

# English Department Alumni e-Newsletter

Northeastern University, English Department (617) 373-4540 [www.english.neu.edu](http://www.english.neu.edu)

## From the Chair



Welcome to our English Department e-Newsletter.

In response to the Fall newsletter, we received a number of alumni updates, comments, and reminiscences. Please be sure check out what your fellow alumni have been up to. Visit the alumni website, [www.english.neu.edu/alumni/](http://www.english.neu.edu/alumni/), and while you're there, take a moment to [drop us a line](#).

The 2007-2008 year is soon coming to a close, and it has been an eventful year! In November, several alumni participated in a panel presentation for Pam Goodale's Intro to

Co-op class, representing a variety of career possibilities for students, including publishing, professional writing, education, public relations, and creative writing. Our students continue to have great learning experiences while on co-op.

In addition to co-op, there are many English majors participating in other forms of experiential education, including Study Abroad. Every semester they can be found at one of the overseas programs sponsored by NU. Two of our students recall (on page 3) their recent semesters in London and Dublin.

These kinds of experiences only enhance our fundamental academic mission and strength in the classroom. This is where most of the learning occurs after all, where our faculty dedicate themselves to their students – and students respond with intelligence and enthusiasm

every day. And new students come along right behind them each year, as applications to the major and to the University remain at peak levels.

Also in November, the Department hosted the Poet Laureate of the U.S., Charles Simic, who presented the annual Peter Burton Hanson lecture to a capacity audience.

More recently, in February, the Department sponsored what is becoming an important annual event now: the English Graduate Student Association's graduate conference. Next year's conference is already in the works.

There is much more news inside these pages, and in the meantime, we're looking forward to hearing from you ...



Tim Donovan  
Chair

## Alumni Spotlight: English Alums in the FBI

By Peter Franklin

Tom Larned works for an employer many would consider unusual for a graduate of an English department: the FBI. Yet the influence of his education at Northeastern is entirely typical of what the Admissions Office is promising to prospective students.

Larned graduated from Northeastern in 1985, after growing up with nine brothers and sisters in a family that was heavily involved with social

justice programs in the low income communities of Boston. Larned does not sugarcoat his upbringing amidst a time when racial tensions were extremely high in Boston: "I would read the newspaper accounts of riots on Carson Beach and the Orange Line. My friends seemed to feed on the energy and there was a lot of craziness." Yet by the time he graduated from high school, Larned knew he wanted to work helping kids in gangs.

After attending Brandeis for a year on a baseball scholarship with the intent to go on to law school, he transferred to NU because he "didn't feel like [he] was doing anything but playing baseball."

Larned's time at NU made all the difference. Though he did not go on co-op, Tom was sponsored by a professor to do an independent study as a juvenile probation office intern. *Continued on page 3.*

## Spring 2008

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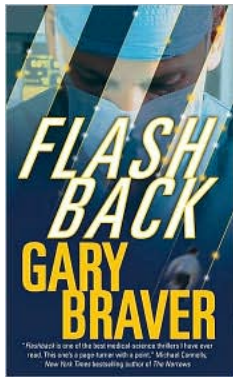
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## Reception to honor Joseph DeRoche & David Tutein

On the occasion of their retirements. Present & former students of Joe & David are welcome.

- Wednesday, April 16
- 6:00-8:30 p.m.
- Kerr Hall (96 The Fenway)

For more info, contact Marina Leslie ([m.leslie@neu.edu](mailto:m.leslie@neu.edu)).



In November 2007, Prof. Gary Goshgarian, under his pen name Gary Braver, saw the publication of the paper-back edition of his bestselling 6th novel, *Flashback*, which *Publishers Weekly* in a starred review called "an exceptional medical thriller" and which was the 2006 winner of the Massachusetts Honor Book Award for Fiction—a first for a thriller. The book was also recently published by the German subsidiary of Random House under the name *Memoria*.

His seventh novel, *Skin Deep*, will be published in July 2008, also by Tor/Forge Books-St. Martin's Press, and in Germany later this year. *Flashback* is one of three of his novels in the top 15 highest customer-rated thrillers on Amazon.com.

His website is:  
[www.garybraver.com](http://www.garybraver.com).

## Retiring ...

This year marks the retirement of three valued and long-time colleagues in the English Department: **Joe DeRoche**, **David Tutein**, and **Susan Wall**. Each of them has contributed so much to the teaching and learning in the Department, each in a special way.

