both kinds of courses simultaneously. Though this sounds chaotic, Callahan remarks that from chaos grows learning: "Being overwhelmed lets you sneak stuff in on people. You jumble their ideas up so much that their world views change almost without their knowledge." Through this collage of ideas, they saw striking similarities between the goals of all the students enrolled, from both the sciences and humanities alike.

"Humanities students were interested in writing about scientific issues for popular audiences, and the science students were too," comments Callahan. Callahan's desire to use writing to bridge gaps in understanding between science students and

"Interdisciplinary courses reflect the real world; nothing affects only one discipline."

humanities students, combined with Mogen's interests in interdisciplinary studies, intellectual history and cultural analysis, eventually merged into the class that exists today. Despite their disparate academic backgrounds, the pair met with only superficial conflict in planning the course.

"We've disagreed over which books we should use and teaching tactics, but I can't say that we have ever been at the point where one of us is ready to leave the project," says Callahan. Mogen concurs, remarking, "When we began the course, we really didn't know each other at all. Now that we have collaborated on this project for

to be done, but I don't foresee any radical changes," muses Callahan. The structure of the course also depends on whether the two team-teach it or whether Callahan teaches alone, as he has done when Mogen's teaching load is full or when he is on sabbatical.

When asked about why he believes that an interdisciplinary course such as this one is vital to a university environment, Mogen remarks, "There's a lot of lip service paid to interdisciplinary program design; but university structures reflect another paradigm, which is the power of committees. Not much is actually done to create these interdisciplinary structures, and much more could be done. I think it's important to deal with the connections across disciplines, and perhaps create a new paradigm."

Callahan has similar ideas on the subject. "Interdisciplinary courses reflect the real world; nothing affects only one discipline. At the end of our class, the students have become a community with a shared goal. Classes like this break down stereotypes, generate energy and vitality, and help us to see the connections that bind us."

For both Mogen and Callahan, there is clear evidence of the class' success. Mogen reflects, "We've seen a lot of interesting writing and had some great discussions." Callahan adds, "Some students still want to meet after the class ends. That light bulb that helps them make connections has come on."

The two will continue their academic collaboration in an interdisciplinary senior seminar titled *Construction of Self in Philosophy, Literature and Medicine*, taught next year in conjunction with Bernie Rollin of the philosophy department. Perhaps a new paradigm shift will be instigated by this course. Nothing would make Mogen and Callahan happier.



David Mogen and Gerry Callahan

several years, we're much more conscious of the way the other works." The class has spent so much time in the developing stages that neither instructor envisions dramatic change in the near future. "The material may change, and there's always fine-tuning

A Portrait of Charles Smith

By Samar Abulhassan

Known for his rigorous workloads, good-humored demeanor and passion for literature, Charles Smith has impressed CSU students for almost thirty years. Smith earned both BA and MA degrees in English literature from the University of Nebraska, and he received his PhD in English literature with a concentration in Medieval literature from Princeton University in 1972. The English professor—who humorously dubs himself “anachronistic”—has announced he will retire at the end of this semester, triggering emotional responses from faculty and students.

Former student Deanna Ludwin recalls reading multiple volumes of literature for one of Smith’s Medieval courses, a workload uncommon even at the graduate level. “Those of us in the class soon realized that we were in the presence of a gifted scholar and master teacher,” said Ludwin, an English instructor at

“You can’t study literature apart from the culture that produced it.”

CSU who earned her Master’s in the 1980s. “I’m sure I never devoted more time to any course.”

Earlier this year, Smith was awarded the prestigious John N. Stern Distinguished Teaching Award, a tribute to his untiring service at CSU. “Personally, I think of Charles as the essence of integrity,” said Kate Kiefer, a professor of English who was instrumental in nominating Smith for the award. She described Smith as an indispensable worker, whether running computer-assisted composition courses, teaching Medieval literature or advising his students.

At the crux of Smith’s teaching philosophy is a firm belief that “you can’t study literature apart from the

culture that produced it.” For example, the word “pornography” would be absent from a study of life during Medieval times, a principle Smith drilled into his students countless times, Ludwin said. “We chanted like a mantra, ‘All is clean to the clean,’” she mused.

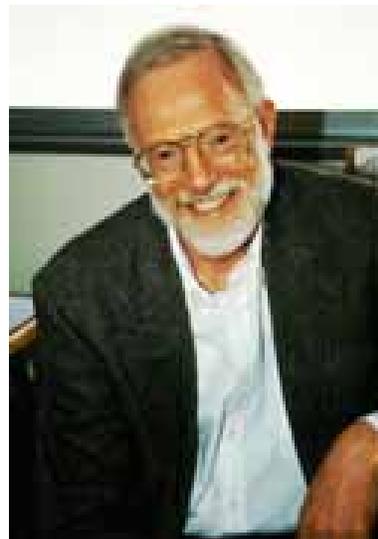
Smith was also one of five faculty members to develop an honors capstone course called *Nature and Human Nature: Impacts and Implications of Science Since 1859*. Smith, who has taught the class jointly three times,

said the course looks at the impact of such things as evolution, quantum mechanics and ecology on our daily lives. “It’s the most fascinating course I’ve ever been involved with,” he said.

In the 1980s, along with Kiefer, Smith headed development of the collegiate version of AT&T Bell Lab’s Writer’s Workbench, a computer program to help students in style, spelling and grammar. The two implemented a computer-assisted composition course and trained faculty to use the program in composition courses. Smith also became heavily involved in an effort to bring to CSU a mainframe IBM program called CRITIQUE that could process natural language. But after IBM abandoned the project to catch up to PC developments in the 1990s, Smith started to think about retiring.

Throughout his CSU career, Smith has lived on Loomis Street, a student neighborhood north of campus where students often frolic during all hours of the night. Ready for a quieter neighborhood, Smith recently purchased 40 acres of land just outside of Fort Collins where he and his wife will design and build a house. “I saw a chance to get in touch with the other Charles Smith, the one who likes to do practical things as well as intellectual things,” he said.

Smith said he plans to spend his time enjoying retirement, working at the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association, publishing some Medieval papers and, of course, building his dream house.



Charles Smith

CSU Literary

Colorado Review: 25 Years of Excellence

By Karen Olson

Colorado Review, Colorado State University's internationally distributed literary magazine, entered its 25th year of publication in 1998. In a recent Denver Post article, writer Ed Will said, CR's "longevity, quality and circulation place it among the nation's top literary magazines." This is no small feat in the competitive environment of small press publications. CR's success is certainly due in part to its impressive list of contributors, including writers such as Mark Strand, Raymond Carver, Barbara Guest, Alberto Rios, Karen Volkman and Robert Olen Butler.

David Milofsky is the editor of *Colorado Review* and the director of the Center for Literary Publishing. The Center publishes CR and is staffed by graduate student interns who learn literary magazine and book production, contest administration, public relations and marketing, subscription fulfillment—in short, how to run a small publishing house by doing it.

Interns are currently working on updating the CR home page, researching and writing grant proposals, designing promotional materials and working on creative ways to increase subscriptions. They also work on publicizing the Colorado Prize for Poetry and the Evil Companions Literary Award.

Judge Jane Miller chose Catherine Webster's *The Thicket Daybreak* as winner of the 1997 Colorado Prize. Webster received a \$1000 honorarium, and the Center for Literary Publishing typeset and organized production of her book. The 1998 Prize carries a \$1500 honorarium.

Former winners of the Colorado Prize include Bruce Beasley's *Summer Mystagogia* and Dean Young's *Strike Anywhere*, which has just gone into a second printing. "This is a rarity for



books of poetry from small presses," said Milofsky. "We are pleased about Dean Young's success."

Dorothy Allison, author of *Bastard Out of Carolina* and *Cavedweller*, is this year's Evil Companion. The award is named after a group of journalists in Denver in the 1950s who regularly met to discuss literature. Former winners include Mona Simpson, Robert Boswell, Yusef Komunyakaa, James Galvin and Joanne Greenberg. A reception for Allison was held April 9th at the Oxford Hotel in downtown Denver.

With CR subscriptions on the rise, the number of Colorado Prize entries growing each year, and the increasing awareness of Evil Companions, interns at the Center for Literary Publishing are continually involved in new projects. Not only is the Center a place to learn about publishing and to interact with professional writers, it is also a place where students from multiple genres create a literary community.

Jewels Sparkle

Greyrock Review: Offering Opportunity

By Jillene Randall

The 1997-98 staff of the *Greyrock Review* tried a few crazy tactics to get this year's publication to print. We held a contest and opened up our submissions to all Colorado colleges in hopes of recruiting good writers and financial support. We also held a couple of intense poetry slams at Avogadro's that generated money and energy for the writing world.

