



THE WORD

“Go forth! Be brave! Be proud! Be true!”—Jane Leonard (1840-1925), IUP English Professor

Special Delivery: Red Flag Poetry Finds a Home at IUP

By Matthew Stumpf

On a drive back from their home state of Michigan, Peter Faziani and his wife kept watching the mailboxes as they passed. One by one these seemingly antiquated boxes kept going by like fence posts, and Peter thought to himself, “how can I make checking the mailbox an enjoyable experience again?” This question may seem an odd one, but, believe it or not, Peter, and his team of four are accomplishing this goal every month.



The back of a Red Flag poetry postcard

Fueled by a love of poetry, accompanied by the urge to brighten everybody’s day, Peter Faziani, Wesley McMasters, Matthew Stumpf, and Sarah Everett have been publishing pithy poetry that employs interesting and innovative language, images, or content through the medium of a postcard delivered monthly right to your mailbox. Each postcard features an original work of poetry along with original artwork. Every subscriber receives one postcard per month along with another poem sent through the Red Flag Poetry Express service via e-mail. By publishing emerging poets

and artists from both within the IUP community as well as across globe, Red Flag strives to feature works from all parts of the aesthetic spectrum. From playful prose poems to serious sonnets, Red Flag trusts that poetry is powerful enough to make people think. Poets challenge their readers to interpret and experience elements of life that may be hard to understand, painful, or filled with ecstasy; and through poetry they provide the tools needed to comprehend those parts of the human experience which often elude us.

In appreciation of Red Flag’s mission, the IUP’s Department of English graciously agreed to fully fund the project beginning in the Fall 2018 semester. With this funding, Red Flag hopes to continue to provide both a journal for people to find and appreciate poetry, as well as offer an opportunity for students in the department to gain experience in the world of editing and publishing through the semesterly internship program. This funding continues to support the project in providing free

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Do you have departmental or alumni news that you would like *The Word* to feature? Contact Todd Thompson at Todd.Thompson@iup.edu.

Interested in donating to IUP English? Contact Development Officer Tony Cancro at acancro@iup.edu.

subscriptions to anyone with a valid IUP email address. Along with the IUP subscribers, the project now reaches roughly 150 individuals from 28 different U.S. states as well as individuals from India, Estonia, and Canada. Visit redflagpoetry.com to subscribe and check out the work Red Flag has already published; it won’t disappoint.

Continuing a Legacy of Teacher/Scholar Mentoring in the English Department

One of the things that makes us especially proud as an English Department is the quality of our teaching. But our commitment to thoughtful, creative, effective pedagogy isn't just evident in our classrooms.

For over a decade, graduate students in the Composition & Applied Linguistics and Literature & Criticism programs who are hired to teach IUP's liberal studies writing and literature courses have benefited from a dedicated mentoring program.

Students in the programs are given the respect and responsibility of being independent teachers. They develop their own course syllabi, teach all class sessions independently, and do their own assessment of student learning.

But supporting them in this process are faculty mentors from all English department programs who bring years of high-quality teaching experience and cutting-edge pedagogical research to the table.

As Dr. Mike Sell explains, "This kind of one-on-one collaboration between faculty and students is one of the best ways we fulfill our mission as an English Department."

Though the CAL and L&C mentoring programs are run independently under the leadership of, respectively, Dr. Dana Driscoll (starting in Fall 2019, Dr. Matthew Vetter) and Dr. Sell, they share common goals, including preparing teachers of literature, composition, and language learning to develop



L&C Mentor Dr. Mike Sell leads a class in 2016.

their pedagogical skills in the classroom and out; developing high-quality teaching materials; adapting their teaching skills to a variety of educational settings; supporting the improvement of teaching through reflective practice; facilitating student-engaged, research-supported teaching; and fostering one-on-one mentoring relationships between English department faculty and graduate students.

The mentoring program accomplishes this through a structured program of activities and assessments.

The most important of these is one-on-one mentoring. Each graduate student instructor is paired with an experienced English

Department faculty member each semester. Before the term begins, mentors provide meticulous feedback on syllabus and course plans; help their mentees decide on personal improvement objectives; ensure understanding of all department and university policies; and help plan for the semester.

Over the course of the semester, mentors observe their mentees teach at least twice, meet with them individually, and provide whatever support they need to ensure that our undergraduate students get the best possible education in the skills and opportunities English provides.

As Dr. Driscoll explains, "Our program helps not only our doctoral students gain high-quality, supported teaching experience, but also better prepares them for future careers as educators."

