

THE IRREGULAR LITTONIAN

Fall 2009, Number 42

Welcome to another edition of *The Irregular Littonian*. The Fall newsletter includes all the features you love (faculty and alumni updates and announcements) as well as a special report on LITT and the economy. Remember, while the newsletter only comes out twice a year, you can always find us on the web: <http://titania.stockton.edu/literature/>. Enjoy!

FACULTY UPDATES

Deborah Gussman is continuing in her role as coordinator for the Literature program this year. Over the summer, in addition to doing coordinator-related duties, she taught an on-line course on the American Short Story, participated in an assessment seminar in which she developed an instrument for learning about literature students' prior knowledge of recognizing scholarship, gave a presentation (with Lisa Honaker) on student engagement at the American Democracy Project Conference in Baltimore, worked on a new grant-funded project that seeks to find ways to integrate political engagement and wellness into the curriculum, helped plan the Fall Faculty Conference on Distributed Education, and did research for a new paper on two of Catharine Maria Sedgwick's novels to present at the Society for the Study of American Women Writers conference in October.

She also squeezed in some time for relaxation (lots of yoga and swimming) and vampire-themed summer reading (three of the Twilight books and several of the Southern Vampire Mysteries aka the *True Blood* series) and almost learned to knit. She is serving on Stockton's new Faculty Senate, and looking forward to attending a seminar on E-Citizenship in Detroit this November.

Marion Hussong is on sabbatical during the fall 2009 semester. She will be conducting research in Austria.

Nathan Long spent the summer writing, reading, and traveling. He wrote three new stories, one inspired by the Ann Patchett novel *Bel Canto*. Other summer reading included *At Swim, Two Boys* (Jamie O'Neill), *After Dark* (Haruki Muakami), *Fun Home* (Alison Bechdel), and *Krik? Krak!* (Edwidge Dandicat). Nathan's story, "Real Life Things," which appeared in Philadelphia Stories in the summer 2007, has just been reprinted in the anthology, *Best of Philadelphia Stories*, vol II; and his short story "Billy Tipton Day," was recently accepted by College Hill Review and will be published in 2010. Nathan's short creative nonfiction piece on "Anger" was also recently accepted by *The Sun*.

Nathan also traveled through Ireland for several weeks in June, visiting several Druid caves, the cliffs of Mohar, the Giant's Causeway, and the Wicklow Mountains. He happened to be in Dublin for Joyce's Bloomsday and saw an amazing exhibit of Yeats at the National Library, which included Sinead O'Connor reciting "Easter 1916." He spent another two weeks in Wisconsin and Minnesota, canoeing, swimming, hiking, and doing far too much driving.

For the first time in many years, **Tom Kinsella** *did not* teach summer school in 2009. He must be growing confident in the grammar skills of current LITT students (for it is grammar that he usually teaches when the sun begins to warm). Instead he brought to completion a modernization of Standish O'Grady's 1857 translation of the fenian tale, *The Pursuit of Diarmuid and Grainne* and with it A. H. Leahy's 1905 translation of *The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu*. It is being published by a small press and will be available through amazon.com. Currently he is preparing for web publication a catalogue of Renaissance Italian bookbindings held by the University of Pennsylvania. In the Spring he will be on sabbatical and will head to NYC to study the book trade of colonial and nineteenth-century New York City. He had a bumper crop of snap peas and potatoes this summer.

Adeline Koh will join the LITT faculty in January of 2010 after finishing her contract at the National University of Singapore. Adeline finished her Ph.D. at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, in 2007. The title of her dissertation was "Race Inventing Malayanness: Race, Englishness and Education in Colonial Malaya." Adeline is working towards completion of two book manuscripts, *British Modernism and Mapping Race from Africa to Southeast Asia* and *Literary Representations of Female Education in Malaysia and Zimbabwe*. In addition, Adeline has an edited volume, *Rethinking Third Cinema*.

Last fall, **Cynthia King** moved from Cincinnati, Ohio to Atlantic County and became acquainted with the soup cart, Chartwells, Lake Pam and the mysteries of getting from J-wing to the bookstore. She did a poetry reading in Brooklyn at Pete's Candy Store and continued her collaborations with the poets Sophia Kartsonis and Brett Price. Their work appeared last fall in the *New Orleans Review*, *Black Warrior Review*, *Boston Review* and *LIT magazine*.

In the spring, Cynthia's Collaboration in the Arts students fanned out across New Jersey and brought art and writing into classrooms, nursing homes, art centers, museums, and even Hospice sites. Their dedication and enthusiasm were contagious. She also enjoyed traveling with Judy Copeland, Emari DiGiorgio, and Nathan Long to Durham to witness the poised presentations of Stockton's upperclassmen and women. Their panache and professionalism made her particularly proud. Cynthia also engaged in a number of other conferences in the spring, giving papers on Ginsberg, Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge, and reading her poems from the anthology *Yellow as Tumeric, Fragrant as Cloves*.