We hit up every friend, family and faculty member who would listen to our plea for donations, and we even entertained the idea of hand-binding this year's book due to a major cut in our funding from the English department. But we've come through in one piece, and, thanks to all of those who helped by supporting us, we will be able to make ends and pages meet.

We have had an excellent turnout



Greyrock Review staff

this spring semester in the number of students interested in the *Greyrock*. This year's staff is composed of roughly 23, people including Faculty Advisor, poet Laura Mullen, and Graduate Advisor, fiction writer Nannette Rogers-Kennedy.

The rest of the staff is composed entirely of students who are either registered for an internship in literary editing for one credit or just participate on a volunteer basis to help out and learn the publishing world. The *Greyrock* staff elects four officers for the year. L'Shawn Lyle is this year's Assistant Editor and Jill Randall is the

Editor. Luisa Groher takes care of advertising and PR, and Lance McKinley is the treasurer. Johanna Racz, next year's graduate advisor, has also dedicated lots of time and advice this semester, as has last year's editor, Juhl Wojahn.

Working on the *Greyrock Review* includes learning not only the entire publication process, from idea to finished book product, but also information about the writing scene and how to submit your own work for publication. Many students find that the overall process impacts their own writing and helps them develop their own voice and ideas.

Online with the Nieve Roja Review

By Mark Sanchez

The *Nieve Roja Review* began in 1995 when English professor Mike Palmquist and Mark Smallwood, then an MFA candidate, proposed publishing an Internet magazine that would be linked to the English home page.

MFA candidate Mark Sanchez subsequently worked with Smallwood to create a journal that would emphasize quality poetry, fiction, nonfiction, interviews and criticism, while at the same time pushing for materials and submission from multicultural backgrounds.

When Smallwood left the program in 1996, English department alumna Marla Cowell began working on the magazine. Together, she and Sanchez carried on the initial vision of the magazine: To create a student-run publication that would include diverse works from authors within and outside the CSU community. Sanchez created the name *Nieve Roja* (Red Snow) because it reflected both the regional and cultural influences on the publication.

The first issue of the magazine featured poetry from Aaron Abeyta, an interview with fiction writer and author of *The Sincere Cafe*, Leslee Becker, and a tribute to Allen Ginsberg. The latest issue, spring 1998, features a poem by Chicano poet Jimmy



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Images and Impressions of Chile

By Allyson Klein and Kathryn Morgan

Traveling along the southern Chilean countryside—Andes to the east, the South Pacific ocean to the west—Mary Crow and Deanna Ludwin entered a world quite different from their own. They landed first in Santiago—a city midway between “the world’s most perfect desert” to the far north and a vast array of



Mary and Deanna in Punta Arenas

glaciated islands to the far south—via professional growth grants from the College of Liberal Arts and some matching funds from the English department at CSU.

Because Crow lived in Santiago on a Fulbright scholarship fifteen years before, she was able to show Ludwin the house where she lived, the oldest cathedral in the city and the fine arts museum. They then flew to the southern tip of the country, to the city with the largest population that far south in the world, Punta Arenas.

This town took Ludwin by surprise. The combination of Chilean culture and European influence reflected a city that welcomed the modern way of life while respecting the integrity of its past. Part of Chile’s history and culture showed up in the highly adorned cemeteries, to which Ludwin felt an immediate connection. “It puts you in touch in a very different way,” she said, looking at a photograph of a graveside tribute to a day-old infant. Juxtaposed with the innocence of a young child’s death was that of a Nazi war veteran’s grave decorated, not with flowers, but with the instruments of war.

The daily newspaper showcased the influence of literature on the Chileans. “Serious writers author columns, and papers have literary sections covering books by French philosophers and international intellectuals that would put our papers to shame,” said Crow. The many colors of the people who landed in Chile—Germans, Italians, Spaniards—were on display at the craft fairs, the outdoor markets and the many streetside vendors proffering hand-crafted

goods and typical Chilean foods. From the magnificence of its many cathedrals to the multi-colored buildings that painted the cityscape, Punta Arenas impressed itself as a city rich with artistic expression and a pervasive sense of those who live there.

In addition to the beauty of the urban landscape, Ludwin found that the natural environment provided a feast for the senses as well. “There were flowers everywhere,” she said. “Even the most humble homes had beautiful flowering shrubs.” Before departing Punta Arenas, both women took a day-long boat ride out through the fjords to some of the many brilliant blue glaciers.

The next stop was Puerto Natales, site of Latin America’s premier national park, Torres Del Peine, where Crow and Ludwin saw herds of guanacos, wild foxes and snow-capped volcanoes. On the island of Chiloé, the women visited a craft market at Dalchahue and toured the unforgettable orange and lavender cathedral. Everywhere in Chiloé they remarked at the quirky nuances of their surroundings. “The south of Chile is in many ways still in the 19th century, so traveling there offers many surprises,

such as people traveling in primitive ox carts with wooden yokes and wooden wheels,” said Crow.



Chochoca (traditional Chilean bread)

Ludwin, as well, was struck by the idiosyncrasies of the land and its people. “We stayed in a funny, sprawling hotel, *Unicornio Azul* (Blue Unicorn), which was painted bright pink!” she exclaimed. Their room looked like the inside of a boat cabin with its wooden paneling, and a small room nearby housed an auspiciously placed table on which Crow and Ludwin recorded their impressions.

Continued on p.10

“The south of Chile is in many ways still in the 19th century, so traveling there offers many surprises.”

A Place to Call Home

By Raleigh Gould

Professor Ellen Brinks moved to Fort Collins in the summer of 1997 from Manhattan. She misses the density of people and street life, as well as the diversity Manhattan offers. She also misses the rain. Yet, Brinks has found many things to be happy about in Colorado. She has devoted some of her time to hiking in the mountains and skiing. When she can find time in her hectic schedule, she also enjoys film and travel.

To be sure, however, Brinks is most delighted by the opportunity to teach English to undergraduate students. She has had a great experience teaching at CSU thus far and claims that her students have been “really creative and committed to their studies.” Brinks has been pleased with the variety of her students and finds one of the thrills of teaching to be the element of surprise. “It’s exciting,” she says, “not knowing what to expect from students when they walk into the class.” Brinks finds students’ responses to literature both compelling and unexpected. For instance, this semester a student in her English Romanticism class, environmental health major Leslie Marchando, related a Wordsworthian experience of nature to the field and practices of “bioaesthetics.”

Brinks is also interested in the individuality of each of her students. One of the things she learned

“I became interested in experiences that go beyond the ordinary and everyday.”

from her teaching experience at Princeton, where she received her PhD in comparative literature, was that “every person in the classroom brings a whole different set of experiences and expectations and interests to the class.” It is important to Brinks to recognize the individuality of each student, as well as to show a sincere interest and willingness to engage each of them. One of her former jobs was in the field of social work where her experience with disadvantaged children enabled her to relate with people from all walks of life and to recognize the importance of not pre-judging people.

The fact that Brinks spent four years in Germany studying at Phillips Universitat Marburg to obtain

her Master’s degree in German literature also contributed to her receptiveness toward diversity. When she lived in Germany, Brinks became



Ellen Brinks

completely immersed in the culture and the language and found this exposure both exciting and fascinating. She wrote her Master’s thesis on the twentieth century German poet Gottfried Benn and continued to implement German studies into her schooling; she focused on comparing German and English literature for her PhD in comparative litera-

ture. She wrote her Doctoral thesis on masculinity in the Gothic Romantic narratives of Coleridge, Keats, Byron, Hegel and Freud and is currently working on turning this dissertation into a book.

I asked Brinks what enticed her to specialize in Gothic Romanticism, to which she responded, “I became interested in experiences that go beyond the ordinary and everyday.” Next year Brinks will teach what promises to be a very interesting course on Gothic literature from the eighteenth century to the present. She plans on incorporating film into the course, such as *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, *Psycho*, *Aliens*, *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*.

Undoubtedly though, Brinks’ interest in literature goes well beyond the Gothic and the Romantic. Some of her published works include essays on seventeenth century map-making and women writers, free blacks in England in the 1790s and the adoption of religious rhetoric for a revolutionary abolitionist agenda, and twentieth-century lesbian writers and their revision of “home.” For now, Brinks is happy teaching at CSU and making a home for herself in Colorado.

“It’s exciting not knowing what to expect from students when they walk into the class.”

