

Department of English



INKLINGS

I would rather see words out on their own, away from their families and the warehouse of Roget, wandering the world where they sometimes fall in love with a completely different word.

—Billy Collins

JEANNE SHAMI RETIRES AFTER 35 YEARS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF REGINA



After a career spanning 35 years, first at Champion College and then at the U of R, Professor Jeanne Shami is retiring. A University of Regina President's Scholar and former president of the John Donne Society, Jeanne received her M.A. degree from the University of Western Ontario and her Ph.D.

from the University of Toronto. She is best known as a Donne scholar, having written *John Donne and Conformity in Crisis in the Late Jacobean Pulpit* (2003) and co-edited *The Oxford Handbook of John Donne* (2011). She has accepted a fellowship at All Souls College, Oxford, as part of the active research life she plans to pursue after retirement in June. Jeanne graciously agreed to answer a few questions from the editor of *Inklings*.

INKLINGS: What were your initial impressions of Regina and Champion when you arrived? Who were the faculty members, both in and outside the English Department, that you most vividly recall? Can you tell us an anecdote or two that epitomizes those years?

When I moved to Regina in August of 1977, I was 25 years old and had never been to the city (although my friends in Toronto held a wake for me). I'd been hired by Father Peter Nash, President of Champion, on the strength of an interview that had taken place in Toronto some months before, where it was determined that I had qualifications in two fields: Renaissance Literature and CFL Football (not only did I know who Ron Lancaster was, but I had witnessed that last-second Saskatchewan loss in the 1976 Grey Cup). Father Nash took me under his wing, drove me around Regina to find an apartment so I could move out of the McCarthys' basement, and introduced me to a special group of friends and colleagues: the McCarthys, the McGoverns, the Dalsins, the Moores from Champion, and their colleagues from across campus, including the

deVliegers, the Costains, the Howards, the Bergbushes, the Murrays, the Ehmans, and the Ventres soon after. In those days, it was customary to have dinner parties on the weekends, formal affairs with several courses, and I learned to cook from the very best, as a result.

If I could summarize those early years, I would say that the University was a smaller place, a real community, and that we had the time – and took the time – to build friendships. The friends I made in these early years are precious to me. Sadly, I don't think we take the same time and care with our new colleagues as people did then (I'm as guilty as anyone), and we're the poorer for it.

INKLINGS: What are some of your recollections of students of that era and how are today's students different?

The similarities among students then and now are striking. Most of them were the first in their family to go to University; many of them were from small towns in southern Saskatchewan; most were afraid of English. I still remember, and occasionally run into, students from the first English 100 class I taught. They are teachers, crown prosecutors, mothers, professionals of all sorts. I had excellent students then, just as I do now, and roughly in the same proportions. They were more flustered by presentations then, but up for the challenge. But the biggest difference I notice now is in student expectations – about the course, about grades, about workload, about why they are at University. Students rarely complained, as they do now, that the workload (so much less than it was in the 80s) was excessive, or that there was too much reading on the syllabus. Grades were not contested in my office as they often are now. I never needed to keep Kleenex on hand. Plagiarism wasn't nearly as much of a problem. Students could read a long book or a difficult poem such as *Paradise Lost* without as much guidance or instruction, and it was still some years before I was routinely asked for "translations" of Shakespeare or other

Renaissance texts. I'm aware that many students no longer love reading, and this is now our biggest challenge. We sell ourselves too often as teachers of writing, but we should be promoting our jobs as purveyors of literary treasures above all. That's why the highlight of my teaching is the *Paradise Lost* public reading where I gather and train readers from across campus, staff as well as students, public figures and administrators. These performers come together for the day in exhausting but exhilarating communion with people off and on campus to experience the language and the sound as well as the meaning of great literature. It's a privilege and pleasure I will not give up easily.

INKLINGS: When you were a graduate student and during your first few years teaching, the discipline of English studies was very different in that most of your colleagues would have been products of the period before the rise of Theory. What would you say are the major changes that the discipline of English studies has undergone during your professional career?