Joe started teaching at Northeastern in 1965 but actually began his career at NU as a student back in 1956. He has been a much beloved teacher of contemporary poetry and American literature. To Joe, teaching has always been a vocation—a sort of calling—that has inspired him and his students over the many

decades to learn and love literature.

David started at NU in 1967, but, like Joe, he has been a Husky since even earlier as an undergraduate, beginning in 1955. He has taught a range of topics over the years but has especially enjoyed giving courses in British literature (Joseph Conrad is a particular favorite) and modern fiction. He has been fortunate to observe many changes with the campus and the students at Northeastern during his years of service.

Susan started her career a little later at Northeastern, in 1987, but has left her mark here

certainly. She has been a curriculum leader at both the undergraduate and graduate level, in addition to being well-known in the field of Rhetoric and Composition. Her unstinting dedication to students and to their learning has always been at the heart of her success as a teacher.

Former students of these three outstanding educators may wish to be in touch with them to offer congratulations.

☞

*Timothy Donovan*

## Goshgarian & Friends

In 1972, Professor Gary Goshgarian, then a new young instructor, introduced his popular Science Fiction course. One of the members of that class was **Charles O'Neill** who graduated later that year with a B.A. in English. Over the decades they became fast friends. In the summer of 2007, Goshgarian and Mr. O'Neill, now a mutual funds executive in the Boston area, took a bicycle ride together from Berlin to Prague with International Bicycle Tours. The trek took them over 260 miles through scenic back roads of the former East Germany and through the Czech Republic. It was a fabulous trip, Goshgarian reports, and the beers and scenery were exquisite.

The August of 2007, Professor Goshgarian returned for the third consecutive year to teach his "Writing the Bestseller"

workshop at the six-day Maui Writers Conference. One of the most promising writers in the group of ten was another former NU student and current business major, **Kyle Kerr** who is working on his first novel. Goshgarian returns to Maui again this coming August.

In 2007 Pearson Longman Publishers published two revised editions of Prof. Goshgarian's college writing textbooks, *Exploring Language* (11<sup>th</sup> edition), *The Contemporary Reader* (9<sup>th</sup> edition), and a new book, *What Matters in America*. Assisting him on these revisions was another former student, **Kathryn Goodfellow** (B.A. and M.A. in English) and former graduate coordinator. Since 1975, twenty-seven editions of Goshgarian's textbooks have been published, nearly each of which containing an updated essay, "The Language of

Advertising," by old pal Charlie O'Neill.

Also in November, Prof. Goshgarian was featured speaker at the three-day Maine Literary Festival where he gave a presentation entitled "The History of Mystery: From Poe to Parker." For years, Goshgarian has taught stories of Edgar Allan Poe in his Horror Fiction course and exclusively in his Major Figures course. A close personal friend, Robert B. Parker, the bestselling mystery writer, was Goshgarian's office-mate when Parker was a member of NU's English Department back in the 1970s. ☞

*Professor Gary Goshgarian can be reached at [g.goshgarian@neu.edu](mailto:g.goshgarian@neu.edu).*

## Undergraduate Travels

Each year, many English majors participate in study abroad programs through Northeastern University. Herein, two recent traveling scholars, Robert Brodeur and Matthew Zahnzinger, give us a glimpse of their time in England and Ireland.

**Robert Brodeur:** "During the Fall semester, I spent my time studying abroad in London. I can honestly say that I had the time of my life during those three months. I experienced several new cultures with my weekend excursions about Europe, and learned a great deal more than I ever could have expected through new approaches to teaching and my varied courses (including UK Politics, an extremely fascinating class where I managed to draw parallels between cultures). I even managed to impress myself with my level of maturity and responsibility shown while living abroad on my own. Given the chance, I'd go back without a moment's notice!" ~

**Matthew Zahnzinger:** "This past summer I had the pleasure of studying at the Gaiety School of Acting in Dublin. I worked with thirteen other international students, including two from Northeastern, under the tutelage of the Gaiety faculty to explore the unique intricacies of Irish drama. The syllabus included trips to the theatre, where we saw Irish, English, and American plays, and even acrobats from Tangier.

"Culturally, we were shepherded everywhere from the Guinness Brewery to Phoenix Park, from the National Library to St. Patrick's Cathedral. Nothing was more remarkable though than the Aran Islands. It was one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen.

