

## *Ira Sukrungruang charms audience as second visiting writer*

Dmitriy Shakhray



**SUKRUNGRUANG  
DURING THE CRAFT  
TALK ON APRIL 3RD**

Claire Woodcock

Thai-American writer Ira Sukrungruang concluded this year's Visiting Writers Series by giving a motivating craft

talk and a constructive reading of his work.

Sukrungruang is an associate professor of English at the University of South Florida. He is also the author of the memoir, "Talk Thai: The Adventures of Buddhist Boy," and the poetry collection, "In Thailand It is Night," which were both widely taught throughout the English department in light of his arrival.

On Thursday, April 3rd, he gave a craft talk and a reading in McEwen 202. In his craft talk, he spoke

about finding a balance between all of the different languages we utilize daily and determining what languages to evoke in the writing you produce. He used this as preparation to guide the audience through a brief prompted exercise, allowing for students to experiment with different styles of language and how this experimentation can create a successful poem.

After the brief writing prompt, he allowed twenty minutes for a casual "chat," where students were

**Continued on page 5**

## *Keynote Speaker Alexandra Socarides discusses work beyond Dickinson*

Kelsey Radomski

Several students, professors, and community members alike filled the lobby of the Fredonia Opera House on Wednesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> to hear Keynote Speaker of the Big Read Alexandra Socarides discuss Emily Dickinson and the women poets of nineteenth century American literature.

In her lecture,

she explained that she had been working with Emily Dickinson's letters, poetry, and essentially entire life for nearly ten years. After the publication of her first book, *Dickinson Unbound: Paper, Process, Poetics*, Socarides decided to steer away from the study of authors to focus on conventions in poetry instead. She asserted that authors, especially the female poets of the nineteenth

century, must not be seen as speakers, personas, voices, identities, subjectivities, etc., of their time and that for too long scholars have been imagining and reimagining these women as historical subjects.

During the lecture, she described the ideas of her new project from focus on authors to focus on conventions, using examples such as "Battle

**Continued on page 5**

### **SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:**

- ◆ Look into studying abroad opportunities found on the English Department website!



### **INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

Casual Career Talk held by English Works	2
Emily Dickinson Poetry Slam	2
Fredonia Poetry Festival	3
Interview with Matt Pisarski	4
Interview with Shirley Ibach	6
Study abroad opportunities	7

## *Casual Career Talk held by English Works group*

Sean Dolan

On Thursday, April 17 in the Williams Center the English Works club hosted its second “Casual Career Talk.” Students studying writing and literature were invited to come and speak with professors about their career goals after college, as well as hear professors discuss their own career history and pass advice on to students. Professors Iovannone and

McVicker spoke to each student about his/her individual career goals after (s) he graduated from Fredonia.

Professor Iovannone had participants work on a writing exercise to help

***“Stay relaxed and avoid making any decisions about the future in a moment of fear”***

them discover what it was they were passionate about. This gave the students a chance to explore what it is

they are interested in and what kind of changes they could make in the field that they most want to work in. Iovannone and McVicker advised students that they should understand that their futures may take unexpected turns, but to be prepared for it and be accepting of the changes that they may end up facing. They were also advised to stay relaxed and avoid making any decisions about the future in a moment of fear. Both professors also shared their history through college and career, and what led them to now teaching at Fredonia.

This was the second casual career talk that English Works has held

since restarting last semester. The organization is planning on having one of these talks each semester featuring different faculty at Fredonia who have studied English in the past.



## *Emily Dickinson Poetry Slam for the Big Read Initiative*

Will Walawender

In association with The Big Read and Reed Library, the Emily Dickinson Poetry Slam on March 21st was held in order to revitalize the role of literature in American culture today. Jason Castillo and Zija Lubin-West came in first and second place respectively within the competition. Tying both slam poetry and Dickinson became a main focus to show the connections between the canonical poetry and new student poetry coming forth on campus. For many, this was their first time reading their poetry to an audience. Sharing their work in this way opened it up for more freedom of expression and was evident as each of them spoke.

That is the beauty of the poetry slam, though. It creates a platform like no other, filled with the exposure of one’s self to everyone surrounding them and the welcoming of that expression. People in the audience cheered and they booed when the judges’ scores were too low. The event became much more than a simple reading as the Tower Lounge erupted with applause with each poem read. For the final few people trickling in, there was floor room only. Some stood and some sat on the ground, but the crowd became a cohesive unit, rising

and falling with the poems and the poets.