CSU's Got A Brand New Bag

By Raleigh Gould

The new and improved CSU Web site showed its face to the world on February 20, 1998. CSU President Al Yates proposed that the Web page be updated to make it more attractive and appealing to prospective CSU students, current students, faculty and staff. The task of redesigning a new site was a major endeavor that involved the hard work and dedication of a myriad of people.

Under the direction of Laurie Hayes, Associate Vice-Provost, and Gil Mulley, Acting Director of Public Relations, a team of writers, programmers and photographers was assembled to redesign the CSU Web page. Some of the key players involved in improving the Web page included Luann Barnes, Laurie Hayes, Greg Hoecht, Karen Holman, Kay Jackson, Gil Mulley, Mary Ontiveros, Mike Palmquist, Dale Rosenbach and Don Zimmerman.

Starting January 21st, the development team met nightly to determine how they were going to redesign the Web page and, since the initial meeting, the team put in well over a thousand hours in a month's time to get the Web page up and running. According to Mike Palmquist, who worked on overall design and navigation issues for the site, "Finding enough time and people to finish the project by the deadline proved to be a major obstacle."

Undoubtedly, even though the redesigned Web site is active, the work is far from over. The development team will

continue to meet once every two weeks. In addition, numerous hours of assessment and usability testing will be conducted to ensure that the new Web site is meeting the team's expectations.

The amount of work the development team has poured into the redesigning process is tremendous, and one may

wonder why all this work is necessary when many people were satisfied with the old Web page. I spoke to Palmquist about this issue as well: "The old Web page took too long to load. It tried to cater to too many audiences. It tried to do everything."

The design team focused on enhancing the site's attractiveness, improving its functionality, making it more accessible and creating a structure that could grow over

time. The new test site loads in less than fifteen seconds; there is a common look and feel throughout the Web page; there is a consistent set of graphics, links and design structures across the site that will ease maintenance; and new pictures were added to the site to appeal to a younger audience. The team will continue to work together to make the CSU Web page the best that it can be, but, at least for now, the design team can come up for air. Visit the site at WWW.ColoState.Edu.



Chile, continued from p.8

From Castro, they took a taxi to the village of Pid Pid where the two Americans supped on some of the tasty culinary creations of the natives. This tiny village, population 200, hosts a food festival that includes fresh rotisserie lamb and a traditional bread called *chochoca* that is grilled on wooden spits. At this event, Crow and Ludwin stumbled upon a bit of American fashion—a young woman wearing a CSU sweatshirt! This vestige of American culture came as quite a surprise in such a small and remote area. "The south of Chile," Crow said, "is one of the really beautiful places in the world, relatively underdeveloped and relatively unpolluted."

One of the highlights of the trip was the magnificent Osorno Volcano, near Lake Llanquihue. Puerto Varas,

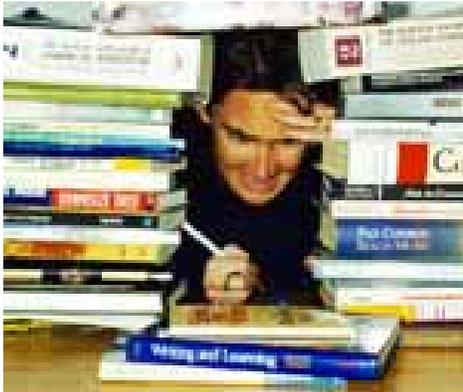
in the heart of the Lake District, offered a lovely hotel with large rooms, complete with tables and a direct view of the full moon looming over the volcano at sunset.

Both writers kept copious journals, jotting notes along the way and scribbling rough drafts of poems. One factor that influenced Crow's writing was the length of their days. "In the south of Chile it was light until 11:00 at night, which is wonderful!" exclaimed Crow. "It gives you a charge of energy—it's like getting a transfusion!" Both Crow and Ludwin feel that travel refreshes the creative spirit and offers new images and inspiration. "The writing itself seemed more urgent, more immediately imbued with meaning than it does when I'm at home," said Ludwin.

From the Lake District, Crow and Ludwin took buses to Temuco. On the final evening of the trip, they dined in the local market at a restaurant. They ordered Chilean champagne to celebrate the end of a successful journey. Instead of admitting she did not have the bottle they requested, the restaurant's owner made a quick run to purchase it from another vendor in the *mercado*. Before the meal was complete, the owner shared stories of her life and experiences with the Americans. Both Crow and Ludwin were impressed by the generosity and warm-hearted nature of the Chileans. Remarked Crow, "Over and over again, we developed an affectionate relationship with the people."

Oh, Those Dreaded Comps!

By Cara McDonald



A stressed grad student

Grad students are an interesting sort. The mere act of re-upping for additional years of school indicates a kind of masochistic personality, one driven to spend further time in libraries losing eyesight and personal savings in pursuit of deeper brain fissures and a justification for a bohemian-chic wardrobe. Some of this lunacy is caused in the name of the Master's thesis, and some by a more vague and threatening event: The Comprehensive Exam.

The comprehensive exam is by no means unique to the English Master's candidate. Other departments across CSU's campus require comps in varying shades and forms—some oral and others in the form of formal papers or take-home examinations. Even within the English department, the exams take different shapes between the programs—take-homes for MFAs and timed in-house for literature and communication development. Some require massive reading lists; others synthesize knowledge from a core of required courses.

All of them seem to inspire dread.

"We believe in using them for a lot of reasons," says Carol Cantrell, Director of the

Graduate Program in the English department. "A grad program should stress independent learning, and it is reasonable to use comps as a way to encourage and evaluate this." She is emphatic that these exams turn out to be positive experiences for students and are not merely devices to weed out or intimidate them.

The volume of information that comps require students to master may seem daunting, but it is more to encourage students to become participants in their academic community than to terrify them. "A big misconception is that comps require a giant, mental dump, but instead of inhaling information, you need to *own* it," said Cantrell. "It's a big step toward being a peer in your field."

The only thing the students in *my* comps study group owned were copious notes and well-stamped customer cards from the Coffee Connection! We compiled endless lists of

"A grad program should stress independent learning, and it is reasonable to use comps as a way to encourage and evaluate this."

things to do and words to know and books to read and ultimately went our separate ways, each secretly believing that the rest of the group was crazy and barking up the wrong tree. According to Cantrell, this can be one of the biggest problems. "Students seem to trade a lot of misinformation and feed each other's fears. There is a lot of needless stress and speculation." She sighs and smiles.

"I've thought perhaps students took these a little too seriously. I thought it would be

Student Suggestions

1. Get them over with while the material is fresh in your head.
2. Eat a good breakfast.
3. Be comfortable on the computer system you will use to take the test.
4. Speculate on a variety of possible questions.
5. Drink lots of water.

hilarious to give a joke exam, like a set of word analogies: 'Hemingway is to Thoreau as Kerouac is to

_____?,' or maybe a nice 'Find Your Major Author word search,' . . . but it would probably lead to complete collapse." She is quick to point out that the committees grading comps do take the process seriously, and fairness is a big consideration. "I think there is a tremendous concern with fairness, but I've always been impressed with the degree of consensus that the committee reaches."

Not that complete collapse doesn't happen. Sometimes people freeze, choke, overcompensate or just try to regurgitate everything they've learned. Or, sometimes a troop of unsupervised boyscouts attending a convention finds the building fuse box and turns off all of the electricity during the exam. "It was really

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Cantrell's Keys to Success

1. Get a sample copy of the exam. Practicing answering old exam questions can help show students what kind of questions to expect.
2. Take the exam when the time is right for you. Allow for adequate study time, but don't procrastinate or obsess. Some students like to get them over with quickly, but depending on the program, they may benefit from further coursework.
3. Talk with your advisor. Be sure he/she is aware of where you are in your course of study.
4. Talk to other students who have taken it. They can give you pointers and study tips or just vent with you.
5. Study in a group. Compare ideas and use each other as sounding boards.

Tayson Writes to Free a Voice

By Dawna Duncan

Though now known nationwide for his poetry and his book co-authored with Julia Tavalaro, Richard Tayson started this trip from the CSU English department. Along the way, Tayson blossomed into an award-winning poet and prose writer. Following completion of his BA in English at Colorado State University in December of 1988, he received his MA in creative writing at New York University. He went on to win the Pushcart Prize: Best of Small Presses XXI, Prairie Schooner's Bernice Slote Award for four poems published in the fall 1995 issue, and the Academy of American Poets, College Prize.

In addition, he expanded his interests to teaching along such avenues as hospital writing workshops, workshops for Poets Theater and The Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center, in addition to serving as an adjunct faculty member for both the writing program and the humanities at The New School for Social Research in New York.