This past summer was dedicated to the re-editing and sending out Cynthia's two poetry manuscripts. Her first book, *People are Tiny in Paintings of China*, was accepted for publication and will come out from the independent press Octopus Books in fall 2010. She also traveled to Kentucky, Boston, Western Mass., and New York City, did a lot of knitting, and bailed her cat out of the vet's office after he ate string.

Adalaine Holton spent much of the summer working on her book project on archives and black literary activism. She is particularly interested in the ways in which black radical intellectuals have challenged conventional understandings of the form and function of the archive by engaging in experimental archival projects. Her article on the logic of iteration (repetition with a difference), in W. E. B. Du Bois's genre-bending work *The Souls of Black Folk*, will be coming out in the journal *Arizona Quarterly* later this year. In addition to working on her book this summer, Addie enjoyed kayaking on the Chesapeake Bay and appreciating the expanding bald eagle population.

Ken Tompkins continues to transition to retirement, but one might not know it from all that he has been doing since the last newsletter. He teaches Shakespeare every term, directed *Measure for Measure* last Spring, and keeps the Literature program abreast of technological innovations with scholarly and pedagogical potential.

Kristin Jacobson's summer could be summarized as: read, write, revise, *repeat*. She spent June at New York University working on her book manuscript, "Neodomesic American Fiction." Hopefully in about a year others will read her efforts: the manuscript is under contract with The Ohio State University Press. During the summer she also enjoyed a visit to Wisconsin to see family, watched season 1 and 2 of *The Tudors*, and traveled to Boston for a conference. She is currently writing two conference papers and enjoying her fall classes.

Adam Miyashiro joined the faculty in the Literature Program this fall as a specialist in medieval literature. He hopes to likewise cultivate student interest in Medieval Studies at Stockton through student and faculty engagement. Over the summer, in the transition to Stockton, he finished substantial work on two articles for publication, and began to work on his book about race and monstrosity in the Middle Ages. He will present the findings of one of these articles at the International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, Michigan in May 2010. Since arriving at Stockton College, Dr. Miyashiro has been impressed by all the technology found in Stockton's classrooms. As a former web editor and e-learning course designer, he is working to develop an interactive, multimedia medieval studies environment, using digital resources for paleography and

codicology, the study of medieval handwriting and book making, respectively.

Lisa Honaker has been at work on a series of productive collaborations in recent months. She continues to coordinate events for both the Ordinary Lives of Engagement speaker series and the Political Engagement Project. After participating in a Classroom Learning Assessment workshop last May, she is working with Beth Olsen to develop an instrument for assessing students' civic engagement. She is also working with other faculty and staff on a grant project seeking to develop the college's curricular commitment to civic engagement for the AAC&U's Bringing Theory to Practice division. Working with a team of students, faculty, and staff, Honaker is also curating a manuscript exhibit focusing on Stephen Dunn's creative process, scheduled to open in March 2010 in the Stockton Art Gallery.

Over the summer, Honaker gave two presentations at the American Democracy Project conference: "Ordinary Lives of Engagement: Balancing Service and Stress" with Deborah Gussman, and "A Reflection on Common Experiences of Three Stockton Courses at Yellowstone National Park" with Tait Chirenje and Patrick Hossay. Her writing projects have also been collaborative: with Fred Mench, she wrote an article, "Suicide in Detective Fiction" for a volume on suicide and the arts, edited by David Lester. She has also contributed to two ADP monographs—one on the Yellowstone Experience with Tait Chirenje and Patrick Hossay and one on campus political engagement with the members of Stockton's Political Engagement Project team. All three publications are scheduled for release this fall.

ALUMNI NEWS

We love to hear from you and want to help keep you in touch with fellow LITT alumni. Please email any personal or professional updates to the LITT Program Coordinator, Deborah Gussman: Deborah.Gussman@stockton.edu. We will include your updates in the Newsletter and on our webpage: <http://titania.stockton.edu/literature/>.

Natalia Serejko was accepted into the Rutgers-Camden Master's program for English.

Carlene Graham was accepted into Stockton's MSW program and was approved to teach in Atlantic City public schools

LITT ON THE ECONOMY

A positive result from the most recent economic downturn is that we have all spent some time learning, thinking, and talking about the economy over the past year. We also may be saving more green (both in terms of the environment and in terms of cash). Whether it is thriving or struggling, the economy is a perpetual subject in literary studies. In LITT, the economy may develop as a theme in the poem or novel we are currently reading or writing or be on our minds as past and present students prepare to job hunt or apply to graduate school. To shed more light on this topic, LITT faculty were asked to connect the subject of the economy to their own lives/experiences or to a passage in literature. We begin with a bit of sage advice for job seekers from LITT's coordinator and then careen from careers to apples and to other varied slants on this theme. Here is LITT's sundry take on the "economy."