"Everything about the trip (despite unseasonable torrents of rain) was thoroughly enjoyable." ~



**Robert Brodeur**, pictured above in Trafalgar Square in London, is a Junior in the English Department.



**Matthew Zahnzinger**, pictured at right at the cliffs at Inismann, is a Junior in the English and Theatre Departments.

## Alumni Spotlight: English Alums in the FBI

*Continued from page 1*

"This is where I started working with gang members and found direction...NU gave me the freedom to work in a hands-on environment, and then report back to the class." Tom speaks fondly of his professors. "My English courses got me reading. Saul Bellow and Hemingway really got to me. I started writing and professors like Tim Donovan told me I was good. Early on I told him I wanted to go to law school and he asked me, 'Do you really want to write like a lawyer?' That changed everything for me because I knew that I wanted the law degree for what it would allow me to experience, not because I wanted to practice law."

After graduating from Northeastern, Larned earned his law degree while working as an investigator for public

defenders. From there, he has worked as an FBI agent in Miami, Boston, and Brooklyn building gang task forces. Now he is in Iraq, reading Hemingway in his free time. Looking back at what he learned at NU, Tom says, "I still write better than a lot of people in my profession, and sometimes the most important thing we do in the FBI is document what happened so it can be evaluated at a later time. Learning to read and write requires that you learn to be aware, to connect, and to empathize. That is a lot of what it takes to be an FBI Agent."

Larned is not the only English alum to go into the FBI. James Bowman, of the class of 1967, transferred from the School of Engineering to the English Department because he liked literature. He learned from his

co-op experiences as a claims adjuster that he enjoyed investigative work and was good at it. That got him started on the path that led to a successful career in the FBI in Foreign Counterintelligence investigations and as a supervisor and recruiter. Of his education, he says "[It] was great preparation because so much of what a Special Agent does is getting information, putting it in a form which others can understand, and disseminating it." ~

*Peter Franklin is a middle year English and Modern Languages major.*



English majors **Melanie Bishop** (pictured above) and **Stephanie Peters** (pictured below) received Cooperative Education Awards in 2007.



## English Majors Win Co-Op Education Awards

Every year, approximately 5500 students at Northeastern participate in the Co-op program, and every year, the university honors a select group of seniors who have demonstrated remarkable achievement through their co-op experiences. In 2007, twenty seniors, representing all six colleges, received Cooperative Education Awards.

I am pleased to announce that two of these twenty winners are English majors: Melanie Bishop, with a dual major in English and Linguistics, and Stephanie Peters, a double major in English and Journalism.

**Melanie Bishop** has completed three co-ops with outstanding evaluations, as a Proofreader at Wilmer, Cutler, Pickering Hale and Dorr, as a Documentation Assistant at Sun Life Financial, and as an Editorial Assistant at Pearson Custom Publishing, all in Boston. In addition, Melanie has served as Editor and Webmaster for *Spectrum Magazine*, winning the Phoenix Award in 2006 for her work with this organization, and has been a member of the Linguistics Club and the NU Media Board.

**Stephanie Peters'** achievements are equally impressive. She has also completed three

co-ops, working on the News Desk at the *Patriot Ledger*, the City Desk of the *Boston Globe*, and at the *Scripps Howard Foundation Wire* in Washington, D.C. In addition, Stephanie has served as special sections editor for the *NU News*, managing a 3-page section for this weekly paper and mentoring new reporters.

Congratulations to Melanie and Stephanie for receiving this award. ☞

*Co-op Coordinator Pam Goodale* can be reached at (617) 373-3423 or by email at [p.goodale@neu.edu](mailto:p.goodale@neu.edu).

## Writing Programs Update: Literacy on the Cape

High school teaching was a constant learning experience – always challenging, often fulfilling, sometimes frustrating. In my first year teaching high school, I joined a district-wide writing committee in which we discussed writing theory, administered writing assessments K-12, identified benchmarks, and developed a writing scope and sequence for the district. My experience on this committee helped me recognize how students' writing skills developed, from "kindergarten writing" to complete sentences and paragraphs to high school essays.

My understanding of the longitudinal development of writing throughout students' academic careers helped me to identify my own students' strengths and weaknesses. In addition, observing the unfolding of more complex sentence structures and

transitions to support more complex ideas and logic caused me to really value the work that teachers do in the lower grades. As much as I enjoyed having a great deal of autonomy in my own classroom in high school, I came to realize fairly quickly the ways in which outside factors – poverty, lack of family functional literacy, substance abuse, homelessness, transience, family mental or physical ill health – made my students' lives unstable and thus affected their readiness to learn and certainly their ability to read and write. I realized that I couldn't realistically expect my students to care about homework when they were working forty hours a week to help their families put food on the table or when they were living in motel rooms with entire families. And I couldn't expect parents working two low-wage jobs just to make ends meet to be able to create the kind of text-rich environment needed to support the

developing literacy skills of their children. These are factors that classroom teachers really have no control over, and yet teachers also have no input into most school districts' policy-making about programs that might ameliorate some of the problems.

Two years ago, I became involved politically and ran for the local school committee. My involvement with a different district with different leadership and priorities allowed me to envision alternative ways of doing things, particularly literacy. Our district has an incredible primary literacy program (our fourth grade reading scores on the MCAS [Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System: the state competency test] put us in first place in the state this year), but – like many school systems – has no support structures in place for students who transfer  
*Continued on page 6.*

### Writing Programs Update

The Writing Programs Update is dedicated, in part, to graduates who have parlayed their time teaching at NU into careers, either directly in a teaching position (at whatever level) or indirectly outside of the academy.

Our first guest columnist is Jennifer Rabold, who received her M.A. in English with a concentration in comp/rhet in 1997. She stayed at NU for a year, teaching writing full time, and then began teaching high school on the Cape. In Fall 2007, Jen began doctoral work at Boston University in the Language and Literacy program of the School of Education.

☞ **Kathleen Kelly**, Director of Writing Programs

## Grad Alum Pursues Human Rights Work

The past year has been eventful for **Elizabeth Swanson Goldberg**, B.A. '88, M.A. '93, Ph.D. Miami University of Ohio, 2000. Elizabeth is the inaugural holder of the Mandell Family Term Chair in the Division of Arts and Humanities at Babson College, where she is an associate professor teaching English and Postcolonial Literature. Elizabeth's book, *Beyond Terror: Gender, Narrative, Human Rights* (Rutgers University Press), appeared in 2007, a year in which she was also honored by students as Professor of the Year and by the college with a "Women Who Make a Difference" award.

In *Beyond Terror*, Elizabeth argues that "after human rights violations have occurred, it is the realm of representation—and of narrative in particular—in which struggles for meaning are waged." It was as a poetry-loving teen that she first developed an interest in contemporary human rights, after encountering a letter-writing campaign in *Poets and Writers* magazine on behalf of dissident writers worldwide. Now, Elizabeth has been writing letters on behalf of prisoners of conscience for some twenty-five years, and she is currently editing a special issue of the journal *Peace Review* devoted to literature, film, and human rights.

Reflecting on her time at Northeastern, Elizabeth remembers particularly "the many hours I spent in the company of faculty in the English department, talking about career and other challenges. Those hours gave birth to the mentor that I hope I have become for my own students." In her own teaching, Elizabeth works to instill in her students "a love of the arts, a notion of the power of beauty as an alternative to violence and an instrumentalized culture," and the faith that "their actions can bring change." ✎

Graduate Coordinator **Laura Green** can be reached at [la.green@neu.edu](mailto:la.green@neu.edu).



Elizabeth Swanson Goldberg

## DeWall Accepts Position at McKendree University

**Nichole DeWall** (Ph.D. expected 2008) has just accepted a tenure-track, assistant professor position at [McKendree University](http://www.mckendree.edu) in Lebanon, IL, teaching British literature through the Renaissance. Nichole, who is completing a dissertation entitled "A Plague o' Both Your Houses," calls McKendree, a small liberal arts college not far from St. Louis, MO, "exactly the kind of place I wanted to end up at." Nichole is pleased that McKendree "like Northeastern,

emphasizes that the learning environment extends beyond the classroom, and that one of education's principal goals is to train individuals for thoughtful, engaged citizenship and service.

"And since McKendree also expects its faculty members to maintain active research agendas, I feel confident that the rigorous academic training and support that I have received throughout my program will help me to continue my scholarly projects."