When teaching, Tayson can neither anticipate who will show up in his classroom nor prepare for the experiences he will encounter there. In October of 1991, when 56 year old Julia Tavalaro arrived in his writing workshop at Goldwater Memorial Hospital sitting stiffly in her wheel chair, she had a sign over her head that read, "My name is Julia. I am nonspeaking. I look up for yes. Ask me ward/floor."

Quickly, the bond between Tayson as professor and Tavalaro as student moved across boundaries set by age and language, and the two forged a strong connection. Tayson noted her impact on his life in the foreword to their book: "Though Julia was my 'student,' during the semester, I often felt that our roles were reversed. I found her to be fascinating, articulate, able-

"Writing frees me and I don't want to get trapped in formula."

minded, and, when she wasn't in pain, brimming with every possible emotion, including joy."

Tavalaro, you see, is no ordinary woman. She is extraordinary. Having suffered two strokes at the age of 33, she was thought to be brain dead for six years of her life. When a speech therapist finally discovered she had a living mind trying to communicate, Tavalaro's stories came forth. Due to Richard Tayson's efforts, she and her story reach out.

One cannot deny the incredible value of Tayson's ability and the insurmountable work performed to transpose a life and style of writing from the simple glances and nods of Julia's head

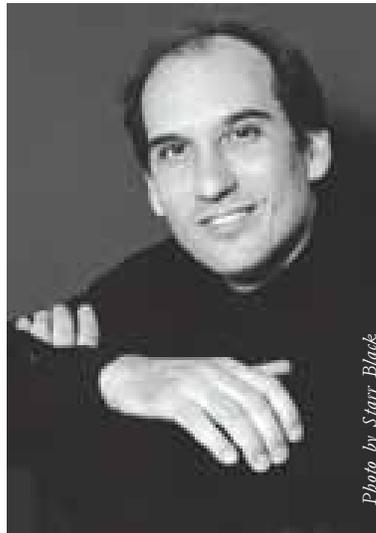
to the printed page. But Tayson did more than simply transcribe information. This talented writer managed to convey thoughts, emotion, and more than anything, he gave voice to a heart otherwise unable to squeal, scream, or shout in joy and pain as you and I might.

When asked whether he had any idea where meeting Tavalaro would lead, Tayson replied, "Absolutely not. In 1993, when I was the NYU/Goldwater Hospital Workshop Coordinator, I received a phone call from *The New York Times*, and they published an article about Tavalaro. This led to a book offer, among other things. For eighteen months Tavalaro and I met for five hours a day, and we would use a letter board to communicate about her experience of living for thirty years in a public hospital."

In a way, Tayson connected himself to Tavalaro in heart and mind, drawing on her strength to be a person rather than a mere frame of what once was Julia Tavalaro—the woman, mother, grandmother, friend.

Tayson spent many hours working with Tavalaro on their book. "Though the degree of her disability filled me with many feelings—fear, sorrow, pity, thankfulness at being able to walk and speak—I could somehow see past the surface level of her disability," he remarks. He delved into the life of this unique woman, emulating the style of the poetry she began writing in 1977.

"During the time it took to write this book, we were both pressed to our limits as writers and human beings," says Tayson. "When we first started writing, I didn't think we'd be able to finish the book, let alone get people to read it." In spite of this, the book was published and Tayson and Tavalaro appeared on Dateline NBC and a variety of other talk shows. Tayson appeared on a radio show and received reviews from *Publishers Weekly*, *Rocky Mountain News* and *The New York Times Book Review*. Now, *Reader's Digest* is about



Richard Tayson

Photo by Starr Black



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The Writing Center Evolves

By Todd Forkner

What do you do with a “best kept secret” that nobody wants to keep? As the University Writing Center approaches its 20th year of existence, Writing Center Director Laura Thomas grapples with this problem: “I’m convinced there are more people out there who would utilize our services if they were aware of them.” To this end, Thomas, in conjunction with the composition studies faculty in the English department, is working on a three-fold plan to expand use of the center.

The first step began when the English department hired tenure-track faculty member Nick Carbone to become the full time director of the Writing Center beginning in the fall of 1998. Previously, the position was staffed on a temporary basis by lecturers. According to Composition Professor Kate Kiefer, “[The temporary position] creates problems with continuity; new people may dismantle what was done previously.” In addition to establishing a more

consistent program, Thomas believes that having a permanent director will aid in connecting with a wider group of potential clients. “I think more outreach needs to be done, and having a permanent Writing Center director will facilitate that.”

The second phase involves moving the center from its present location in Aylesworth Hall to a permanent site in Eddy Hall. In its past incarnations, the center has listed a “windowless basement” space in Johnson Hall, a student lounge in Aylesworth, and Kiefer’s office as its various “homes.” Thomas thinks more students will frequent the center once it resides in Eddy. “It’s been an uphill progression but we will be moving closer to the action in Eddy Hall. We’ll be in a more centralized location closer to the computer labs.”

The third component involves expanding the ongoing effort to develop programs that support Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC). The center’s participation in WAC promotion began through the creation of workshops to assist university faculty in adapting and formulating curriculum that would facilitate WAC activities. In the past few years, those efforts have expanded

through use of the Online Writing Center, which offers support via the World Wide Web.

Thomas feels these efforts create opportunities for outreach and education among the faculty, and through them to their students. Two goals for broadening the Writing Center’s role in WAC development include planning workshops on specific discipline-oriented writing tasks for graduate and undergraduate students and surveying faculty members for feedback on possible WAC applications.

Above all, Thomas wants to continue to provide and improve the services the Writing Center has offered to the CSU writing community since its inception in 1979. “Our mission is to produce better writers, not just better writing,” says Thomas. Composition Director Mike Palmquist concurs: “Many people think the writing center is a ‘fix-it’ shop; they have a sense that it is strictly for remediation.” In fact, while the center does provide



Writing center director Laura Thomas advises student Miles Stanley on a writing project.

remediation through individual tutoring for students who fail to meet minimum proficiency for inclusion in the Composition 150 course, it also offers assistance to a broad range of clientele that includes graduate students working on dissertations, English as a second language (ESL) students and CSU faculty and staff.

“What we do best is individual, one-on-one tutoring,” says Thomas. This tutoring is provided by second-year graduate teaching assistants from the composition program with the goal of helping writers build permanent skills. Thomas agrees with Palmquist: “We are not a ‘fix-it’ shop. We’re concerned with the education of writers, not the correcting of writing. We want to blast the notion of the solitary romantic genius toiling in a garret. Writing is not a solitary activity. We are here to engage in a dialogue and to help students develop a repertoire of skills. Eventually, good tutors make themselves obsolete.” The University Writing Center is currently located in Aylesworth C-104. Its hours of operation are Monday through Thursday, 9-12 & 1-5 and Friday 9-12. Phone: 491-0222

“Our mission is to produce better writers, not just better writing.”

“We want to blast the notion of the solitary romantic genius toiling in a garret. Writing is not a solitary activity.”

To GTA or Not to GTA?

By *Christof Demont-Heinrich*

The *Other* is a frequent topic of discussion in many CSU English department graduate classes. The *Other* represents who we are *not* or who we believe we are *not*. And we use the *Other* to—at least partially—define ourselves. A certain social and cultural hierarchy is implied in the notion of *Other*, one in which the majority is often (though not always) placed in a dominant or central position in comparison to the minority. However, sometimes the opposite holds true: The minority occupies a central or dominant position in relation to the majority.

Such a relationship would appear to exist at Colorado State between English graduate students who have been awarded graduate teaching assistantships (GTA's) and those who have not. Unfortunately, there seems to be no viable alternative to



Paul Barribeau

designating graduate students without GTA's as anything other than *non-GTA's*, even though 79 of 127 total current graduate students—more than half of the English graduate student body—do not hold teaching assistantships. In other words, the majority's social position within the English department seems to be based on what they do not have—an assistantship. Thus, graduate students without teaching assistantships seem to be, in a very real sense, designated as the departmental *Other*.

The most obvious gap between the “haves” and the “have-nots” in the English department would seem to be economic. However, many English graduate students indicate that there is often a social divide as well.

GTA's, all of whom undergo an intensive week-long orientation before the beginning of the fall semester, receive a substantial boost in the socialization arena, says Heather Urschel, a second-year GTA concentrating in communication development (CD). “I think GTA's have an advantage. We all get thrown together in orientation and we acquire a kind of boot camp mentality. It causes us to want to hang out together.”

Paul Barribeau, a first-year GTA with a concentration in literature, agrees that the initial



Allyson Klein

GTA training helps incoming GTA's form a special, perhaps even exclusive, bond. “On a social level, [orientation] helped a lot. I think it's played out in classes. [GTA's] group together; we herd.”