“What Not to Wear”: Deborah Gussman has always chafed at getting dressed up for job interviews (or for any other reason!), and finds comfort in Thoreau's idealistic if sometimes impractical views:

A man who has at length found something to do will not need to get a new suit to do it in; for him the old will do, that has lain dusty in the garret for an indeterminate period. Old shoes will serve a hero longer than they have served his valet -- if a hero ever has a valet -- bare feet are older than shoes, and he can make them do. Only they who go to soirees and legislative balls must have new coats, coats to change as often as the man changes in them. But if my jacket and trousers, my hat and shoes, are fit to worship God in, they will do; will they not? . . . I say, beware of all enterprises that require new clothes, and not rather a new wearer of clothes. If there is not a new man, how can the new clothes be made to fit? If you have any enterprise before you, try it in your old clothes. All men want, not something to do with, but something to do, or rather something to be. ~Henry David Thoreau, from “Economy” in *Walden* (1854)

“Will Work for Food”: Nathan Long worked playing Frosty the Snowman at a local mall, making sandwiches at a food co-op, driving a recycling truck, selling South American clothing on the street, packing English muffins, building and cleaning houses, loading boxes for a Clorox factory, setting up concert stages, acting as an extra for a Vietnam War film, moving furniture, counting traffic patterns, conducting bus surveys, caring for the mentally ill and deaf in group homes, baking, photocopying, and cooking at an organic restaurant -- all before becoming a college professor. As his job history suggests, it's for good reason that the word career resembles the word careen. So, don't worry too much if you take on a few interesting jobs before you find your life path.

“Ancient Advice for Job Seekers”: Adam Miyashiro defers to the ancients to address the ups and downs of searching for a job, having just gone through the process himself recently:

“Maxima enim, patientia virtus” [“Patience is the greatest virtue”] Distichs of Cato

When searching for a job, your search may be longer than you expect, and you will need to develop strategies to increase your patience with the process. The best way to cope with the times of waiting could be as simple as organizing your materials and job lists early to avoid confusion in rushing out job applications, to creating an interactive calendar of due dates, required materials, and letter and resume files, and scheduling regular periods of outdoor or other physical activity. And don't give up! Just because you are not successful the first couple of times, opportunities frequently come from where you least expect it.

“The Cat Wrote My Resume”: Cynthia King's only wisdoms about work are that she had many crazy jobs before becoming happiest as an echo tech and that she lived with her parents for quite a while in her twenties. This allowed her to save money and go back to school to become the teacher she'd always wanted to be. If you can stand it (and your parents aren't abusive or stressful in some serious way), do it. She also shares with you the following from TFD comics (reprinted with permission).



“The Most Dangerous Profession” or “College Professors are ‘Snakes’”: Lisa Honaker wanted to find something on the economy (or money) in Frank Norris's *McTeague*, a book that has stuck in her head in ways that have surprised Lisa since she read it for her PhD oral exams. Trina McTeague (who became an obsessive gold hoarder) has often figured into discussions of money Lisa has had with literary-minded friends. Unfortunately, Lisa couldn't find her copy of the novel. In the search for it, however, she happened to light on Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt*, and, as if the gods had taken an interest in our fall newsletter project, Lisa opened the book to the page with the following quotation, part of the Annual Address George Babbitt delivers at Zenith's Chamber of Commerce dinner:

“But the way of the righteous is not all roses. Before I close I must call your attention to a problem we have to face, this coming year. The worst menace to sound government is not the avowed socialists but a lot of cowards who work under cover the long-haired gentry who call themselves ‘liberals’ and ‘radicals’ and ‘non-partisan’ and ‘intelligentsia’ and God only knows how many other trick names! Irresponsible

teachers and professors constitute the worst of this whole gang, and I am ashamed to say that several of them are on the faculty of our great State University! The U. is my own Alma Mater, and I am proud to be known as an alumni, but there are certain instructors there who seem to think we ought to turn the conduct of the nation over to hoboes and roustabouts.

“Those profs are the snakes to be scotched – they and all their milk-and-water ilk! The American business man is generous to a fault, but one thing he does demand of all teachers and lecturers and journalists: if we’re going to pay them our good money, they’ve got to help us by selling efficiency and whooping it up for rational prosperity! And when it comes to these blab-mouth, fault-finding, pessimistic, cynical University teachers, let me tell you that during this golden coming year it’s just as much our duty to bring influence to have those cusses fired as it is to sell all the real estate and gather in all the good shekels we can.”