Three IUP English Alums Inducted into CHSS Hall of Distinction in September

Three distinguished IUP alumni—Blane K. Dessy (B.A. 1973), Dr. Thomas S.C. Farrell (Ph.D., Rhetoric and Linguistics, 1996), and Dr. Danielle J. Wylie (B.A. 2007)—were inducted into IUP’s College of Humanities and Social Sciences Hall of Distinction at a ceremony on September 28, 2018. According to the CHSS website, “The College of Humanities and Social Sciences Hall of Distinction recognizes and honors alumni and friends who have demonstrated illustrious professional accomplishments, outstanding character, and a commitment to

degree from the University of Pittsburgh and built a career that took him to the Library of Congress, where he became Executive Director of National Enterprises. At Library of Congress, Dessy managed a research division, a publishing office, a network of federal libraries, and other business functions before retiring in 2017. He has been involved with several professional associations and has lectured abroad in Brazil, Turkey, Finland, and the Netherlands. Dessy was an inaugural member of the CHSS Dean’s Advancement Council, a position through which he

35 books, 41 book chapters, 87 articles in refereed journals and conference proceedings, and 50 popular articles in non-refereed publications to date. Most recently, he published *Research on Reflective Practice in TESOL*.

Dr. Wylie is an assistant professor of philosophy at Mississippi State University, where she serves as the undergraduate coordinator, as a faculty affiliate for the Gender Studies program, and as a representative on the university’s President’s Commission for the Status of



Blane Dessy, B.A. 1973



Thomas S.C. Farrell, Ph.D.,



Danielle J. Wylie, B.A. 2007

community service and philanthropy. Through their extraordinary achievements, they have established a lasting legacy of excellence.”

Dessy, a first-generation college student when he entered IUP, began his educational career as an anthropology major but became interested in literature and graduated with a BA in English. He then earned a Master of Library Science

continues to serve IUP.

Dr. Farrell, a Professor of applied linguistics at Brock University in Canada, is an internationally renowned scholar and award-winning researcher in reflective practice and language teacher education and development. A highly sought-after speaker, Farrell has given presentations worldwide and has published widely, authoring or editing

Women. As a first-generation college student from a working-class background, she participated in IUP’s McNair Scholars program, inspiring her to learn more about issues of inequality and injustice in education, which she addresses in her research and teaching. She received the Richard M. Griffith Memorial Award from the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology.

Slater Offers Public Film Showings in Conjunction with Arab Film and Literature Course

The following films showed or will show on these dates (Mondays) at 6 pm in an HSS room to be announced. These will be shown in relation to Dr. Slater's ENGL 765/865 Arab Film & Lit class, but after class time, so everyone is welcome to join. There will be no lecturing or presentations, but discussion for anyone who wants to talk. Attendance vouchers will also be provided.

Feb 4 **Wedding in Galilee (Michel Khleifi, 1987)** A Palestinian seeks Israeli permission to waive curfew to give his son a fine wedding. The military governor's condition is that he and his officers attend. The groom berates his father for agreeing. As darkness falls, tensions between army and villagers rise, and the groom's wedding-night anger and impotence threaten family dignity and honor. Can cool heads prevail?

Feb 11 **Divine Intervention (Elia Suleiman, 2002)** Separated by a checkpoint, Palestinian lovers from Jerusalem and Ramallah arrange clandestine meetings.

Feb 18 **Whatever Lola Wants (Nabil Ayouch, 2007)** A New York postal worker travels to Egypt to take belly dancing lessons from a legendary instructor.

Feb 25 **Cairo Station (Youssef Chanine, 1958)** Kinawi, a physically challenged peddler who makes his living selling newspapers in the central Cairo train station,

is obsessed by Hannouma, an attractive young woman who sells drinks.

While she treats Kinawi in a sympathetic way and jokes with him about a possible relationship, She is actually in love with Abu Sri', a strong and respected porter at the station who is struggling to unionize his fellow workers to combat their boss' exploitative and abusive treatment.

Mar 18 **Taxi (Jafar Panahi, 2015)** Jafar Panahi is banned from making movies by the Iranian government, so he poses as a taxi driver and makes a movie about social challenges in Iran.

Apr 22 **Song of Sparrows (Mahjid Mahjidi, 2008)** When an ostrich-rancher focuses on replacing his daughter's hearing aid, which breaks right before crucial exams, everything changes for a struggling rural family in Iran. Karim motorbikes into a world alien to him: incredibly hectic Tehran, where sudden opportunities for independence, thrill and challenge him.