“GTA's do have a big advantage in terms of the opportunities to form social bonds and friendships,” says Jonathan Howell, a third-year CD student. But, while Howell laments the fact that there are not more organized social activities aimed at integrating all graduate students into the English department, he says he understands why GTA's tend to hang together. “Most GTA's are just like everyone else who's new; they make alliances with whomever they happen to be around.”

GTA's and *non-GTA's* take classes together and interact with one another in the classroom. However, according to the graduate students interviewed for this article, GTA's and *non-GTA's* do not socialize much outside of class.

“It seems like the two groups don't really associate too much,” says Dave Golden, a second-year graduate student who is a first-year GTA. “If you're a GTA, you have a much greater sense of community. As a *non-GTA*, you feel a little more isolated. You don't have the same forms of assistance to meet other people.”

“It's really hard having to find an outside job to support yourself. I think it puts more pressure on you.”

Allyson Klein, who is working toward a Master's in CD, says she'd like to see more of an effort to socialize *non-GTA's* into the general English department discourse community early in the semester. “I feel slighted,” says Klein. “The GTA's—especially the first year—are socialized before school even starts. They already know each other before the first class begins.”

...That is the Issue

However, none of the graduate students interviewed felt that there was a deliberate attempt among GTAs to separate themselves from the *non*-GTAs. “I don’t think it’s a conscious thing,” says Golden, who has experienced both worlds. “I think it’s more circumstantial.” But Golden did add that he thought a graduate

“If you’re a GTA, you have a much greater sense of community. As a non-GTA, you feel a little more isolated.”

student’s social status in the department hinges heavily on whether a student is a GTA or not. “I think one of the things that defines you in this department is whether or not you have an assistantship. There’s a huge distinction between someone who teaches and someone who doesn’t.”

Golden, Howell and Klein would like to see awareness of this issue extend beyond the social and into the economic. “Many *non*-GTAs have to work very hard to put themselves through school,” says Howell, who began at CSU by working full-time at Kinko’s and taking a full schedule of classes.



Dave Golden

“GTAs have a stipend of \$800 to \$900 a month and their tuition is completely paid for,” Howell explains. “We have to pay for tuition and we don’t get any stipend. I don’t think a lot of GTAs realize the situation that many *non*-GTAs are in. I’m about \$15,000 in debt right now.”

“It’s really hard having to find an outside job to support yourself,” says Klein, who works 20-40 hours per week editing a newsletter for CSU Apartment Life. “I think it puts more pressure on you.”

Simple awareness of each other’s situations and the various demands, advantages and disadvantages associated with those positions is not enough to integrate English graduate students more thoroughly, say those interviewed. Urschel envisions a separate orientation for all graduate students organized by graduate students them-

selves early each semester. Barribeau says he’d like to see a more “extensive and intensive” orientation and introduction according to concentration for all graduate students.

While Golden stresses that it’s difficult to “institutionalize” social interaction, he, too, indicates that a formal orientation program for all students in the program would be helpful in integrating *non*-GTAs. Howell suggests a voluntary “buddy” system in which an experienced GTA or a second- or third-year *non*-GTA could show incoming students “the ropes.” A graduate assistant position created exclusively to foster communication between all graduate students and faculty is another



Jonathan Howell

possibility, says Howell. Such a coordinator could make sure that social functions, readings, meetings and departmental events were publicized and promoted efficiently and consistently to all graduate students, via a newsletter, emails or perhaps even an online newsletter.

Klein, too, would like to see more efforts to

“I think one of the things that defines you in this department is whether or not you have an assistantship.”

socialize *non*-GTAs into the department via early semester orientations and more frequent, organized and well-promoted social functions. But in the end, all Klein is asking for is a place for all graduate students simply to “hang out.” Both Howell and Klein note that unlike the GTAs, *non*-GTAs have no offices to go to between classes. “I think it would be really nice to have a common place where people could go and have coffee and chit-chat,” says Klein. “Right now, I feel like we’re shadows with no place to go.”

New Faces in Eddy Hall

by Leslie Dengler

Passing by the English department's office these days, one might notice a new face behind the window and a familiar one missing. No need for alarm—the office staff has just been going through some changes. Tracy Barber, who worked at CSU for just over two years, left the English department in January to pursue a job opportunity in Colorado Springs. Rhonda Shank,

missed by everyone who valued her organization; but as Shank reminded me, “She’s only an email away.”

Shank's duties practically doubled in February when she took over Barber's graduate school responsibilities, while remaining in charge of the undergraduate process. “Because Rhonda has worked in the English department for over a year, her training requirements were minimal,” said Marcia Aune, the English department's Office Manager.

The biggest challenges Shank has faced so far include keeping up with the graduate school applications and dealing with graduation deadlines for both graduate and undergraduate students. Slightly overwhelmed by the transition into her new position, she could not yet tell me what her favorite part of her new job is. Apart from the refreshing view she now has out of her very own window, she could only add, “Ask me in a month!”

Cathy Topf came to the English department with a background as a media assistant in the Poudre R1 school district and with experience from Mail Boxes, Etc. Topf's many responsibilities include receptionist duties, distribution of mail, updating the English department's newsletter and, of course, minor photocopier repair. “There are a million little details to learn, like the names of forms and deadlines,” said Topf. “Learning them all is the biggest challenge.” All of the office employees have all helped Topf settle into her new position at the university. And it is this setting that Topf likes

“It's never the same. Every day is a little different.”

most about her new position. “It's never the same. Every day is a little different.”

All members of the staff agree that the best part about working in the English department is the group of people they work with, including faculty and students. “What I miss most about my job is the people I worked with,” said Barber. “I really enjoyed working in the English department. Everybody had something interesting to share and I really enjoyed talking to and learning from them.”



From left to right, Rhonda Shank, Marcia Aune, Cathy Topf, and Sue Russell

another well-known face around the department, took over Tracy's position as Administrative Assistant to the Undergraduate and Graduate Programs. A new

addition to the staff is Cathy Topf, who now works in Shank's old position as Departmental Administrative Assistant.

In the time that Barber was with CSU, she became an invaluable resource for the English department's graduate students. She assisted students throughout their schooling—from requests for information, through admissions, GS forms and, finally, graduation. Sue Russell, Administrative Assistant to the Composition Program, said, “Tracy did an excellent job making each graduate student feel welcome and important and letting them all know she was there to help them.” Barber also tackled Web site updating, key distribution and countless other duties.

When asked what was her biggest accomplishment in the office, Barber replied, “I'd say that I'm most proud of the organization that I brought to the position, which in turn affected most of my work.” She will be

Technology & the English Department

By Jonathan Howell

Technology is constantly changing our lives. From the invention of the ball point pen and computers to the latest LCD projection device, Colorado State University has always been at the cutting edge of deploying technology.

The Department of English is no exception when it comes to using the most recent advances to further the aims of teaching and research. The English department has used a computer-equipped classroom to teach numerous classes since 1981.

Room 300 of the Eddy building, outfitted with 50 computers, is a place where students and staff have the opportunity to use some of the latest equipment to further the teaching aims of the department. According to Mike Palmquist, 300 Eddy was “the first computer-supported writing lab in the country” and was instrumental in several pioneering studies conducted chiefly by Kate Kiefer and Charles Smith during the early part of the 1980s.

Faculty and students continue to use the facility to conduct research on how teaching is impacted by technology and how students can benefit from using technology to improve their writing. Currently, the English department has more than 100 computers available to students in four labs within the Eddy building. Stop by 300 Eddy any time and you are sure to find most workstations in use by students from all majors and departments.

Graduate Teaching Assistants are provided

the opportunity to teach CO150 in one of these computer classrooms. GTA Christof Demont-Heinrich was not exposed to computers as an undergraduate but was excited about the prospect of teaching in a computer-

equipped classroom. He noticed right away, “Students today may be more comfortable using a computer than writing with pen and paper.”

Demont-Heinrich sometimes begins his class by asking students to write at the computer for several minutes. He says that his students seem to write more than those who use only pen and paper. Demont-Heinrich requires his students to post to a class-specific newsgroup and has noticed, “Students who don’t otherwise participate in class discussions seem to participate in newsgroup discussions.” The traditional power relationships in a typical classroom are changed in a computer classroom setting. Perhaps students feel more comfortable in this decentered environment and this is reflected in their writing.

Demont-Heinrich has also begun to use the LCD projection device in his teaching. This device allows him to project a real-time screen shot of a computer and present how writers actively write and revise: “Rather than describe how a particular piece of text can be revised, I can demonstrate several methods of revision.” Demont-Heinrich has also noticed that students become more engaged in the writing process through the help of the technology in the department. “Overall, the advantages of using recent technology to help teach outweigh the disadvantages of not using it.”



