

# MUSINGS



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## Dates to Remember

- October 28: Last day to withdraw with a "W."
- November 18: Fall Quarter Birthday/Thanksgiving Party
- November 23: Fall quarter classes end.
- November 29, noon: Grades due.
- May 25: Gary's Retirement party. Save the date.

## FROM THE CHAIR : 3/1

Having only three columns left as chair of the English Department, I would like to concentrate each column upon a different aspect of my career here at Sinclair Community College: the students, colleagues (winter quarter), and the profession itself (spring quarter). When I started here in September, 1972, I had just taught one year at Oakwood High School (my teaching career actually began in September, 1967, when I taught at Wayne High School for three years before I went to the University of Michigan for my Masters). At Oakwood, "mini-courses" were the educational rage of the day, so in addition to freshmen required to read *The Odyssey* and juniors and seniors in journalism and the yearbook (since being newly hired I was designated the faculty advisor for both the student newspaper and the yearbook), I taught mini-courses in The Theatre of the Absurd (having just read that the new Nobel Prize winner Harold Pinter would act in Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape*, I was reminded that I also performed that single-actor play for my class), Hermann Hesse, and a course I titled "A Russian Troika: Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky and Solzhenitsyn." Imagine my surprise when I came to Sinclair to begin teaching the expository essay in ENG 111.

No one had taught me how to teach exposition – I am not sure that I even knew at that time what it meant. I had taken a methods course at Wilmington College for my certification, but we rarely discussed how to teach writing; back then the professors assumed that the students had learned to write in high school so the word *composition* was hardly referenced. I learned as the students learned, always keeping at least a chapter ahead of them, and ultimately knowing that in fact being older and more educated that I knew more than they did at the time. I began to think of Sinclair as an advanced high school, but I had the desire to challenge the students to realize that they were in college now. How naïve I was! I remember talking about surrealism in class and showing them Salvador Dali and Luis Bunuel's short avant-garde film *The Andalusian Dog*. What must they have thought about that? I would love to be able to find some of my students from 1972, and ask them what they remember or learned. One of my education professors warned me that I could

never know what was going on in a student's mind, but now I wonder what effect I have had over the many students who have flowed through my classes.

Initially, my students were older and always with jobs and families, and Sinclair was a place for them after they had their families and jobs. They were often under-prepared or "rusty" about their English and writing skills but very willing to make new advances. I hope that I provided them with these skills. I have tried almost everything to reach them: lecture, discussion, reading, memorizing, visual learning, repetition, step-by-step explanations, hands-on work, demonstrations, note taking activities, board notes, PowerPoint, internet, oral presentations, use of examples, and field trips. I have attempted to always be friendly, understanding, passionate, and energetic. I have attempted to be straightforward with them and fair. I have tried to give clear directions and to explain my expectations on exams. I have attempted to challenge the students to think, to offer them new knowledge, and to make learning fun.

Now the students are younger; their points of reference are very far from my points of reference; they have not even read the typical teenage novels that I thought everyone read during those years: *Catcher in the Rye*, *1984*, *Brave New World*, or *Look Homeward, Angel*. When was the last time that you mentioned My Lai in class? Now they may have read a Harry Potter book or *The Lord of the Rings* (I could never make it through *The Hobbit*) and their points of reference are generally from popular culture, though not even from the films that I have seen at The Neon or even the PBS television programs that I have watched. Now I have to become even more "the villager explainer." They do not read newspapers, even on-line, and get tired of me saying that I do not read *The Dayton Daily Loss* (oops!) but instead *The New York Times* since it challenges my vocabulary and critical thinking skills. Yet with even these drawbacks, they are eager to learn, just not in the traditional ways. More recently, the trend seems to be back to "telling" them rather than "showing" them; they

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## FROM THE TEAMS

Adrienne Cassel, coordinator of the **Satellite Campus Team**, attended a focus group meeting on Thursday, September 29. Deans and chairs were present to discuss their concerns and issues surrounding the development of satellite campuses. Sinclair has brought in an outside consulting firm to conduct the focus groups, which were held at the Huber Heights and Beaver Creek Y's, included both Y members and nonmembers, and met in the morning and afternoons. The purpose of the groups was to determine what types of classes should be offered and to ascertain pre-conceptions being held concerning the campuses.