When I came to the University of Regina, people in the discipline of English were not particularly self-conscious in labeling what we did with texts. My own literary training had taken a historical bent in graduate school, and as my teaching and research developed, I realized that historical contextualization of closely read texts yielded more insights for me than other theoretical approaches, and I followed that direction. I'm not sorry that I veered more towards history than towards theory; but it wasn't always a popular choice. Despite my historicist inclinations, however, I made a point of keeping up with developments in theory, usually by consulting Ray Mize, Ken Probert, and Aydon Charlton who were cultivating this part of the discipline in their weekend reading group. In my time, I've seen a steady decline in interest in the early historical periods. Of course, there were always exceptions (witness Karl Persson who has gone on to a Ph.D. in Old English literature, a subject which we taught rarely, and then only as directed reading courses). Some of our best students over the last 15 years or more have graduated – unapologetically – without a single course at the 300-level in literature before 1800.

INKLINGS: Who among your colleagues here had the most influence on you and what was that influence?

Well, I suppose I should start with Ken Mitchell. "Reader, I married him," as Jane Eyre says. As for the rest, although I wouldn't want to leave anyone out, I recall Orlene and Anatol Murad's efforts to foster a departmental community with their sponsorship of academic discussions. The receptions they hosted, at their home, were convivial, again reminding me of a time when people didn't have to run home at 4:30 p.m. on a Friday afternoon. And I have special place in my heart for Bill Howard, a colleague and friend who was unfailingly wise, funny, and hard-working, and who loved his job. He was a model to me of service and commitment to this profession, and I miss him. I would love to tell stories about *all* of my colleagues.

INKLINGS: In your view, what are the most significant changes in the University of Regina beyond the obvious one of increased size?

This is a tough one. It will seem churlish to focus on the negatives, when the University has been such a good place to work for most of my life. But, I worry about the way the University is growing, as if growth in and of itself were a good thing. I worry about the University's real commitment to education, as opposed to training, and I worry about the future of all of the non-professional academic programmes. I worry that in response to a political and social climate that confuses accountability with accounting we are weakening the humanities, with consequences for the long-term health of our institution, and of education in the province. On a personal note, I worry that my own integrity is compromised when I am continually unable to persuade University decision-makers that their priorities and values are shifting / have shifted dangerously from the liberal arts they claim to support. Nevertheless, I believe that we continue to hire people who care about the profession, especially the students, and that even though there are fewer of them to carry the load, they seem very capable of sustaining it into the future, and perhaps even of altering, by even a fraction of a degree, the short-sighted courses the University often seems so hell-bent on following.

INKLINGS: What are your post-retirement plans? For example, will you still be affiliated with the U of R?

I've made the transition easier for myself by accepting a fellowship at All Souls College, Oxford for 2012-13, and I invite my colleagues, friends, and former students to visit me there. I keep thinking I will finish with John Donne, but that seems unlikely. I have quite a few research projects to finish up, and I've taken on some new ones, so I plan to have an active research life as long as the subjects I'm exploring interest me. I would still like to teach – Milton, preferably – if the opportunity arises. And I plan to volunteer – with my dog, Cassie, at the Wascana Rehab hospital, and as a literacy volunteer with the new Mother Teresa Middle School in Regina. We're not planning to move to the West Coast, as so many of our colleagues have done. I have a horse that I still love to ride across the prairies, and a home I'd like to enjoy. So, we'll certainly be around, and I'll likely be seen in the English Department halls and the Library from time to time. Who knows? I might finally read all the books on my shelves before I make room for some new ones. And, if I can still remember how to cook, my friends can expect the dinner invitations to resume.