Chris Demont-Heinrich

Students Helping Students

By Mark Tursi

As a result of yet another successful semester with the Kids at Work/Literacy Through Poetry program, the bond between CSU graduate students in the English department and elementary students at Dunn Elementary School grows ever stronger. The internship enables English graduate students from CSU to assist “at-risk” youth in fourth, fifth and sixth grades who are having trouble reading and writing. The program has flourished over the last two years with the help of dedicated graduate student mentors, donations from faculty members and the supportive staff at Dunn Elementary School.

“Kids at Work” is in its sixth successful year, while the new addition, “Literacy Through Poetry,” has just begun its second year. This new

feature of the program involves motivating, instructing, inspiring and guiding the kids at Dunn School in creative writing. At the end of each semester, the students give a reading of their own work. The event, called “Poets at Work: Presenting and Performing,” is tentatively scheduled for the last Thursday in April on the CSU campus. Last year, the reading attracted parents and teachers from Dunn, students from CSU, community members, administrators from the College of Liberal Arts and several faculty members. A resounding success, the reading attracted a standing room audience.

The two foci for the project, reading and writing, are designed to raise literacy levels of elementary students by having them read and discuss with graduate students what they read. The graduate mentors assist them with trouble areas, challenge them to read difficult material and, essentially, try to get them “hooked” on reading. During each session, students write poems or stories based on or inspired by the poetry and fiction they read, or from activities that the graduate students develop for them.

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Creating a Life for Himself

Juhl Wojahn



By Elizabeth Robbins

This May, poet, sculptor and Fort Collins native Juhl Wojahn will graduate from CSU with a BA in creative writing from the English department and a BFA in studio art from the art department. In addition to completing these two demanding majors, Wojahn has also been active with the English department's literary publications.

His involvement with the *Greyrock Review* culminated last year in a position as Associate Editor; this year, he is on the staff of the *Colorado Review* as well. He has also served as a juror, evaluating undergraduate visual arts entries into the university's annual Research and Creativity Symposium. He is currently the treasurer of the Student Organization of Visual Arts, and also a member of Gallery 152, an artists' cooperative downtown.

How does he find time to do all this? "I have one word for you: Coffee." But although Wojahn jokes that school has been "an ongoing sleep deprivation clinic," he does not find the level of involvement difficult to maintain. Both coursework and activities are the types of responsibilities he really enjoys. Coffee is only a means to an end.

Such inspired focus, combined with a certain

serendipity, accounts for Wojahn's academic success. But he was not always so motivated.

Following an indifferent high school career, Wojahn settled into a job with National Cash Register making computer chips. "For the next eight years," he says, "time just slid by. I spent those years in suspended animation." Then he realized he needed something more, something the English and art departments were soon to provide.

Until he took a leave of absence to travel in Europe for ten weeks, Wojahn says he was "used to seeing things one way." Following his eye-opening travels, he began attending school part-time. When, as he puts it, he was "given the opportunity to be fired," he used his severance package to become a full-time student.

Wojahn has earned his creative writing degree for poetry. His BFA in art emphasizes sculpture, which he makes from "junk" or found objects he assembles. He has also worked with bronze casting. In both arts, Wojahn's focus is perspectives that are different, unexpected and leave little room for complacency. "I am interested in the idea of examining things from multiple directions—emotionally, culturally—and in terms of the juxtaposition of the individual to society."

The quality of professors and instructors he has had at CSU, both within his majors and in many electives as well, provides another key to Wojahn's success. "I haven't had any disappointing professors. I'm sad I'm graduating. I don't mind moving on, but there is so much, even just within English, that I haven't touched."

Such a sentiment is rooted in Wojahn's sense of the many potential connections between various aspects of the humanities. Wojahn is moving on. But, with plans to earn his MFA in sculpture, no doubt his insatiable curiosity will continue to serve him well.

Nieve Roja, continued from p.7

Santiago Baca. The magazine also has a nonfiction piece by professors Sue Ellen Campbell and John Calderazzo, as well as a critical piece by Professor James Work.

The new staff includes Jody Jacobson, an MA student in communication development. Her goals for the magazine include publishing diverse work and generating submissions from outside the CSU community. Jonathan Howell, who is nearing completion of his MA in communication development, is another staffer who would like to see the

diversity of student submissions increase to more accurately reflect the student population of CSU. "I hope the *Nieve Roja* can become a significant forum for CSU students to expose their creativity," Howell said.

The staff is currently working on getting an issue out for May and welcomes submissions for art, poetry, fiction, nonfiction, criticism and interviews.

If you are interested in working on or submitting to the *Nieve Roja*, check out the home page: <http://www.colostate.edu/Depts/English/pubs/roja/issue2/issue2.htm>

Comps, continued from p.11

only a momentary setback. That sort of thing doesn't usually happen," Cantrell assures me.

So, besides getting an electrical engineering merit badge, what helps people succeed? Is there any formula? Cantrell says yes:

"When exams don't go right, it's usually not due to a lack of demonstrated knowledge, but a lack of clear focus," Cantrell says. In other words, preparation, strategy and a calm, focused mind are key.

One student who recently passed comps pauses as she tries to give me advice for this article. "You know," she says, "I'd have lots of advice, in theory. . . ." Well, just tell me how they went, I gently prompt. "Honestly," she looks dreamily out the window, "I don't remember." In other words, this, too, shall pass. . . and hopefully, so will we all.

The Great MFA Advising Debate

By Lisa Metzgar

Early this fall, students initiated a discussion about how advisors are chosen for MFA candidates. This discussion, which caused considerable debate about the best possible advising system, has led to a number of proposed changes in the policy. Under the old system, faculty matched advisors with incoming students before they began the program; students could switch advisors by obtaining signatures from both their current advisor and from the program director. However, some students felt that, while they were technically allowed to switch, they were so strongly discouraged from doing so that it had become all but impossible. During the fall semester, some students decided to take action.

In September, a petition was circulated to determine the level of student support for a change of policy that would allow students more choice in the selection of their advisors. Although few students were unhappy with their advising assignments, the petition gathered enough signatures to confirm that MFA students felt a change in policy needed to be proposed. In response to the petition, the Organization of Graduate Student Writers (OGSW) held a meeting in mid-September at which a formal student proposal was discussed and developed.

The proposal suggested that incoming students be assigned a temporary advisor rather than a permanent advisor. Students would then be expected to make a permanent advising choice late in their first year at the same time they were putting together their thesis committee and planning their course of study. The assumption was that such a change would allow students more control over their time

spent in the program, thereby resulting in better matching between students and faculty. RD Hollenbeck, the student representative on the Creative Writing Committee, brought the proposal to the Committee in mid-November.



RD Hollenbeck

At the center of this issue is the fact that the advising role in the MFA program differs from that in other graduate English programs. MFA advisors are not simply academic or thesis advisors; they are seen as a central part of the entire program. MFA advisors are deeply involved in their students' work, and the intent is that advisors become mentors for their students. For faculty members, this relationship requires an investment in students' work that does not necessarily exist in other programs. Because of these differences, the program seems to require a unique advising system. The debate centers around how best to foster such mentoring relationships while allowing students sufficient ability to switch advisors.

While the student proposal was tabled on a tie vote at the November meeting, it did initiate serious discussion. Because the department recently had a similar policy in place, faculty members were able to bring forward several possible problems with such a system. For instance, according to Bill Tremblay, MFA Program Director, one such problem was that students arrived in the program without an advisor and were left to "wander the halls, hat in hand," all but begging faculty members to work with them.

Attempting to find an area of common ground on this issue, MFA fiction faculty member Steven Schwartz brought another proposal to the next Committee meeting. According to this proposal, incoming students would still

be assigned an advisor, but student and advisor would meet late in the first year of study to discuss the student's satisfaction with the advisor's role. If it became clear in this discussion that the student wished to switch advisors, he or she could begin that process. The point of this proposal was to make the advisor assignment feel less prescriptive to students and to engage a discussion of the advising role between students and faculty.

Finally, at the meeting on February 16th, faculty gave preliminary approval to this proposal and sent it on to students for comments. Faculty will consider student comments and make a final decision at the next Creative Writing Committee meeting.

Neither students nor faculty deny that the advising role is fundamental to the MFA curriculum and that it should serve as a program-long mentoring relationship. Rather, the debate is about the best way to make that relationship most effective for students and their studies.

It remains to be seen whether common ground has actually been reached.

