FROM THE CHAIR:

How to keep looking down the road when you’re afraid of falling over your feet—that is the lesson we have been trying to learn in these days of diminished budgets but greater than ever need for the work done in Humanities departments. It is the Humanities that come under pressure as “too expensive” or as “luxuries” in times of economic downturn. But English is the meeting place for minds; it is where our culture lives, speaks, and works to understand itself. As readers and writers, critics and theorists, English students are well equipped for this complex cultural moment—and Wyoming students always rise to a challenge.

This issue of the department newsletter will make you optimistic for their success. It is full of the energy refracted by faculty at the top of their game as researchers and therefore as teachers, and of the achievements and enthusiasm of students who recognize opportunity and make it their own.

Achievement in a university always looks forward and also back; we build on the best of the past, and strive toward greater understanding in the future. This year has made us particularly mindful of our debts: it has been a year of sickness, where colleagues generously supported one another; it has been a year of celebration, as we affirm the tremendous commitment of faculty like Bob Torry; it has been a year of optimism, as we imagine innovative courses and expanded degrees from the base of past successes.

And of course, every year brings new students, full of vigor, excitement, and commitment to this most important of disciplines. Those students are closely connected to you who have gone before. In this newsletter you will hear their real appreciation of their predecessors, now supporters of the department, who help them on their way.

—Caroline McCracken-Flesher

STAYING IN TOUCH

We hope you will be in touch with us through the year. Our aim to construct an email newsletter has morphed into the reality of a Facebook page. There we will keep you up to date on events and achievements, and we will welcome your news and updates. This will be the place to go to learn that Marlene Tromp has moved to Arizona State; that Cody Hartley is the Director of Gifts of Art at the Boston Museum of Fine Art; that Jessica Robinson has just published Life Lessons from Slasher Films based on her research with Bob Torry!

To contact us call (307) 766-6452. Our fabulous administrative staff (Rachel Ferrell, head honcho; Patty Romero; and Gwynn Lemler) will direct you to the right person for your interest. And please feel free to call or email direct to me: cmf@uwyo.edu—I’d love to hear from you.
“WHERE SHALL WE THREE MEET AGAIN?”

UW makes international experience a priority for its students, knowing that they face a world at once growing and shrinking. We welcome international students, and encourage our own students to study abroad. Innovative summer courses in English take students to England, Italy, Japan, and India.

Here, Professor Emerita Janice Harris communicates the excitement of studying “Shakespeare in England and Italy,” and Assistant Professors Erin Forbes and Jason Baskin describe their work to establish a course on “American Writers in Paris.”

SHAKESPEARE IN ENGLAND AND ITALY

The Merchant of Venice set in Las Vegas? Romeo and Juliet played as a poignant comedy by a troupe from Brazil? And the concepts worked? They did. Astonishingly so.

That kind of theatrical challenge and surprise has delighted eighteen UW students, summer after summer, for the past ten years.

“Shakespeare in England and Italy,” a three-week study-abroad course sponsored by the UW Honors Program, A&S English Department, and UW Summer School is taught by Honors and English faculty Duncan Harris and Peter Parolin, with frequent help from Leigh Selting, Theatre and Dance.

A typical itinerary begins with four nights in Stratford and seven in London. The days and evenings are brimful of Shakespeare: reading and seeing the plays on offer from the Royal Shakespeare, Globe, and National Theatre Companies; writing succinct analyses; discussing previous and upcoming plays; and visiting historical sites. The class then shifts to Italy to explore the roots of Renaissance drama. To many sixteenth-century artists, Italy was the model to follow, be it in theatrical architecture, garden design, literary form, or painting. Milan, Vicenza, Verona, and Venice introduce students to what Shakespeare and his peers learned from the Italians. And with all this inspiration . . . students produce two major projects after returning to the states.

Strange productions of Shakespeare work—so does the course. It may rain at The Globe. Students may pass around a cold, miss a train, or order—yikes!—horse or squid. But at the heart of this course, year after year, is the invitation to immerse oneself, mind and heart, in the plays of one of the most remarkable writers in western culture.

—Janice Harris, Professor Emerita

AMERICAN PROFESSORS IN PARIS

Woody Allen’s Midnight In Paris sends a young American writer from the present day back to the city of the Lost Generation. There he meets Stein, Fitzgerald, and Hemingway. Only slightly less glamorous and less magical, we attempted this journey this summer to develop a study abroad course. We studied the Paris beloved of America’s literary expatriates—from Notre Dame and the Catacombs to the Luxembourg Gardens and the Trocadéro—to develop a course on “American Writers in Paris.” Students who take this course will dive into the literature of Americans abroad and let it guide them around the city. Rather than looking at images of the impressionist paintings that influenced writers like Henry James and Gertrude Stein, or of the gothic architecture and winding, medieval streets that inspired Edgar Allan Poe, they’ll see them first-hand, learning what it’s really like to be “An American in Paris.”

If you’d like to come along . . . authors will range from Benjamin Franklin, who describes his experiences as the first U.S. ambassador to Paris in his Autobiography, to James Baldwin, an African-American writer who made his home there in the 1950s. The city itself—dubbed the “capital of modernity” by a recent scholar—will be our teacher.

—Erin Forbes and Jason Baskin, Assistant professors of American Literature and Modernism

If we work hard to send our students out into the wide world, we work equally hard to bring the world to Wyoming. This year, the MFA Eminent Writer fund brought renowned authors such as Colton Whitehead, Ed Roberson, Camille Dungy, and John D’Agata. Together, faculty and students in Creative Writing, Rhetoric and Composition, and Literary Studies mounted three successful mini-conferences on Digital Media. Literary Studies has pursued faculty exchanges: in 2011 Professor Gerry Carruthers, Head of Scottish Literature at the University of Glasgow, taught in the undergraduate program; in 2013, Susan Oliver of the University of Essex will work with departments across the university on developing international and UW initiatives on literature and the environment.
NANNI AND SAM ANDREW

Gifts from donors enable English students to conduct research and present their work all over the world. In 2011-12, the Sam and Nanci Andrew fund supported student travel to New Orleans, Chicago, London, Paris, Italy, and the Canary Islands. Nanci Andrew has long had an affinity for English: “I was supposed to be the writer in the family,” she remembers—“I loved English as a way of expression.” Her relationship with English and with Wyoming inspired her donation to our department. Growing up in Chicago, Nanci spent several summers on a ranch in Wyoming. There she fell in love with the west. After doing one year of college in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, she transferred to the University of Wyoming, graduating with a degree in English in 1955. She still has the book she received at the UW Honors Assembly on May 26, 1955, recognizing her “superior work in English”: The Solitary Singer: A Critical Biography of Walt Whitman. Years later, when she decided to donate to UW, she chose English because “I was an English major myself and feel it’s a necessary skill for students to speak correctly and well.” Thinking about the impact her gift could have on today’s English majors, she says, “I wanted young people to have the skills that I had and maintain them through their lives.” Our students benefit every day from the generous support of alums like Nanci Andrew, who want to see Wyoming students well equipped to face the future.

We sadly note the passing of Sam Andrew, August 2012, and extend our sympathies to Nanci.

—Peter Parolin

IN TRANSLATION

MFA student Chelsea Biondolillo tells of her trip to Spain, sponsored by an award from the Nanci and Sam Andrew fund—and then she SHOWS us the energy it brings to her writing

It’s not impossible to write naturalist essays from a desk; the key is quality field work. In December of 2011, I was fortunate to receive a travel award through the English department enabling me to spend eight days in Spain researching biodiversity.

Opportunities to travel and explore are priceless components of any education. There is no substitute for being there. The way the rocks feel, the way the air smells—these can only be imagined from books (someday, I hope, my own).

SPAIN, DECEMBER 2011 TRIP REPORT

I arrive in Madrid a couple of days before Christmas Eve. My Spanish is poor, and though I’ve asked a few locals, I am still unsure why the children are wearing wolf-shaped hats. I’m in Spain to research plant biodiversity and birds and my first stop is Madrid’s botanical garden. It turns out to be small, and designed in carefully trimmed squares, like an English garden. I watch magpies and blackbirds while I wait to speak with one of the staff botanists about native bird-plant relationships. The next day I take a train to the zoo, which houses a number of endangered species, including a lion extinct in the wild. I spend 45 minutes inside the lemur enclosure with a zookeeper, learning what I can from her Spanish lecture.

My next stop is Barcelona. The botanical garden is inside the former Olympic village. I walk by empty stadiums and signs in eight languages to reach the entrance. Built in irregular terraces, this newer garden seems more organic than Madrid’s. Plants are grouped by region (like animals in a zoo) rather than ornamentally. I meet with a horticulturalist who tells me about the Dragon tree and a fire resistant pine. In Barcelona too, I meet with a group of Catalan ornithologists. At first, no one speaks English and my Spanish is insufficient to the point of absurdity. Finally, a bilingual specialist shows up and we discuss vultures and chaffinches. He is interested in pigeons and explains to me why they bob their heads when they walk; his talk is supplemented by wonderful pantomimes.

I also spend a day at Gaudí’s Parc Güell, a large garden complex in the city. The architecture is at once flamboyant and organic—creating a Through-the-Looking-Glass feel to the grounds that both blends and competes with the pines. After eight days on my own in Spain’s two largest cities, I head back to Madrid to meet up with a group of environmental studies classmates, my mind full of ideas.
A Kambouris Fellowship took me to the T. S. Eliot International Summer School at the University of London. Alongside lectures and intensive seminars taught by the top Eliot scholars in the world, the school included day trips and tours to the places in Eliot’s poetry. Eliot’s themes and images have an abstract, intellectual quality that seems universal but aloof. Yet Eliot’s greatest poems, *The Waste Land* and *The Four Quartets*, are rooted in specific places. Eliot’s imagery in these poems revolves around concrete aspects of experience tied to the description of a physical place. The summer school allowed me to walk on the grounds of Burnt Norton “Along the empty alley, into the box circle, [and] to look down into the drained dry concrete pool,” into the town of East Coker “Where you lean against a bank while a van passes and the deep lane insists on the direction into the village,” and see Little Gidding “Where midwinter spring is its own season.” Visiting these places was an inspirational experience. Combined with the opportunity to discuss my own research with the most respected minds in the field, it has allowed me to advance leaps and bounds in the writing of my master’s thesis.

—Aaron Graham, MA student

**SUMMER WITH T.S. ELIOT**

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My trip was full of amazing moments: I made lifelong friends, and saw things that will be emblazoned in my mind forever. But it was the unplanned that not only shaped my experience, it also molded me into a different person.

Henry Miller said, “One’s destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things,” and that is my sentiment exactly. My eyes shifted, and now I see the world like never before.

**IN THE COMPANY OF THE TANNER FAMILY**

The Stirling exchange allows UW to exchange one student per year with its sister school on the edge of the Scottish highlands. English majors figure prominently in this exchange. Next year, Sarah Maddy will follow Lauren Perry, Shaleena Moy, and Cassandra Ozbirn. Moy and Perry have continued to pursue Scottish studies since their return. Students who go to Stirling are generously supported through the Tanner Study Abroad Award in English. They send enthusiastic thanks to the Tanner family.

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**OUR THANKS TO YOU**

The generosity of students, faculty, and friends has established funds to honor graduates and teachers, and to serve the best interests of education in English. The L. L. Smith fund, recognizing a former faculty member, supports visiting speakers. The Sandy Schwartzkopf fund remembers a student who died young but left a legacy of commitment and hope. Recently, the Kambouris, Andrew, and Tanner families have engaged graduate student need, the emergencies that can disrupt promising student careers, and the travel that broadens any student’s mind. Our students are grateful to you all.

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**STUDENT AWARDS AND HONORS 2012**

Andrew Graduate Studies Award: Chelsea Biondolillo, Katie Booms, Rowan Derrick, Erin Fortenberry, Lindsey Grubbs, David Henrion, Amanda Joyal, Matthew Perkins, Lauren Perry, Catherine Reeves, Irina Zhorov

Clough Award: Zachary Anderson, Celia Bannan, William Smith

English Study Abroad: Ty McNamee

Harris Award: Luling Osofsky

Kambouris Graduate Fellowship: Courtney Carlisle, Aaron Graham, Lindsey Grubbs, Bonnie Hanson, Matthew Perkins, Paula Wright

Meriam Award for Creative Work in the Humanities: Irina Zhorov

Mcintyre Award: Zachary Anderson, Wendy Blair, Mary Kaiser, Binny Loveless, Kristen Nielson, Erika Partenheimer, Billi Rimel, Kenneth Thompson

Schwartzkopf Scholarship Trust: Celia Bannan

Tanner Award for Study Abroad: Lindsey Carter, Bailey Jackson, Sarah Maddy

Tarry Award for the Outstanding Thesis in English Honors: Heidi Lichtfuss

Wilson/Land Dekay Award: Lindsey Carter, Kristen Nielson, Kelli Price

UW Ellbogen Outstanding Graduate Assistant Teaching Award: Kristen Gunther

UW Outstanding Graduate Thesis Award 2012: Katie Schmid

A&S Outstanding Graduates: Rosa Beyer, Laura Wespetal

A&S Summer Independent Study Award: Kali Fajardo-Anstine, Jay Gentry, Lizzie Picherit
UW ENGLISH IN CASPER

We are in the A&S Auditorium, hearing Kate Lembo entertain the Honors Convocation with “Nesting Wyoming.” The rolling lilt of this Scottish native and English major at the University of Wyoming/Casper College Center entrances the audience. No question about her terrific presentation—later published in *Northern Lights*—but I heard students wondering why someone from Casper College was getting the stage. They should not have worried. Kate was as much a University of Wyoming student as they were, but in Casper. And she was not alone. Since 1976 thousands of UW students have studied at and graduated from the Casper program. Many of them take English classes. These are taught by resident UW and Casper College faculty—who have included Lynne Cheney (yes, her), David Romvedt the Wyoming Poet Laureate, and Pat Greiner (now a director, actor, leader of Stage III, and winner of a Governors’ Arts Award) as well as, since 1984, me. Faculty come north from Laramie, too, or teach by compressed video—Susan Aronstein won a Hollon Award for her distance teaching. People like teaching in Casper, and like teaching our students. The classes are small and the students in their 30’s and 40’s have a real zest for literature. They like to argue and they enjoy our discussion-based classes.

Interesting people have passed through and had their say. I remember the well-known writer Sam Western wrestling with eighteenth-century British fiction; Stu Rutten (Ph.D. Toronto, medieval researcher) working at Chaucer; Stacy Casper (now a Casper lawyer) arguing for free will in *King Lear*; Cindy Huckfeldt (M.A. Laramie, middle school teacher in Casper) questioning the value of *Romeo and Juliet*; Marc Sundstrom (now a minister in Casper’s biggest church) figuring out the meanings of *Ulysses*; and Loel Kim (Professor at Memphis State, Ph.D. Carnegie Mellon) arguing for the value of the whaling information in *Moby Dick*. Kate Lembo has continued writing and is a secondary school English instructor in Colorado.

In 1984, a small red-brick schoolhouse and three trailers (called U Hall) were our campus and everything seemed tentative, provisional and about to fall apart. Now, we use space at Casper College and in January 2013 will move into a large building in the middle of the campus with the University of Wyoming written at the top. The frame is going up right outside my office. I imagine UW English classes in a beautiful seminar room with windows looking over Casper north to the Big Horns—and new faculty and new students reading, writing, and thinking.

—Bruce Richardson

Bruce Richardson is “Our Man in Casper.” Laramie faculty who have delighted in teaching Casper students include Susan Aronstein, Jeanne Holland, Bob Torry, Vicki Lindner, Caroline McCracken-Flesher, and a host of others. But there is no one to compete with the inimitable Richardson who, over the years, has taught Romantics, Victorians, Shakespeare, Theory, Professional Writing—the list goes on. If it is in our curriculum, Bruce has probably taught it, and to great acclaim from students. Today, Bruce also teaches back to Laramie, bringing campus students the benefit of his expertise as a Romanticist and scholar of William Blake.

HAIL

Christine Stebbins now steps into the role of Assistant Chair. Christine is a long-time member of the department, teaching English as a Second Language, Composition, and Science Fiction. But did you know she is a rock diva and an artist as well?

Ryan Croft (Ph.D. Pennsylvania State) and Peter Remien (Ph.D. University of Colorado, Boulder) join us as visiting Assistant Professors, focusing on Medieval through Early Modern literature.

FAREWELL

This year we said farewell to Mary P. Sheridan. Author of *Girls, Feminism, and Grassroots Literacies* and *Design Literacies*, Mary P. was also our Director of Composition and an Assistant Chair. She has moved to be near her family. We will miss her.

And until we meet again:

We bid a temporary farewell to Caskey Russell. Caskey served as Assistant Chair last year, and became a familiar, kind, but sensible face to students in need of advice. Caskey heads of this year on a well-earned sabbatical. We thank him for his terrific service to the department.
“Bob’s beautiful commitment to teaching reaches its apogee in the almost poetic inspiration he brings to the classroom.”
—Peter Parolin, Past Chair

“Bob is one of those teachers students never forget, who changes how they think about the world around them, and, more importantly, how they think about themselves.”

“Bob’s kindness and intelligence do not stop at the classroom door.”
—Lindsey M. Hanlon, 2011

“Film and Religion is an outstanding book written as a textbook with students in mind.”
—Alan Nadel, William T. Bryan Chair at the University of Kentucky

“If you have ever watched Professor Torry lead a lively discussion with 120 students, you know you are seeing a master at work.”
—Paul Flesher, Director of Religious Studies.

“To put it bluntly, Bob was born to teach.”
—Jeanne Holland

“If Torry were to retire, we’d need three people to replace him.”
—Ric Reverand

“‘Wow’ is both the first and last word that comes to mind when I think of the time I spent in Professor Torry’s classroom.”
—Dave Hall, student

“How,” I once heard Bob Torry ask a student, “Do you get from I don’t know to I know?” The student was silent for a moment; then she smiled: “Think?” she replied. “Good. Now if you were to think about this,” Professor Torry urged, “What might you say?” This exchange captures the essence of Professor Torry’s long career. He teaches students how to think, how to get from “I don’t know” to “I know.”

One of his trademarks is a large-group lecture on Homer. This Freshman Honors lecture introduces students to Greek society and the Iliad in a way that changes how they read both Homer and their own culture. It encapsulates the qualities that make Bob one of the university’s most effective and dynamic teachers. He never allows students to sit passively in their seats; he engages them. He transforms students, giving them the tools to understand and analyze what they read and watch—to become critical consumers of messages and ideologies.

Bob has taught at the University of Wyoming for nearly thirty years: on campus, via compressed video and at UWCC. His classes have ranged from the Freshman Honors Colloquium through upper-division English, to Religious studies and Honors classes in film and literature, to Graduate Seminars in theory and poetry—from 150 students in a lecture hall through 30 students at eight sites on a television screen, to seven students around a seminar table. To all of these classes—all sizes, all levels, all subjects—Bob brings a thorough knowledge of text and context supported by intellectual rigor, engagement, and his own astounding clarity.

Because Professor Torry is such a good instructor, he inspires students to learn more; because he wants them to learn more, he never turns them down. Over the years, he has taught countless independent study classes and directed or served on the committee for an astonishing number of theses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Professor Torry’s students are scattered around the country; they are business people, professors, authors, web-masters, administrators, lawyers, teachers, and parents. Many of them still keep in touch. All of them remember him as one of the most influential teachers of their college career. He taught them how to think.

—Susan Aronstein
Alyson Hagy, Boleto
Good stories teach us how to read them, and the opening pages of “Boleto” are entertaining, entrancing teachers.
—New York Times

Caroline McCracken-Flesher, The Doctor Dissected
McCracken-Flesher is one of the most ingenious—and readable—academics working in the field of Scottish culture, and this volume . . . shows her skill at teasing out a story and its implications.
—The Scotsman

Kate Northrop, Clean
With intense clarity of image and spare language, Kate Northrop’s poems immediately lure you into intimacy.
—Ploughshares

Susan Aronstein, British Arthurian Narrative
Aronstein subtly and intelligently recognizes complex interrelationships between history and art.
—Martin Shichtman, co-author of King Arthur and the Myth of History

Andy Fitch, Pop Poetics
Rigorous, full of delight, and utterly original, this is a game-changing work of scholarship.
—Maggie Nelson, author of Women, the New York School, and Other True Abstractions, and The Art of Cruelty: A Reckoning

Julianne Couch, Traveling the Power Line
Nobody has gone to so many sources before, meeting the people who keep the juice flowing to us all.
Couch has a knack for disarming the wonkiest engineers and discovering the intrigue in cooling rods and “geothermal brine.”
—The Daily Yonder

David Romtvedt, co-ed., Buffalotarrak: An Anthology of the Basque People of Wyoming
The Buffalo [Wyoming] Basques—or Buffalotarrak—are brought to life.
—Daniel Montero, editor at the University of Nebraska press

Caroline McCracken-Flesher, ed., Scotland as Science Fiction
The problem . . . is how to reconcile science fiction with a regional culture . . . This provocative study meets the challenge head-on.
—Choice
ROBERT TORRY ENGLISH HONORS AND LITERARY STUDIES FUND

The English faculty have begun a fund in honor of Bob Torry, beloved by colleagues and students alike. Bob is the professor who always “can.” If a student needs an advisor, Bob is willing; if a colleague needs a mentor, there is Bob; if a committee needs a stalwart, Doctor Torry rides “once more unto the breach.”

Once the fund exceeds $25,000, it will become a lasting gift to students in honor of “Dr. Bob.” We now open the fund to the generosity of the generations of students and colleagues who have benefited by knowing and working with our dear friend, Bob Torry.

To give to the Robert Torry fund in English, cite the fund by name, specifying English.

Dr. Torry has given beyond the call to numerous campus programs. If your fond memories of his classes relate to those programs, you can support the Robert Torry fund in Religious Studies (contact Paul Flesher: pflesher@uwyo.edu) or the Robert Torry fund in University Honors (contact Duncan Harris: dharris@uwyo.edu)

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