The **Business/Technical Team** has been busy fall quarter. We adopted a new edition of the Gerson text which is proving to be successful. Liz and Vicki have scheduled all classes in the Writing Center Lab to secure our "space" in the new library. Liz has completed all of the CMTs required by the college and they have been entered into the database. Liz has also updated both of the Master Syllabi for English 131 and 132. Accordingly, we have continued to downsize our sections of Technical Writing to meet demand. We will still be offering several sections during the day and evening hours through 2006.

The **Literature and Scholarship Team** had an extremely busy week Sept. 19 – 23 updating the master syllabi for the British Literature and American Literature series (201, 202, 203 and 211, 212, 213, respectively) and Literature of Africa, Asia, and Latin America (234) to meet an Ohio Board of Regents (OBR) deadline. The revised course outcomes and performance criteria now align with the Transfer Assurance Guides established by the OBR Articulation and Transfer Council. Alignment means that these courses will continue to be recognized as transferable, university parallel courses, interchangeable in course outcomes and similar in content to such courses taught at a four-year college or university.

The project involved discussion of course content (the outlines), agreement upon the wording of outcomes and criteria, matching assessment methods and outcomes with Gen. Ed. and Divisional outcomes, and entering the data in the Curriculum Management Tool (CMT) database.

Librarian Winnie Tseng, of the **Library/English Liaison Team** revised the assignment worksheets for ENG 112, including the two sheets used by faculty in the classroom before taking students to the library for orientation and hands-on research work. Those two sheets are available in the English office; the others, in the library.

Kay Berg and Carol Nancarrow attended the fall open house at the library; Winnie presented and Kay attended the library's "What's New" workshop on Sept. 21.

The **Assessment Team** is working with the Composition Team to write and disseminate new master syllabi changes for feedback from all faculty. You'll receive an e-mail asking you to log on to your English department organization site on my.sinclair and leave feedback in the discussion forum.

As a result of our work on the assessment team, we have learned that we should not rely on our *master* syllabi to work as our *teaching* syllabi. Master syllabi are used on a state-wide level to ensure transferability of our courses. They should be sufficiently vague to match up with outcomes at other colleges and universities and still allow us breathing room for our instruction preferences. However, we should be creating and utilizing helpful teaching syllabi which should be very specific to ensure that new and part-time faculty clearly understand the nature of course content. They would also provide useful assignment guidelines, tips, and department policies. We hope to extend the discussion of master syllabi to teaching syllabi suggestions—options for assignments and class activities to achieve master syllabi outcomes.

The **Part-time Faculty Team** are entertaining suggestions for criteria for a Part-Time Teacher of the Year Award. Please email suggestions to Jack Bennett. Planning for a Winter Quarter in-service is under way. Our desire is to hold a full session on teaching in our department, procedures, class management and strategies. At the recent recognition program held September 1 in the Tartan Terrace, faculty members Richard Strader and Lisa Mahle-Grisez were honored by the college for 20 and 5 year service respectively.

The **Composition Team** will be aligning the Master Syllabi and the expanded version of the syllabi for English 111 and English 112 as soon as the outcomes have been determined. We are also working on the procedure for restricting the time that a student can register for one of the courses in the sequence. In addition, the Composition Team will be working with the Part time Faculty Team to design our January in-service. It is hoped that the majority of facilitators or discussion leaders for the in service will be from part time faculty. Our meeting in October will include a number of part time faculty to get ideas for the in-service.

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*"Autumn wins you best  
by its mute appeal to  
sympathy for its decay."*

—Robert Browning

The **Creative Writing Team** reports that the 2005 edition of *Flights* will be out soon. We'll be charging \$7.00 a copy this year with the intent of getting the journal carried by bookstores. Also, The Sinclair Community College 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Writers' Workshop will take place in conjunction with the city-wide Paul Laurence Dunbar Centennial Celebration. The workshop will be Thursday Feb. 23 12-5 p.m. in Building 12. During the

workshop, four writers of national reputation will present sessions dealing with their specialties. Workshop fees are \$15.00 for high school and college students and \$25.00 for non-students. Poet Michael S. Harper will deliver a keynote reading Friday, Feb. 24 from 7:00-9:00 p.m. in the Frederick C. Smith Auditorium. The reading will be free and open to Sinclair students, faculty, and the community.