“Finding the Best in the Worst Job”: The most mind-numbing (and lowest paying) job **Addie Holton** ever had also turned out to be the most important. It was a summer internship at a major cultural institution in Washington DC, which she expected to be an exciting beginning to a career in arts administration. Instead, the work itself turned out to be dull and repetitive, and more bureaucratic than she had anticipated. In fact, Dr. Holton counted down the minutes each day until 5:30 when she could go home. The internship did teach her some things about herself that she might not have realized until much later – that autonomy and intellectual creativity were important qualities she needed to look for in a career. The lessons learned in that one boring summer helped her make a number of positive personal and professional choices at the time and later down the road. Even when internships don’t lead to job offers, they offer a chance to understand a field from the inside, learn new skills, make connections, and establish references. And, at the very least, they can help us realize what we don’t want to do, which might be just as valuable.

“A Penny for Your Thoughts on the Economy”: As for jobs and the economy, these times make **Tom Kinsella** think of connections to earlier hard times. Willman Spawn, Tom’s research partner for 25 years (who is 89 years old), recently spoke feelingly about his memories of the Great Depression. “I remember men standing on the street corners of Washington, D.C. selling apples. There would be a bushel at their feet and they would ask a nickel for an apple, but they’d take two cents or a penny. I remember them late in the day, a handful of apples left. They wouldn’t go home until all were gone. They complained about the weight of the pennies in their pockets.” A bushel of apples has between 120 and 160 apples. Think about standing on a street corner for ten hours and walking home with a pocket heavy with pennies inconveniently heavy, but not enough.

“Thrifty is the New Black” or “On the Economy of Language”: According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, the primary definition of “economy” (noun) is “The way in which something is managed; the management of resources; household management” (def. 1). It also denotes “The careful management of resources; sparingness” (def. 6). **Kristin Jacobson** (aka Thrifty Kristy) is (in)famous among her friends for her interest in the domestic economy as well as her coupon clipping and penny pinching – habits passed down as family tradition and honed while living on a graduate stipend. In the winter she passes out sweaters to cold friends instead of turning up the heat, always brings her own bags to the supermarket to save a few nickels and keep plastic bags from landfills, and she is forever on the lookout for a smart bargain. Whether you find yourself scrimping and saving or spending and praying, the Literature program hopes that you consider it good fortune to have spent some of your time studying the economy of

language. We also hope that you have been able to cash in on this experience in a variety of ways – materially and spiritually growing your wealth.

Feeling a little low in literary currency? If you are looking for career tips, one place to start is our own webpage: <http://titania.stockton.edu/literature/careers/>. We also hope that you will return for our annual BASH or for a Visiting Writers Series event. The LITT faculty wish you prosperity and hope to hear from or see you soon.

Announcements:

Stockton Anthology: This year Professor Long will be working on publishing a collection of stories from the Stockton Fiction workshop. If you work-shopped a story in the last four years and want it considered for the anthology, email a revised copy to nlong@stockton.edu.

Listserv: The server with our bank of email addresses crashed over the summer. You will need to sign up again to receive or send announcements. To sign up for our Literature listserv, go to: <http://fsmac1.stockton.edu/mailman/listinfo/litt-majors>.

Visiting Writers Series: (free and open to the public) *Jim Zarvanos*, 8pm, F111, 15 October 2009

Ravenswood Reading: (annual fundraising event for the series, donations accepted for admission to the reading) *Tim Seibles*, 8pm, Alton Auditorium, 4 November 2009.

Alumni Networking: The Literature program will hold our first Alumni “Speed Networking” event on Thursday, October 29, from 4:30-6:00 in the TRLC. Current students and graduates will have the opportunity to speak with selected alumni from a variety of fields, followed by an open session to meet and mingle. Food and beverages will be provided. You should receive an invitation by mail from the college’s development office, but if you haven’t or if you have any questions, please contact Deb Gussman (Deborah.Gussman@stockton.edu).

LITT Bash: 23 April 2010, TRLC, 4-6pm: Our annual Bash celebrates student achievements and our alumni. The faculty provide the food and drink. Just bring yourself. Please plan to join us for this free event. Can’t wait until spring? Check out our Bash recipes on the web: <http://titania.stockton.edu/literature/not-quite-necessary/bash-recipes/>.

Giving to ARHU: Make your tax deductible donation here: <http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=69&pageID=172>. If you would like to earmark your donation to support the Visiting Writers Series, contact Nathan Long (nlong@stockton.edu).

In Memory: The Literature program was greatly saddened by the loss of our recent 2008 graduate, **Beth Ann Davi**. Beth passed away on Thursday, September 3, 2009. Contributions may be made in her memory to the Ronald McDonald House, 550 Mickie Blvd., Camden, NJ 08103. Her smile and enthusiasm will be missed.

“Happy is the man who can make a living by his hobby!”

George Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion*