

The English Department

S U N Y F R E D O N I A

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Be sure to Check out the English Works article for their website and upcoming events
- Eduardo C. Corral's unique style explained.
- Should the Graduate tutoring program continue?

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Y E A O R N A Y F O R T H E G R A D U A T E T U T O R I N G P R O G R A M ?

By Katharine Carney

The English department's graduate tutoring program led by Kristen Niemi and Max Stephan is "designed to help [graduate] students develop their profes-

sional and academic writing," says Niemi, who is a masters student herself and will be graduating this semester. The program is just finishing its sec-

"making their writing more cohesive, synthesizing ideas, inserting their own voice into their research"

and Stephan were meant to teach English Composition. When their respective sections didn't meet the fill requirement, Dr. McVicker offered them the job of tutoring and she says that "[Niemi and Stephan] were grateful and willing to tutor." Tutoring has given Niemi a similar experience that she would have had in teaching, but has a more personal approach.

dence in their writing abilities, "making their writing more cohesive, synthesizing ideas, inserting their own voice into their research and not being afraid to say that these are their ideas, but 'here are also mine'." These are necessary skills that English majors have within the normal class setting, while majors like Music and Chemistry don't really get a chance to develop these skills.

"It was nice to be able to have someone to turn to not strictly for tutoring but also for advice and consultation."

Meghan Troutman, a student of

ond semester and was proposed by Dr. McVicker who says that the program is for "non-native graduate students as well as native graduate students who don't have much experience writing on the graduate level." Dr. McVicker is the graduate coordinator as well as the graduate council chair, and explains that originally Niemi

Niemi says that the tutoring program has the chance to show that "our campus is invested at the graduate level as well, and we want to see our students succeed beyond school. Fredonia students have a place in the professional world." When asked about the impact of her work, Niemi says her students particularly enjoy the one-on-one and are able to gain confi-

Niemi's says that "because Kristen and I have similar educational backgrounds we were able to connect on parallel grounds. It was nice to be able to have someone to turn to not strictly for tutoring but also for advice and consultation. Throughout my tutoring, I shared experiences with Kristen that will help shape my future

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SIGMA TAU DELTA WRAPS UP

By Lindsey Buck

Sigma Tau Delta has been involved in many activities on campus and in the community. Every year, Sigma Tau Delta is involved with setting up and collaborating with other organizations for the Big Read event. There are several discussions and various activities that take place on campus and throughout Chautauqua County.

STD also hosts readings at the local WCA home every Monday. Two students from Sigma Tau Delta typically go and read a short story or a chapter to the women of the

WCA home between the times of 6pm-7pm. This semester we focused on the Big Read which was Call of the Wild.

Sigma Tau Delta also held a community wide event known as Bedtime Stories. Bedtime Stories consists of several professors from the English Department who come and read picture books to the children of the community. Participants get to dress up in their pajamas and receive milk and cookies as a snack. This event usually takes place in the Reed library in

the Japanese Garden and children stack up bean bag chairs while they enjoy their snack and listen to the reading.

Sigma Tau Delta (STD) is an international English Honor Society. Our campus chapter is made up of both English majors and English Adolescent Education majors. Advisors of Sigma Tau Delta at SUNY Fredonia are Dr. Emily VanDette and Professor Aimee Nezhukumatathil. In order to be in Sigma Tau Delta, you must have junior

standing and have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher in your English classes.

Our Sigma Tau Delta is also thinking about setting up more actives such as a campus wide book club, movie nights, and professor spelling bees for next semester. Members of Sigma Tau Delta work not only in their classes, but on and off campus as well. Students of Sigma Tau Delta are dedicated to helping out in the community and to share the joy of literature.

POET EDUARDO C. CORRAL VISITS FREDONIA

By Alice Hodge

Fredonia had the special honor of hosting the poet Eduardo C. Corral who came to participate in our Visiting Writers series on April 4th. At his reading, he explained that he writes poetry in the same fashion that he thinks: in English and Spanish. His native language, interspersed throughout his book *Slow Lightning*, provides a delightful audible



treat, one where he prioritizes the aesthetic of the words over their definition. He often weaves and borrows from several art forms for his various ekphrastic poems, for example, he takes from *Little Red Corvette* by Prince for *Our Completion: oil on wood: Tino Rodriuguz: 1999*. The Spanish lines "A su izquierda, huesos. / a su, derecha, mapas de cuero," adds mystery to his poem already vibrant in sound and color.