## PRINTED AND PRESENTED

**Gary Mitchner** hosted a meeting and luncheon for the Dayton Chapter of the Jane Austen Society with the President Joan Ray from the University of Colorado as speaker. He judged the Jane Austen Society of North America's (JASNA) annual essay contest for high school, undergraduate, and graduate essays. The winners were presented at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Milwaukee on October 6. Gary was also appointed a poetry judge for the Dayton-Montgomery County Library annual poetry contest. As Poet Laureate, in addition to the Fall Conference Poem "Song of Sinclair and Myself," he also wrote "Sinclair Beach" (with apologies to Matthew Arnold) for the President's Deans and Chairs Retreat. He also taught a poetry seminar at Antioch University this past summer.

**William Loudermilk** had the opportunity to develop and teach a course titled "African-American and Appalachian Literature" for Urbana University during the summer.

**Sarah Kiewitz** took classes at MIT through the Linguistics Society of America for three weeks this past July. She never met Noam Chomsky (who was only teaching there second session) and, therefore, she must return someday for him and fabulous food (not necessarily in that order). She took a class from the co-author of the text she uses for Linguistics but is glad she didn't realize this while she was taking the class. The professor saying things like, "some contend that the RI raises to CP, but I don't think a case can be made for it raising as high as I" was intimidating enough. She also made friends with a paraplegic T stop panhandler and walked out with a pair of new sandals.

**Ed Davis'** poetry chapbook "Healing Arts," has been accepted and published by Pudding House. His novel, *The Measure of Everything*, was accepted by Plain View Press in Austin, TX and will be published in November, if all goes well. He also recently got word that his story "The Boys of Bradletown" won first place for fiction in *Ohio Writer's* annual literary contest: that means \$150, plus publication in the November/December issue. Ed also presented at the West Virginia Writers Conference in June, and in fact, one of

his students went home and reviewed his first novel, "I Was So Much Older Than" in "Graffiti," a West Virginia alternative newspaper she writes for.

**Chuck Freeland** has been promoted to Associate Professor. His poem "Deviled Ham and a Picture of Jesus" was a finalist in *The Finline Competition for Prose Poems, Short Shorts, and Everything in Between*. The poem will be published this Fall in *Mid-American Review*.

**Tim Waggoner's** story, "Zombie Dreams," was accepted for publication in the anthology *Aim for the Head*. He has been invited to contribute stories to the anthologies *War of the Fantastic* and *Places to Go, People to Kill*, both for DAW Books. He's currently finishing *Darkness Wakes*, his third horror novel for Leisure Books. Tim's novel *Nightmare on Elm Street: Protégé* is due to be released any day now. In July he taught a fiction-writing intensive at the Antioch Writers' Workshop in Yellow Springs, and in August he presented writers' workshops and participated in seminar panels at the Gencon gaming convention in Indianapolis.

**Kay Berg** has a poem in the upcoming issue of *Flights*.

**Len Bazalak** recently gave a lecture to members of a senior citizen center condensing the philosophy of Wayne Dyer, author of *The Power of Intention*.

**Sally Lahmon's** Children's Lit class is hosting her husband Tim's 5th grade class from CF Holliday Elementary (West Carrollton) for a Book Discussion Group on campus. On Oct 25, the kids will be bused in for class, take a campus tour, and have lunch here. In addition to hosting a discussion of Newbery Award winning books, her students will be sharing their picture book projects with the kids; in turn, the kids will share books that they have created at school.

**Lisa Tyler's** review of *Reading Oprah: How Oprah's Book Club Changed the Way America Reads*, by Cecilia Konchar Farr, appeared in the Spring 2005 issue of the *Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*.