ANDY STUBBS PLANS AN ACTIVE RETIREMENT A Reminiscence by Gary Sherbert & Troni Grande



Retirement might be described as choosing the contemplative life over the active, but Andy Stubbs knows full well that such an opposition is impossible for a scholar who necessarily combines both. Retirement for Andy will simply mean having time to be even more active, time for sailing, more writing,

more poems. Andy is well known for his quiet, gentle manner of speaking and his Cat-in-the-Hat smile. Andy came to the Department of English at the University of Regina in 1996 after leaving his position as Coordinator of the Wilfrid Laurier University Writing Centre, and it would not be long before he created the impressive University of Regina's Online Writing Lab, and, of course, the popular Writing Services Centre at the University of Regina Student Development Centre. Andy's philosophy of teaching writing is not to find fault using the "deficit model" to approach student writing, but to develop the skills students already have and then add more. His way of teaching writing is to offer the students a vision of the golden world that can be realized collaboratively through attention to the audience, and to questions arising in the writing process, as well as through discipline and hard work, not to dwell on the brazen world of grammatical technicalities and mixed metaphors.

Andy teaches literary theory, creative writing, and occasionally romanticism, though his enthusiasm for teaching composition and rhetoric is not only unmatched, it is even a little romantic. He has an abiding interest in Freud, as anyone who has spoken to him at any length will discover, but he is most active in the areas of composition and rhetoric, as well as writers like Eli Mandel. In fact, his most recent publications include a collection called *Rhetoric, Uncertainty, and the University as Text* (2007), and his co-edited, two-volume set *The Other Harmony: The Collected Works of Eli Mandel* (2000)—a book that originates in his earlier book-length study of Mandel's poetics, *Myth, Origins, Magic* (1993). Andy's poetry collections have also been nominated for the Saskatchewan Book Awards, beginning with *White Light Primitive* (2009), and more recently *Endgames* (2010).

His latest public contribution to the department was the Orlene Murad lecture entitled "Criminal Action as Art: Literature, Advocacy, and the Rhetoric of Violence" (February 10, 2012). The essay indicates Andy's fascination for what lies at the margins, notably outlaws and transgressive figures who live on the edge. In fact, we recall an incident that perfectly illustrates the Romantic outlaw in Andy. He once went sailing on a catamaran with Ken Mitchell at Echo Lake. Before beginning the adventure, Andy confessed to not being a swimmer, and Ken confessed to not knowing how to operate the sails of the boat (though Andy claimed he did). It was an exceptionally windy day and the catamaran, reputed for its speed, up-ended as they attempted a turn back home. The mast stuck in the mud at the bottom of the lake, so Ken swam to shore while Andy waited in the water for the RCMP to rescue him and the boat. Given that Shelley drowned in a boating accident and that the iconic metaphor of the Romantic period is the "bateau ivre," or Rimbaud's "drunken boat," one might have thought that Andy would have been more cautious. Driven, nevertheless, by the outlaw in him, or the desire to live on the edge, we may best picture Andy sailing toward the horizon, looking for the right rhetoric, or just the right metaphor to make into a reality. We will miss you, Andy, and we wish you well on

your journey ahead. We ask that you keep writing so that we can follow in your wake and keep track of your future adventures.

OPINION COLUMN: TRIVIAL PURSUIT: UNPACKING THE "LIBERAL ARTS" COMMITMENT

by Nicholas Ruddick, Head, Department of English

The University of Regina's current Strategic Plan (2009-14) notes that "Our history is rooted in a range of core offerings in the liberal arts and sciences. We reaffirm our commitment to the value of this historic core." Let's take a closer look at what the phrase *liberal arts* might mean in this context, and what relevance the planners' stated commitment to a "historic core" of programs might have for the Department of English.

The liberal arts of Roman times were three language arts—grammar, rhetoric, and (informal) logic—considered essential to the education of *liberi* (Latin = free men, i.e., men who are not slaves). In medieval universities, these three arts were known together as the *Trivium* (Latin = threefold way.) By then, the *Trivium* had come to be rather looked down upon as elementary knowledge (here's the origin of *trivial*) that should have been absorbed before university entrance. If a medieval student aspired to be a true scholar, then he (it was always "he" back then) needed to master the more demanding *Quadrivium* of mathematics, geometry, music, and astrology.

In more recent times, chiefly in the USA, certain privately-endowed institutions began to call themselves *liberal arts colleges*. By doing so, they sent the message that they did not aspire to be comprehensive in the way suggested by the word *university* (Latin *universitas* implies a community of scholars of all disciplines). Instead, they focused on teaching a set of core subjects—essentially the seven medieval liberal arts updated and expanded, supplemented by the modern social sciences.

Liberal arts colleges typically had no professional schools or graduate programs. Rather, they specialized in offering a personalized education to a select group of undergraduates. High tuition fees ensured that students, who usually lived in residence, studied in small classes and received individual attention from faculty and student services.

A contemporary paradigm of the American liberal arts college is Amherst College in Massachusetts (endowment \$1.64 billion; 1,795 students; annual comprehensive tuition/room/board fee \$53,370). There is no exact Canadian equivalent, insofar as our small colleges that emphasize a liberal arts education are usually public institutions. Such is Mount Allison University in Sackville,

NB (endowment \$86 million; 2,300 students; annual tuition \$6,920 plus approx. \$8,000 room/board).

Universities like Harvard that have gone through a small liberal arts college stage on the way to bigger things are often keen to distance themselves from their past. While Harvard continues to offer a Masters in Liberal Arts (ALM), it only does so as an inexpensive option for extension students who want a graduate degree with "Harvard" on it. Indeed, the Harvard website warns that one should list the ALM degree on one's résumé as "Harvard University, Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies, concentration in history," never as "Harvard University, MA in History."

The U of R began as a liberal arts college not because it was private and exclusive, but because *liberal arts* sounded better than *offering a very limited number of programs*. But since its foundation the U of R has greatly expanded and is now considered a comprehensive university, with extensive graduate programs and a number of professional schools. The language of the U of R's Strategic Plan immediately following the "commitment" quoted above actually suggests that this university, too, plans to put its liberal arts stage behind it: "To serve our students well, we will ... determine how a liberal education can best be conceived in light of current and future student needs and how it can, where appropriate, be better integrated into pre-professional and professional curricula."

There is, I think, a direct connection between the ancient *Trivium* and the stated goals of our ENGL 100 and 110 courses. Grammar, rhetoric, and logic are no longer taught in secondary schools, at least not under those names, yet they are still essential language arts that must be mastered if students are to become engaged citizens of a modern democracy. Our two courses in "Critical Reading and Writing" try to ensure that all first-year undergraduates entering their programs have some understanding of how to write a grammatical sentence, how best to frame a persuasive argument of their own, and how to offer a reasoned critique of the arguments of others. This is why our courses are so much in demand on and off campus.

However, the tenor of the times is against us. Our contemporary version of the *Trivium* is taught by a single, accessible instructor to a relatively small (40) group of students—small, that is, in relation to the average first-year class size (over 200) in comprehensive Canadian universities. Small classes are well and good in a liberal arts college context, but the U of R does not aspire to be a Mount Allison and could not aspire to be an Amherst even if it wanted to. Can the Strategic Plan's commitment to its liberal arts "historic core" be reconciled with the university's comprehensive ambitions? ENGL 100 and 110 as currently delivered will be the canary in the coalmine.

NEWS OF FACULTY

Nils Clausson published "Linda Paston's 'Erosion'" in *The Explicator* 69.2 (April-June 2011): 199-207. His entries on Benjamin Disraeli's Young England Trilogy (*Coningsby*,

Sybil, and *Tancred*), together with the entry on Young England, have been published in the on-line publication *The Literary Encyclopedia*. Nils was the U. of R. English Department's representative in the annual lecture exchange with the University of Saskatchewan English Department (Oct. 23). His talk was entitled "Inventing the Condition of England: Where Did the Victorian Social-Problem Novel Come From?" Nils' review of Kelly Hager's *Dickens and the Rise of Divorce: The Failed Marriage Plot and the Novel Tradition* appeared in *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 33.4 (September 2011): 397-400.

Marcel DeCoste traveled to Baltimore to speak on March 12 at a short, two-day conference on Evelyn Waugh in America hosted by the Notre Dame Loyola Library on the campus of Loyola University, Maryland. His paper, entitled "Waugh's American Conversion: The Object Lesson of Politics and Faith in His New World Travels," contrasted Waugh's 1938 journey to Mexico with his 1948-49 travels through Catholic America.

Cameron Louis presented a paper on "Chaucer's Concept of the Proverb" at a conference entitled *Proverbia Septentriolia: The Use of Proverbs in the Medieval Cultures of Northern Europe*, University of Saskatchewan, November 2011. He was also a member of a three-person committee conducting a review of the English program at Lakehead University in March 2012.

Cindy MacKenzie contributed an essay, "A Haunted House: Dickinson's Letters Archive," to *Emily Dickinson in Context*, a volume featuring essays on crucial contexts for studying Dickinson, published by Cambridge University Press. Her book (co-edited with Barbara Dana), *Wider Than the Sky: Essays and Meditations on the Healing Power of Emily Dickinson*, has been translated into Japanese by Professor Naoki Onishi, Division of Arts and Sciences of the International Christian University in Tokyo. The book was published March 11 to commemorate the national tragedy in Japan following the earthquake and tsunami. This summer, Cindy will travel to Cleveland, Ohio, for the annual meeting of the Emily Dickinson International Society.

Heather Meek presented a paper, "Hester Lynch Piozzi's Ambivalent Response to Eighteenth-Century Discourses of Maternity," at the annual congress of the Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, in October 2011. She has published "'What fatigues we fine ladies are fated to endure': Sociosomatic Hysteria as a Female 'English Malady'" in *Diseases of the Imagination and Imaginary Disease in the Early Modern Period* (Brepols, 2011).

Lynn Wells has published an essay titled "Shilling Postcolonial Identity: Acting, Advertising and the Capitalist Economy in *The Satanic Verses*" in *Critical Insights: Salman Rushdie* (http://salempress.com/store/samples/critical_insights/rushdie.htm). She has been appointed as Vice-President Academic at First Nations University of

Canada and was elected as Vice-President (Equity) for the Canadian Federation for Humanities and Social Sciences.

TRASH TALKIN' 2012

Graduate student Christian Hardy, Organizing Committee Chair, reports on fourth annual Trash Talkin': New Directions in Pop Culture and Creative Writing.

This year's Trash Talking was a rare opportunity to be exposed to some of the most exciting scholarship on popular culture currently being undertaken by young scholars in Canada and abroad. We had a record-breaking number of submissions this year, and it allowed the vetting committee to sort through those submissions and accept only the best entries. The growing reputation of the conference has also meant that we received submissions from a wider distribution of universities than ever before, and we had guest presenters come from as far as The University of Amsterdam to join in our creative and critical exploration of the intersections between popular culture and academic discourse. We were also lucky that the date of this year's conference coincided with the launch of the third volume of *[SPACE]*, a literary journal funded by the English Department and the English Students' Association, and edited by graduate student Courtney Bates, which is dedicated to publishing new work by University of Regina student writers. This coincidence allowed us to combine the book launch with the conference opening, and several of those students whose work is featured in *[SPACE]* were gracious enough to read at the poetry reading on Friday night in Thorn Hall.