Apr 29 **A Separation (Ashgar Farhadi, 2011)** A married couple is faced with a difficult decision: to improve the life of their child by moving to another country or to stay in Iran and look after a deteriorating parent who has Alzheimer's disease.

The Tell-Tale Heart: Poe Loves IUP English

Dr. Dan Weinstein designed this image of Edgar Allan Poe holding an "I HEART IUP ENGLISH" coffee mug.





Alumni Spotlight: Where Are They Now?

Beulah Corsini Fisher (B.Ed. 1956) taught English, French, and Spanish for three years and has also worked in market research. She is married to Dr. John K. Fisher, who served as President of Norwalk State Technical College in Norwalk, CT and of St. Vincent's College in Bridgeport, CT before retiring. Beulah and Dr. Fisher remain active, dancing duplicate bridge and walking every day. They have two sons and seven grandchildren. Beulah established a scholarship at IUP, called the **Beulah (Corsini) Fisher '56 Scholarship Fund**, which gives financial support to a male IUP student each year.

Charles Runyan (B.Ed. 1969) passed away in December 2018. He taught English at Indiana Junior High School for two years before completing a Masters of Library Science at University of Pittsburgh. Charles founded The Roadster Factory, a mail-order business specializing in British sports car parts, in 1978. He also built and owned the Coventry Inn, an English pub in Indiana, PA that was a popular gathering spot for retired IUP English professors.

Virginia Bash (B.A. 1966, M.S.Ed. 1972) recently retired from the South Butler County School District after 33 years teaching English to junior high and middle school students. She has moved to Indiana to be near her family members, including her brother, sister, nieces, nephews, and cousins. Virginia belongs to the Herb Study Group of Indiana County and had a knee replacement surgery in 2017.

Dr. Mohammad S. Zughoul (L&C, Ph.D. 1992) passed away Sept. 25, 2018. He had been an English

Professor at the City Colleges of Chicago since 1995. He also taught as an adjunct at Benedictine University and College of DuPage for many years. Dr. Zughoul was beloved by both colleagues and students.

Dr. Jody Spedaliere (L&C, Ph.D. 2001), recently published his second book, *The Construction of Fiction Through Personal Experience in the Work of William Saroyan and Jack Kerouac: The Autobiographical Components of Literary Experience*, in 2018 with the Edwin Mellen Press.

IUP welcomed alumnus and author **Eric Bell** (English minor 2008) to campus on October 23, 2018 to give two talks as part of the English Department Speaker Series. In the morning he talked to IUP student writers about how to write, pitch, and publish a book project; in the afternoon he talked about writing for adolescents, highlighting queer characters and stories and why middle grade novels matter. Bell, who is author of *Alan Cole is Not a Coward* (2015) and *Alan Cole Doesn't Dance* (2018), was a Psychology major and English minor at IUP as well as student in the Cook Honors College. The talks were co-sponsored by the English Department, CHSS, Women and Gender Studies, LGBT&Q Studies, the Cook Honors College, and the Psychology Department.

In December 2018 **Cathy Renwick** marked the tenth anniversary of her retirement as Graduate English secretary in 2008 after 22 years of work at IUP. Cathy says, "I will always remember all the M.A. and Ph.D students I met from around the world. I still enjoy hearing from many of them on Facebook." Cathy lives Sebring, FL. She enjoys playing shuffleboard and recently earned

qualifications to direct shuffleboard tournaments in Florida.

Former English B.A. Valedictorian **Ashley Stoner** (B.A. 2015) earned a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Virginia School of Law in May 2018, after which she joined the international law firm of White & Case LLP as an Associate. Stoner has offered to serve as a resource for any IUP English students or alumni interested in law school and the legal profession. You can reach her at ashley.stoner@whitecase.com

Dr. Judith Saunders (L&C, Ph.D. 2017) is an instructor teaching English composition, critical thinking and literature at Contra Costa College in East Bay, California. Her an essay, "From Potency to Impotency: Sarah Kane's Play *Blasted* as a National Narrative," won the Victor J. Emmett Jr. Memorial Award, which is given each year to the author of the best essay on a literary topic published in *The Midwest Quarterly*. As the winner of this award, Dr. Saunders was asked to give the 25th annual Victor J. Emmett Jr. Memorial Lecture at Pittsburg State University in Kansas. Her lecture, which she delivered in September 2018, was titled "The Anglo-American Special Relationship: Fact, Fiction, and Fantasy." Dr. Saunders also has work forthcoming in *Modern Drama* 62.1. Dr. Saunders frequently participates in the Comparative Drama Conference and is a presiding officer in the Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association (PAMLA).