Corral also talked about the writing process of other poems such as *Watermark*. This poem is a self-portrait and a "good bye to the notebooks." The notebooks occupied his life for the nine years it took to write the *Slow Lightning*. He rolled the words, "Socorro, Socorro," out in a satisfying way that was pleasing to the ear, he noted.

"I throw /
my head
back, / &
stare at the
slowest
lightning, /
the stars."

Socorro, he explains, means a call for help and also pays homage to his mother who shares the name. In between reading, Eduardo Corral took time to incorporate personal stories with his audience that influenced his writing. He shared that when he was a child growing up in Arizona, "I would run through the cotton and pretend it was snow." Although he states that some of his poems come from jokes, it is difficult to ignore the serious side to Mr. Corral's poetry. Both the second poem and the second to the last poem in

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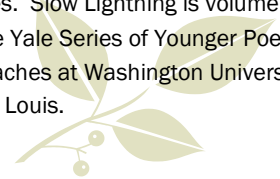
CORRAL CONTINUED

the book are titled Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and there are several other poems that reference this condition that strikes so many innocent people. This is an epidemic that is ever-present in Corral's mind, which shows in his collection. The book has a sort of symmetry to it because of these two poems, and the book ends with a sense of doom.

AIDS originally had a strong impact on the gay community in the early 80's, something that the newer generations have not had to fear. AIDS is not a death sentence now as it was during Corral's time.

When Dr. Nezhukumatathil asked Mr. Corral what advice he would give to young writers who are interested in pursuing their MFA, he implied that to

be successful one must be willing to devote two to three years to develop their craft. Mr. Corral is an award-winning author and his work has appeared in many journals and anthologies. *Slow Lightning* is volume 106 of the Yale Series of Younger Poets. He teaches at Washington University in St. Louis.



ENGLISH WORKS EVENT

By Katharine Carney

The English Works club had a successful event on April 30th, in the Williams Center. The event consisted of different speakers that had advice for the English majors at Fredonia and it was pulled together by students Christina Stock and Lauren Moody, who both have had experiences with internships. The director of the Career Development Office, Tracy Collingwood, spoke first about "the value of an English degree in the modern workplace." Collingwood says that, "English is today, considered the international language of business, and those who can communicate in it well hold great value within the global job market." Her presentation offered a wide range of information on necessary skills in the workplace as well as advice on career searching such as networking, doing research and preparation. Collingwood stresses the Career Development Office's use for students in the job market as well, saying "we will help, while you're here and even after you graduate." Jack Saxby, an English majoring student who attended the event says that "As

"the more you read, read, read, read anything at all. Just absorb it, it doesn't have to be for studying."

English majors, we often hear how adaptable our degree is in the work field; how the ability to critically read and analyze, and how competent writing are all marketable assets in a number of different fields. It wasn't until this event that I could see just how diverse our career options really are."

In addition to Tracy Collingwood, the event also had speakers John D'Agostino, who publishes *The Observer*, Dr. David Kaplin of the English Department, Randall Cronk, founder of greatwriting.com, Robert Fritzinger, executive director of the SUNY Fredonia Technology Incubator and Dr. Lisa Graziano, managing editor of Leapfrog Press. Their advice was invaluable, Graziano said, "the more you read, read, read, read anything at all. Just absorb it, it doesn't have to be for studying." This was a hot topic during the

discussion, as the value of reading and books seem to be deteriorating as the value of social media has flourished. Social media is also very important in this age of job seeking, as many employers search potential employees up on the web. Christina Stock felt that "We were really pleased with the turnout for our first event. We had an impressive panel of people who each

had different experiences to bring to the table. If we helped point even one English major in the right direction, it has been a success." The event did help out at least one major, and that is known for certain. Following the presentation, Jack Saxby decided to go to the opening editor position at the English Department's newsletter. Jack says, "I have never been disillusioned

or led to doubt by my pursuit of an English degree, but I still found the [English works event] both reassuring and reenergizing to know that a person's passion for literature and writing is still very much applicable and desirable in many more work fields than I would ever have imagined."

"It wasn't until this event that I could see just how diverse our career options really are"

Be sure to check out more about upcoming events and past ones on the English Works website: www.fredoniaEnglishworks.wordpress.com. Christina mentions that there will be an English timeline online as well as an interactive PDF about the value of the English degree.

QUESTIONS FOR OUR GRADUATING STUDENTS IN THE ENGLISH MASTERS PROGRAM

- 1.) What do you plan on doing after you graduate?
- 2.) Is there an experience that you've had at Fredonia that significantly impacted you? If so, what?
- 3.) Any advice for students who are looking into going to graduate school?

JACQUELINE HEBERT

Interviewed by Katharine Carney

1) I've been accepted to University at Buffalo's English Literature M.A. program, so I think that is what I'll be doing next year at least. After that, I'm hoping to get into a Ph.D. program and teach at the college level full-time. Teaching English Composition for the past two years has really shown me how much I love teaching college



students.
 2) I think just being a part of the English Department for the past six years has had a significant impact on me. As a student and a graduate assistant, I've been privileged enough to be surrounded by faculty and students who love English studies, and I've had the opportunity to work individually with professors who are passionate

about what they do. These experiences in and out of the classroom have shown me that, more than ever, a college English department is where I want to be.
 3) If you're checking out graduate schools, try to schedule a visit and see the department you're applying to. Although it's not something you usually think too much about while filling out an application, you want to make sure you fit in that environment well. Of course, if you're considering Fredonia's M.A., you're already well-acquainted with the department.

KRISTEN NIEMI

1) After I graduate, I plan on teaching in a secondary classroom somewhere in the United States. More specifically, I'd like to teach in an urban and diverse school setting; my top three cities are Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and Las Vegas. In the long-term, my two big career goals are to become a Head of Department (or subject leader) and to eventually pursue my PhD, hopefully in a program that allows me to study/explore both education and Eng-

lish. For the short-term, I plan on catching up on my YA literature!
 2) What I most appreciate about the English graduate program is the expectation that MA candidates will do wonderful and amazing things, making contributions to their fields of study. This expectation is seen in the structure of the MA program, as the courses and their progression integrate and allow us to develop our

interests, and in professors' attitudes, as they encourage us and support us in our research.
 3) For anyone thinking about pursuing a graduate degree at SUNY Fredonia, I'd say do it! I've enjoyed the two years spent in intense study – it pushed my ways of thinking. And I've also met some of my best friends through the program.

CAROLYN LAURENZI

1) Currently, I am applying for teaching jobs with the hope of getting something local. This summer, I hope to do a lot of leisure reading and just have some "me" time.
 2) My graduate assistantship shaped my future so drastically. I was always interested in multiculturalism but not to the extent that I am now. I find that I am always looking at the world with a multicultural framework in mind which led to

my focus for my degree project on how to revamp multicultural education and why multicultural education is so imperative.
 3) For incoming students, don't give up. That first semester of grad



school is tough- as it should be! But, once you make it through, there is nothing like looking back and thinking about how silly it may have seemed to want to give up. Graduate school is so rewarding, and I am so lucky and fortunate to have completed my work in our English program.

CONTACT US!

SUNY FREDONIA

Any questions about any of these articles or feel like something coming up needs to get covered?

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Professor Dustin Parsons

For all of your English department updates!

The English Department's newsletter is meant to inform a specific audience: the English majors, the English professors and the English alumni. That's why we write about events and news concerning the students and the faculty so that YOU can get more involved! Are you a student who would like to learn more about English related clubs and events or would like to write an article for us? Are you a professor with ideas for future articles or ideas for some of the events you see here? Or are you an alumni who would like to be featured in our "Alumnus of the Month" article? Please contact us for the Fall semester!

GRADUATE TUTORING ARTICLE CONTINUED

writing style as well as my future philosophies on education."

The problem with the program is that it may not be around much longer. The graduate council will be judging the program to see if the program is valid, based on funding. Dr. Mcvicker says that "the need is still there, the question is how to address it." Troutman believes that the program should continue into next year, saying that "as this is the first year, I feel like the program may have lacked interest due to publicity or hesitant graduate students. I believe that once students

make themselves more aware of how helpful this tutoring can be, they will be more apt to join in. This program offers a unique opportunity that not only benefits writing skills but improves communication, while building a friendship." The English department at SUNY Fredonia needs this program, and more like it, because being able to write coherently and well is a valuable skill not only in the English program, but many others as well. This program shouldn't have any doubt in terms of funding, be-

cause this sort of service should be part of our education, and not just a privilege.