Whatever the outcome of the debate will be, it seems that at least some students and faculty feel that simply bringing up the issue has been advantageous. Steven Schwartz felt that the original student proposal made public students' concerns about the advising policy and the lack of comfort they felt in dealing with it. He felt that the debate had been worthwhile if only because it brought the problem to the attention of the faculty and initiated discussion about it. It remains to be seen, however, whether some common ground has actually been reached and whether the outcome of the debate will solve the problems originally brought forward by students.

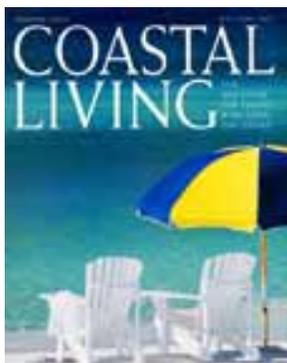
Department Publications

Leslee Becker's story "Correspondence" appears in the spring/summer 1997 edition of *Fourteen Hills* and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

Martin Bucco has published an article titled "Sinclair Lewis on Authorship" in *Sinclair Lewis: New Essays in Criticism*, and a poem called "Reunion With Tom" in the fall 1997 edition of *Western American Literature*.

John Calderazzo's essay "Sailing Through the Night" appears in *American Nature Writing 1997*. He has also published "How to Write the Personal Essay"

in *Writing Stories from Life*, "Where in the World Does Sand Come From," in the May/June issue of *Coastal Living* and co-authored an essay called "Into the Rawahs," with SueEllen Campbell in *Writing Nature*.



SueEllen Campbell's "Grubby" was reprinted in the *UTNE Reader*, and an excerpt from "Desire" was reprinted in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. In addition, she co-authored "Into the Rawahs" with John Calderazzo and published "'Connecting the Country': What's new in Western Lit Crit?" in *Updating the Literary West*.

Pattie Cowell created an online entry on "Anne Bradstreet" in the Book of Days database, a resource guide for librarians and public school teachers. She also had an essay, "Less False Stories: Teaching Comparative Early American Literatures," in *Early American Literature*.

Mary Crow has published a number of poems: "Stressa-1943" appears in the winter 1997 *Michigan Quarterly Review*, "Couple in a Diner" and "Thinker" were published in the *Dominion Review*, "Accounts" and "Everything" in *Controlled Burn*, and "Trances" appears in *Poetry International*, to name a few.

Gerry Delahunty's "'Oh, it's I'm not pretty enough': Expletive Structure and Relevance" in *Dan Do Oide: Essays in Memory of Conn R. O'Clairgh A. Ahlquist and V. Capkova* was published by Linguistics Institute of Ireland.

Kathleen Kiefer is co-author of *Hypertext Reflections*, an online article published in *Kairos: A Journal for Teachers of Writing in Webbed Environments*. She also co-authored *Transitions* with Mike Palmquist, Jake Hartvigsen and Barb Godlew.

Donna LeCourt has written an online, hypertext, instructional module called "Writing Arguments," located at <http://www.colostate.edu/Depts/WCenter>.

Steve Miles' three poems, "Clock," "Carp," and "While We Sleep" were published in the winter issue of *Terra Nova*, and his poem, "The Plough," which was runner-up for Southern Poetry Review's Guy Own Prize, appears in the winter issue. In addition, he had an essay, "Rawahs, September," accepted for the May issue of *Petroglyph*.

Laura Mullen's work has appeared in such publications as *Urbanus, Gargoyle, Boston Book Review, Night Out* and *Denver Quarterly* including her poems "Postcard," "The Dead," "Refuge" and "Museum Garden Cafe."

Karen Olson had her story "The

Ethics of Portraiture" accepted for publication by the *Cimarron Review*.

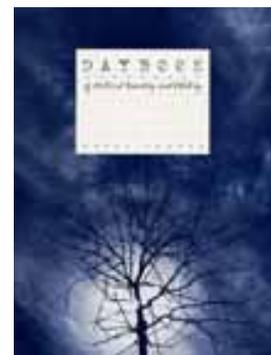
John Pratt's story "Tim O'Brien's Reimagination of Reality: An Exercise in Metafiction" has been published by *War, Literature and the Arts*. Also, he has several entries in *The Vietnam Encyclopedia* and *The Steinbeck Encyclopedia*, both scheduled to come out this fall.



Mike Palmquist is lead author, with Kate Kiefer, Jake Hartvigsen and Barb Godlew of *Transitions*, published by Ablex. In addition, Palmquist has

just had another book accepted for publication and recently had two chapters in edited collections.

Louann Reid recently had the first of four books in a series for high school students published by Great Source Education Group, *Daybook for Critical Reading and Writing*. "Our Repressed Reading Addictions: Teachers and Young Adult Series Novels" appears in the *English Journal*.



Chip Rhodes has had two articles published: "Removing the Veil: Race

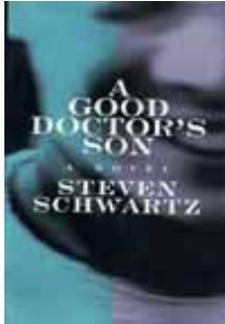
Continued on p.21

Alumni Notes

Dept Pubs, continued from p.20

and American Modernism” appears in *Modern Fiction Studies* (summer 1997), and “Individualism, Imagism and Ideology in William Carlos Williams’ Paterson” was published in *The Journal of Imagism* (September 1997).

Steven Schwartz had his book *A Good Doctor’s Son* published by William Morrow & Company.



Barbara Sebek co-authored “The Traffic In/By Women: Placing Women in Real and Symbolic Economies” with Dr. Ann Christensen and she has a forthcoming article called “Strange Outlandish Wealth.”

Charles Smith recently published “Nature and Human Nature: Impacts and Implications of Science Since 1859” in *Perspectives on the Unity and Integration of Knowledge*.

Ward Swinson recently wrote a review of Cannon Schmitt called “AlienNation: Nineteenth Century Gothic Fictions and English Nationality” in *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature*.

Paul Trembath’s “Reactivating Deleuze: Critical Affects After Cultural Materialism” appears in the May 1997 issue of *Postmodern Culture*.

Irene Vernon had her book review of *Like A Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee*, by Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior, published in the October 1997 issue of the *New Mexico Historical Review*.

Paulette Evans (‘67, BA) was featured in 1996’s *Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers*. She is a junior high coordinator at Most Precious Blood Catholic School.

E. J. Langseth (‘71, BA) published *Any Other Song* in 1981. Her most recent poems have been published in the National Library of Poetry 1997 Anthology, *Embedded Dreams*.

Harry Brown (‘78, BA) is an author, writer and editor in Grand Junction, Colorado. He recently published his novel *Sundays in August*.

Deborah Gengler Dunn (‘81, MA) teaches in the “Advantage” and “Challenge” programs for freshmen at the University of Northern Colorado. Her suspense novel, *Inherited Risk*, has been published. She also received an honorable mention in the 1997 Heart of the Rockies Contest.

Alida Franco (‘82, MA) is a writer and consultant for Intelligo, Inc., a documentation firm in Denver.

Thomas Davis (‘83, MA) teaches English and French at Natrona County School in Casper, Wyoming. He is also an adjunct faculty at Casper College. His wife, **Carmen Springer Davis** (‘73, MA), is the coordinator for the peer tutor program at Casper College. They have one son, Brendon, who is in high school.

Maura LiebmanGage (‘87, MA) received her PhD in English from the University of South Florida in Tampa.

Elizabeth Abariotes Walker (‘88, BA) is an attorney for Great-West Life Annuity Insurance Company. She lives in Denver with her husband.

Julie Rickett (‘89, BA) teaches English language arts and reading at Erwin Middle School. Next year she will be teaching seventh graders at Waltz Clark Middle School.

Carol Dines (‘91, MA) won a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board for her first book, *Best Friends Tell the Best Lies*. She also received a Novel-in-Progress Award from the Society of Children’s Book Writers. She lives with her husband and daughter in Minneapolis, where she works for COMPAS, a Writers and Artists in the Schools Program.

Christine Goold (‘92, MA) is a part-time instructor at Fort Lewis College, where she teaches magazine writing, women’s literature, composition and freelance writing.

Susan Rottman (‘92, BA) published her first young-adult novel, *Hero*, through Peachtree Publishers. Her second novel is due out in 1998. She lives in Oklahoma, where she teaches language arts to seventh graders.

Janet Bacon (‘93, MA) is completing her PhD in English at Arizona State University.

Barb Godlew (‘94, BA) is President of Pharmaco Semantics (www.pharmacosemantics.com), which specializes in medical writing for new product developments.

Jack Martin (‘96, MFA) teaches English at Arvada West High School. In 1997, his book of poems, *Weekend Sentences*, was published by Pudding House.

Julie Sleeper (‘97, BA) is currently working on an MFA in creative writing and a BA in French at CSU.

Deluge, continued from p.1

ported from the field across the street. Grasshoppers bounced against the walls looking for an exit.

Our basement looked like the contents of a washer after the spin cycle. In the main room, a full-size couch had been turned around and moved ten feet. Doors were ripped from their hinges. Books, compact discs, videos, clothes, furniture—practically everything we owned—lay in drenched, mud-covered piles.

It took us one full day just to pick our way to my office, where the same mess awaited us. Twenty-five hardcover books from the CSU library came off a wall shelf as a single, water-sodden log and had to be broken apart with a hammer.

Between my undergraduate and graduate work, I'd spent six consecutive years in school, and every book I'd purchased in that time was water-logged and caked with mud. Same with term papers, class notes and other memorabilia. I felt as though the water had washed away all the tangible evidence of my efforts as a student, including my mud-covered undergraduate diploma.

At least the stacks of student loan papers went, too.

With the fall semester due to start in just three weeks, the looming question was how one fits in the rebuilding of a home into an already rigorous schedule of classes, homework and job. Working five days a week and being a graduate student always seemed like enough of a challenge.

Once we cleaned out our possessions (most of which went into the already overloaded dumpster), the entire basement had to be gutted to the foundation and the main floor stripped of its ruined carpet. Since the house was no longer habitable, we moved in with Steve's parents. Money was tight (like most, we didn't have flood insurance), so we did much

of the labor ourselves, learning as we went. Looking back on it, it's hard to believe that a 1200 square foot townhouse could require so much time and effort and money to rebuild. Even though we used several different contractors and labored ourselves seven days a week, it wasn't until the week before Christmas that new carpet was laid and we could move back in.

The consequences of the Spring Creek flood affect me daily. I had to take an Incomplete in my fall writing class and still have to finish that coursework before graduating in the spring. I abandoned my cherished thesis in favor of a simpler project. Steve is still cleaning his massive CD and laserdisc collection, in addition to the remaining household projects. Our bathroom floor upstairs remains stripped to the plywood flooring. Except for some new drywall, the lower level bathroom isn't anywhere close to done. Doors lack knobs and stacks of boxes await unpacking. And now, in its seeming capriciousness, the Federal Emergency Management Administration has decided we weren't eligible for aid money after all, though without it we would still be displaced. In a form letter, they've told us they want the money back.

But in all of the sorrow, including the death of my dog from cancer six weeks after the flood, I think of all the kindness of the volunteers and those who helped us financially. As I remember those who lost their lives, others whose homes were utterly destroyed, I am mindful that the disaster at least left us with lives and a home to rebuild. And it is here that I especially want to extend my gratitude to all those in the English department who contributed to a book fund established by Carol Cantrell for all graduate students affected by the flood.

High and Dry, continued from p.1

from the basement to the second floor south. The Native American literature collection was saved along with the Western literature collection, and they both now reside on the second floor.

English department Administrative Assistant Rhonda Shank said that office work in EddyHall halted for only a few days after the flood. The English office temporarily moved into the sociology department in the Clark building. For safety and clean-up purposes, the Eddy building was sealed off from any use for two weeks following the flood. However, campus security did allow English office workers to collect personal and work-related belongings in order to continue with department business.

After being displaced for nearly two weeks, English office personnel moved back into Eddy, where they found the phones working and the computer system networked without problems. The only problems, according to Shank, were the building's funky smell and a temporarily inept elevator. The worst smell came from the refrigerator because it had been sitting for a week or so without electricity, incubating the science projects inside.

Projections for finishing repairs on Old Eddy are for August of 1998. Word has it that the computer labs from Eddy rooms 227 and 228 will be moved to the basement



Mary Graziano's flooded basement

during the remodel. So let's just hope El Nino doesn't leave us soaking wet again this year.

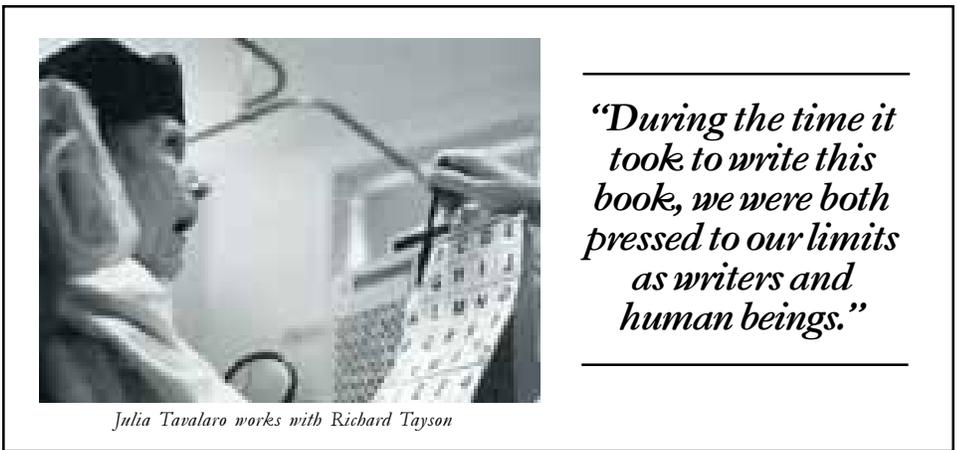
Tayson, continued from p.12

to produce a condensed version of *Look Up For Yes* and a translation is being released in German next year. In addition, their book was a finalist for the Books for a Better Living Award in February of this year.

This book, though impressive, is not the least of Tayson's recent achievements. His book of poems, *The Apprentice of Fever*, which won the Tom and Stan Wick Award for Poetry at Kent State University, will be out in November of this year. This book, says Tayson, "is an exploration of some of the silences and misunderstandings of AIDS and how it affects the two people that appear and re-appear in the poems."

In addition to these two books, Tayson had thirty poems published in a variety of periodicals and anthologies such as *The Kenyon Review*, *The James White Review*, *Things Shaped in Passing* and *Jugular Defences*. He received the Pushcart Prize XXI for his poem *First Sex*, which was published in January 1997 by the Pushcart Press.

When asked where and how he gets



Julia Tavalaro works with Richard Tayson

"During the time it took to write this book, we were both pressed to our limits as writers and human beings."

his inspiration, Tayson replied, "What inspires me to write is opening some region of silence, some place in our poetry (or our lives) that seems closed and unyielding. I'm interested in dismantling silences in my creative life and generating poems from personal experience."

Tayson says he enjoys poetry because he feels that he can write it throughout his lifetime, but he loves writing prose as well. "I've started writing short

fiction again, which I first did in Steven Schwartz's class at CSU." He is also researching a history of homosexuality in poetry since 1855 in an effort to keep his writing life "open to possibilities of form."

Tayson resides in New York where he continues writing and experimenting. "I want to keep exploring the forms, the methods. Writing frees me and I don't want to get trapped in formula."

Kids at Work, continued from p.17

Colorado's Poet Laureate, Mary Crow, helped found the program with Elaine Boni from Dunn Elementary School. "The

"The kids really begin to like reading, and it's exciting to see their faces light up when they describe a story they really love."

Dunn students have someone to look up to—a model who is interested in language, literature, school and reading," said Crow. "But, most importantly, [the students have] someone who is interested in them." Crow suggests that the mentors also benefit from the program by making one of the biggest contributions to society—increasing

literacy and making the community aware of language, education and poetry. "It's really about love—someone caring enough to spend time to help these kids learn and grow, in school and beyond," she said.

New this year will be a literary magazine prepared by the mentors and the students that will display a semester's worth of the kids' work. The magazine will be available at the reading and later will be offered at the English office and the Stone Lion Bookstore.

When asked what she likes best about Kids at Work, Ruth Kamata, a fifth grader, said, "You get motivated to read more and harder books." Graduate student mentor Matt Miller suggested a similar idea: "The kids really begin to like reading, and it's exciting to see their faces light up when they describe a story they really love."



Mark Tursi with some kids from the Kids at Work program

Dear Freestone Reader,

We hope you enjoy the fifth edition of *The Freestone*. We believe this newsletter will help bring together students, faculty and alumni of the Colorado State English department for many years to come. You can help with this endeavor by letting us know what you're doing. In addition to telling us about yourself, you can assure the future of *The Freestone* by helping us cover our publishing costs. With your assistance, *The Freestone* can become a long-standing English department tradition. Thank you.

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