As the Organizing Committee Chair for this year's conference, I would like to thank, on behalf of the organizing committee of volunteers, everyone who helped to make this year's conference a greater success than ever before, including: the vetting committee, to whom I am extremely grateful,; those faculty members who donated their time to chair our series of panels on Saturday, Dr. Michael Trussler, Dr. Jes Battis, Dr. Dorothy Lane, Dr. Susan Johnston, and Craig Melhoff; Dr. Nick Ruddick, who opened the conference and introduced our keynote speaker, Dr. Ann Martin of the University of Saskatchewan, who spoke on "Modernity Must Drive: The Daimler Double Six and the Detective Fiction of Dorothy L. Sayers"; and, finally, all of the student presenters who shared their work with us. I am also indebted to graduate students Michelle Hardy and Cassidy McFadzean, whose organizational skills made our wonderful evenings on Friday and Saturday possible, and who ensured our guests had plenty of food to eat and coffee to drink (among other beverages). Cassidy was also instrumental in organizing the poetry reading on Friday, March 9, which received advertising and financial support from the Saskatchewan Writer's Guild, and featured a spectacular reading by award-winning Canadian poet Jeramy Dodds. Last but not least I must also thank Dr. Marcel DeCoste, my friend and faculty advisor, without whom this conference could not have happened.

I am so glad to have been a part of Trash Talkin' 2012, and I am deeply proud of our achievement this year in putting this conference together. Next year's conference will be organized by Kathryn Sinclair, who also served on the organizing committee this year. I am extremely pleased to be passing the torch to such a hard-working and capable student, and I am confident that the Fifth Annual Trash Talkin' will continue the tradition of excellence that I have been truly blessed to be a part of.

NEWS OF GRADUATES

Former U of R English student **Tara Kainer** has just published a collection of poetry, *When I Think On Your Lives* (Hidden Brook Press). Tara now lives in Kingston, Ontario. Medrie Purdham reports that **David Gane**, a graduate of ENGL 820 (Advanced Creative Writing: Poetry) and ENGL 820AS (Advanced Creative Writing: Fiction) has won *Briarpatch Magazine's* writing competition in the category of Regina-based writers for his short story, "but we do it anyway." His prize is lunch at the Willow with author Sandra Birdsell.

NEWS OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

On March 16th **Cara Bartz-Edge** successfully defended her MA thesis, entitled "Sinister Spaces: Liminality and the Southern Ontario Gothic in Margaret Atwood's Fiction." Her work was supervised by Dr. Medrie Purdham, with committee members Dr. Susan Johnston and Dr. Alex MacDonald. The external examiner was Dr. Wendy Roy of the English Department of the University of Saskatchewan and the defence was ably chaired by Dr. Allison Fizzard of Campion College and the Department of History.

Cara's thesis discusses several novels by Margaret Atwood as examples of Southern Ontario Gothic. The thesis of the thesis (so to speak) is that Atwood co-opts the traditional anxieties and terrors of the Gothic and demonstrates that, while liminal conditions may *appear* to entrap her protagonists, these spaces are replete with opportunity for personal development which can calm the Gothic terror.

In addition to her work with the novels, Cara explored relevant scholarly literature and examined original documentary sources in the Margaret Atwood archives at the Thomas Fisher Rare Books Library, University of Toronto. Part of the thesis was presented at the 2011 University of Regina Graduate and Undergraduate Research Conference.

As many graduate students know, thesis-completion is not usually a simple linear process of gathering data and "writing it up." It tends to involve many second-thoughts and much re-writing. Cara says that what she learned from the process of writing her thesis is the importance of being flexible to new and interesting ideas that crop up over the research, writing and revision stages.

A. MacDonald, Graduate Chair

News to be included in the next issue of *Inklings* is due October 15, 2012.

PLEASE FORWARD YOUR NEWS TO:

Nils Clausson, Editor

[nils.clausson@uregina.ca](mailto:nil.clausson@uregina.ca)

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Department of English
University of Regina
Regina, SK S4S 0A2

ORLENE MURAD

ACADEMIC DISCUSSION SERIES (OMADS)



Friday, May 4 ▲ 3:30 p.m. ▲ Language Institute Theatre (LI-215)

Why Is Crime Drama So Popular? A Panel Discussion

DR. NILS CLAUSSEON (English Department),
DR. NOEL CHEVALIER (Luther College),
and Award-winning crime writer GAIL BOWEN

FOLLOWED BY A RECEPTION

For further details please contact:

Troni Grande or Bev Montague
Department of English
University of Regina