"Autumn resumes the land, ruffles the woods with smoky wings, entangles them."

—Geoffrey Hill

## MEET THE NEW FACULTY

The English department is pleased to welcome three new faculty members this year. **William Loudermilk** is our new ACF, **Furaha Henry-Jones** joins us as a Grow Our Own participant, and **Karel Panchocha** is an exchange instructor from the Czech Republic. Since Karel is here for only Fall quarter, he is featured in this edition. Look for detailed introductions our other new faculty in future issues of *Musings*.

Having been an exchange student at Beaver-creek High School in 1995/96 (staying with Tom Martin, the director of the honors program at SCC), **Karel Panchocha** is not a complete stranger to the Dayton area. Tom Martin and Gary Mitchner made it possible for him to come to the US again to teach English 111 and

conduct his research here at Sinclair during the fall quarter of 2005.

Karel received a B.A. in business administration from Anglo-American College in Prague and an M.A. in English language and literature and special education from Masaryk University in Brno, both in the Czech Republic. He is currently a full-time PhD student of special education at Masaryk University in Brno.

Karel remarks that teaching and studying here has so far been an exceptional experience. "My students are just great, forbearing and patient with me. I had not been expecting so much understanding for a foreigner from just-out-of-high-school students, but I have been pleasantly surprised."

## WRITING CENTER UPDATE

The writing center tutors are trying out a revised working process this fall, and it seems to be working well so far. We are putting more emphasis on the teaching aspects of our mission and less on producing error-free papers. The tutors are reading each paper through before beginning work on it and selecting areas in which they can instruct the students how to improve their own papers. The students will do the actual revisions themselves. The tutors are not writing on the papers except for marginal notes to help them find the areas they identify for work.

The Writing Center policy document has been revised to reflect this change in working process. Any faculty members who wish to review the document, which is always a work in progress, are welcome to email Carol Nancarrow to request a copy.

This process results in the students doing more of their own work and in getting more instruction and less editing service work. To support this mission, the tutors have been

working on the handouts we have available for common writing problems and consulting handbooks to improve their own understanding.

As always, the writing center staff is also available for students who need help at any earlier stage of the writing process.

Doug Greathouse, the Writing Center technician, is now acquiring up-to-date copies of textbooks for most of our writing courses. Because these have tended to disappear, we are now locking them up when not in use. They are not to be removed from the Center.

And finally, our best news—over the summer our bulky, noisy, hot monitors were replaced with new flat panel monitors, opening up a lot of working space that was badly needed and improving the problem with overheating of the tutoring area and classroom.

Carol Nancarrow

*The Writing Center is in room 3221. Hours of operation are 8 am-8 pm Mon.-Thurs. and 8 am-5 pm on Friday.*

## FROM THE CHAIR (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

don't know that they are not "bank deposit boxes" into which I am supposed to invest what I know. They are also not convinced that team work works even though I tell them about all of the teams on which I have worked (more on that later). The students who were serious, and not just in the class for credit or because their parents said they should be in college, have always been amazing. I am

amazed at how many are now teaching here or somewhere else. Last week when I was in Milwaukee for a Jane Austen conference, a former student from 1974 picked me up at the hotel for dinner; she is now the chair of English at a small college there. So many successes, though I still worry about the student who put on a Purdue evaluation: "Fire the son-of-a-bitch!" (though I don't think that he used the exclamation point).

Yes, it is time to retire.

### Faculty and Staff

- Chair:

Gary Mitchner

- Secretary:

Fortunate Finley

- Faculty:

Jack Bennett

Kay Berg

Susan Callender

Adrienne Cassel

Liz Christensen

Ed Davis

Jamey Dunham

Chuck Freeland

Kate Geiselman

Furaha Henry-Jones

Sarah Kiewitz

Sally Lahmon

William Loudermilk

Mildred Melendez

Becky Morean

Carol Nancarrow

Vicki Stalbird

Lisa Tyler

Tim Waggoner

Chuck Wagner

- Tech support:

Doug Greathouse

- Student worker:

Malintha Gundawaranda

- Newsletter Editor:

Kate Geiselman