Alumni, please tell us what you're up to! Send your updates to Todd.Thompson@iup.edu



Writing Center Corner

What Is Social Media Doing to Our Ability to Write?

By Melissa Lutz, Secretary, Kathleen Jones White Writing Center

It seems every time you turn around you see someone decrying the detrimental effects social media has had on the writing abilities of the people who use it. You see people upset that students today are learning to write in “text-speak”—using “u” instead of “you” or acronyms such as “OIC” (oh, I see). Another common complaint about the influence of social media on writing is that it is teaching people to write shallowly due to the limited space provided in many social media forums. While it is true that people who use social media do engage in text-speak and are forced to write briefly online, just how much do these things affect a person’s ability to write?

The first thing that should be acknowledged is that using social media means that people are writing when they otherwise may not have been. Social media is so ubiquitous in our society now that you would be hard-pressed to find someone who does not engage in any form of it, whether it be Facebook or Twitter, writing comments on news articles, or even texting their friends and family daily. There are many people now who write on a daily basis who would not have written at all before social media. While writing consistently can build the habit of writing, which is wonderful, it could also be argued that writing on social media consistently will reinforce bad writing habits such as using informal text-speak or failing to fully engage with a topic. However, I would suggest that there are also good writing habits that can be formed through engaging in social media.

If you were to ask people the difference between writing for the various social media platforms, they would most likely tell you that you need to be much briefer on Twitter due to the limited characters allowed; that on Facebook you are typically writing only for the people you have chosen to connect with, while on Twitter you are generally writing for a broader, more public audience; that when using Instagram any caption you write will be secondary to the image you post. Each of these descriptions shows an understanding of the different rhetorical goals of the genres of Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram writing. This understanding can be the first step toward an understanding of genre on a wider level that includes more traditional types of writing such as the academic research papers.

Understanding your own purpose when writing is important. It is also important to develop audience awareness. When writing on different social media platforms it is important to think about who your audience is for each one. Are you writing on Facebook for only your friends? Then you might say things you would never post to Twitter, where your profile is public and anyone can access your writing. Or, even if you do write about the same topic on both platforms, you would be likely to present it differently for the different audiences. This audience awareness is another skill that can help writers when they approach writing that is outside the realm of social media.

A writing skill that I know from personal experience can be very difficult is being succinct. If I am given four pages to say something, my first draft will usually be at least five pages, and paring that down can often be the most difficult part of the writing process. Social media can help writers with this skill by giving them practice in writing clearly yet succinctly. Even on platforms that do not have character limits, such as Twitter, clear and direct writing is beneficial. On Facebook, users tend to scroll through quickly, so writers need to convey their message clearly and quickly. Even on a platform such as Reddit that has no character limits and attracts a user base that expects to read longer pieces, a writer will often face criticism for being long-winded or for failing to organize thoughts clearly.

As a former tutor in the writing center, I would encourage hesitant writers by showing them that they did in fact have writing experience they could build on. Once they gained confidence in calling themselves writers, it was much easier for them to continue to expand on the skills they had unknowingly been building through their daily writing.

This ties into the idea of transfer, which is the concept of taking skills from one situation and applying them to another. In the case of social media writing, tutors can help this process along by helping writers to see the connections between the skills they have honed through their use of social media and the skills they need to apply to their academic writing.



Mark Your Calendar!

Upcoming Events

Feb. 13

English Dept. Speaker Series: poet **G.C. Waldrep** class visit
1:25-2:15 PM, HSS 219, reading 4-5 PM, HSS 113

Feb. 19

LSE Celebration, 1:30-3 PM, CHSS 506

Feb. 21

English Department **Publication Celebration**, 2-3:30, HSS B03

Feb. 21

Lit Night open mic, 6 PM, Artist's Hand Gallery & Espresso Bar

Mar. 14

IUP get-together at **TESOL Convention** in Atlanta, GA,
5:30-7:30 PM, Walnut Room, Omni Hotel

Mar. 28

Lit Night open mic, 6 PM, Artist's Hand Gallery & Espresso Bar

April 1

English Dept. Speaker Series/IUP 6:00 Series: **City of Asylum author Osama Alomar**, 6 PM, HUB Ohio Room

April 5-6

English Graduate Organization (EGO) annual graduate conference, HSS building, schedule TBA

Apr. 26

Lit Night open mic, 6 PM, Artist's Hand Gallery & Espresso Bar

April 28

English Department **Honors Ceremony**, 1 PM, location TBA

May 11

IUP English Department commencement ceremony, 9 AM, room TBA

The Word IUP English Newsletter



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