The challenges of searching for a position while completing a dissertation have been made easier for Nichole this semester by the award of a Dissertation Completion Fellowship from the Office of the Provost. This competitive fellowship provides Ph.D. candidates who are nearing completion of the dissertation with one semester of non-teaching stipend support. Nichole is one of ten recipients university-wide of the fellowship, awarded for the first time this semester. ✎ *Laura Green*



Nichole DeWall

## Dear Graduate Alumni:

With **Nichole DeWall's** new assistant professor position in Lebanon, IL, Northeastern alumni continue to fan out across the continent. We have graduates teaching in institutions from Vermont to Puerto Rico, from Boston to—well, I can't find anyone much further

west than Chicago. So here's your alumni challenge: Are you, or do you know, a graduate alumna/us living west of Chicago? If so, we'd love to hear where you live and what you're doing, whether teaching, writing, or something totally different. So please, drop us a

line! ([www.english.neu.edu/graduate\\_studies/alumni/drop\\_us\\_a\\_line/](http://www.english.neu.edu/graduate_studies/alumni/drop_us_a_line/)).

And as always, please visit [www.english.neu.edu/graduate\\_studies/alumni/](http://www.english.neu.edu/graduate_studies/alumni/) for a more comprehensive listing of alumni achievements and activities.

With best wishes for a beautiful spring, wherever it finds you,

Laura Green

Associate Professor  
and Graduate Coordinator



## DROP US A LINE!

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## Second Annual English Graduate Student Conference *By James McGrath*

After last year's successful Spring graduate conference, "Textual Spaces," the English Graduate Student Association (EGSA) set to work organizing its 2008 conference, on the topic of "At Work." The conference took place on February 9-10, 2008, and was divided into four panels: *Material Culture at Work*, *The Work of National Identity*, *Women at Work*, and *The Work of Creating Heroes and Heroines*.

A wide variety of research interests were on display; those who attended the conference in its entirety heard papers on Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, contemporary Japanese horror films, and everything in

between. The conference program can be viewed online at: [www.english.neu.edu/graduate\\_studies/resources/egsa/](http://www.english.neu.edu/graduate_studies/resources/egsa/).

"At Work" was also notable for its plenary speaker: Professor Nancy Armstrong of Brown University. Dr. Armstrong is at the forefront of scholarship in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>-century British and American fiction. Her talk, titled "Evolution's Other Narrative: The Work of Exhumation," examined Charles Darwin's turns to Gothic fiction, particularly to the trope of exhumation, in his writing.

"At Work" closed with a roundtable discussion titled *Working In Academia*, in which alumni and doctoral students

discussed practical issues that face students interested in academic careers beyond NU.

This year's conference organizers included Jen Sopchockchai, Anne Kingsley, Jess Krenek, Kurt Moellering, Stephanie Pappas, Rebecca Thorndike-Breeze, and Melissa Wolter-Gustafson.

A third conference is already on the agenda, and alumni are more than welcome to attend what has become a major event for our current student population. ↪

*James McGrath (M.A. '05) is currently working towards his doctoral degree in English at Northeastern University.*

## Literacy on the Cape

*Continued from page 4.*

into the district with reading and writing problems or for students who struggle to keep up with the increased quantities and difficulty levels of reading and writing on the secondary level.

Fortunately, this district, willing to critique their programs, has recognized this problem and created a Secondary Literacy Committee, a district-wide committee of administrators, classroom teachers, and specialists examining the ways we can extend the success of our primary literacy program. My goal is to become involved in public education administration, particularly as a

director of curriculum and instruction for a district. I imagine my priorities in this position will include developing or refining both primary and secondary literacy programs in a district; exploring family and community involvement in the schools, as well as schools' involvement in the families and communities; and examining personnel structures to allow for more opportunities for teacher leadership, including curriculum development, mentoring, and professional development. My more immediate educational goal is to deepen my knowledge in literacy and language, while gaining an

understanding of its impact on curriculum and instruction. I hope to examine ways in which I can address language and literacy development across the disciplines and across grade levels. In addition, I aspire to deepen my methodological and research skills in order to make sure that theory and research always guide my practice, as I help to create policy, curriculum, and instruction that ultimately enhance student learning. ↪

*Jennifer Rabold, M.A. '97, concentration in Rhetoric and Composition.*

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*"My involvement with a different district with different leadership and priorities allowed me to envision alternative ways of doing things, particularly literacy."*

- Jennifer Rabold,  
M.A. 1997

## Acknowledgements

Heartfelt thanks go out to Robert Brodeur, Peter Franklin, Pam Goodale, Gary Goshgarian, Laura Green, Jennifer Rabold, Kathleen Kelly, James McGrath, and Matthew Zahnzinger for contributing articles and photos to the Spring 2008 *Alumni e-Newsletter* and to Cara Veilleux and Kathryn Finn for their continued involvement and support.