While the event was centered on Dickinson and her connection to poetry today, the event was

***“The event became much more than a simple reading as the Tower Lounge erupted with applause with each poem read.”***

able to evolve beyond that as everyone in the room became closer to one another. The poets raised

questions through their interpretations of Dickinson’s work and in their own poems as well, inviting all those who were listening to explore the mysteries with them. Kevin Prufer briefly discusses his connection to Dickinson in an interview conducted earlier this year when discussing his own poetry. “Poems are adept at expressing interior conflict, at enacting complex thought, at

**Continued on page 3**

## *Fredonia Poetry Festival presents gifted visiting poets*

Kelsey Radomski

Monday, April 14th in McEwen Hall, students and professors were graced by the poetic presence of Maxim Becker, “Good Ghost Bill” Moran, Fatimah Asghar, and Andrea Gibson.

Separately, the recitations of these poets’ work were remarkable but together at the same event they were simply astounding. Awestruck members of the audience laughed their way through Becker’s set of dark humor and found themselves leaning forward in

anticipation during the performance of Good Ghost Bill. In both Asghar’s and Gibson’s recitations of family, childhood, love, difference, and feminist pride one could hear the sniffing of runny noses and teary eyes synchronized with the spoken word on stage.

Nearly all of the performers gave advice to the audience – a room full of writers itself – to never stop writing no matter how insignificant or unskilled they may feel. Asghar made a point to encourage listen-

ers to perform their work even if they are terrified of public speaking as she was when she started performing at the start of her career. Gibson, too, made herself human by having one of her best friend join her on stage for support during some of her recitations.

Each poet had a genuine sense of humility as he/she took the stage and the audience responded with great enthusiasm for these individuals had no need to be modest about the quality of their work.

It’s easy to say that the line to meet the poets at the end of the night was by no means short, as attendees had the gifted poets sign anything from CDS and chapbooks to school notebooks.

It was an extreme honor and a privilege to hear a group of talented writers such as these perform with such authenticity and honesty. May Fredonia continue to offer such incredible opportunities for future students in the years to come.

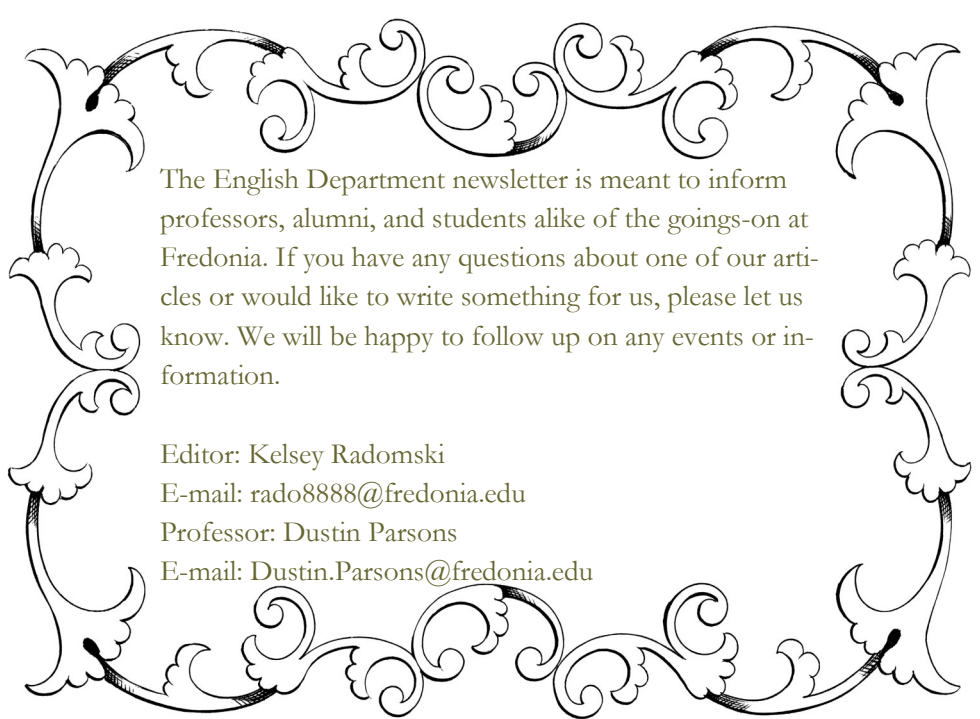
## *Dickinson Poetry*

### *Slam cont. from pg. 2*

feeling strongly through not-knowing—but somehow, when we enter the territory of politics, we expect our poems to shill for votes, to argue strongly for particular beliefs. Emily Dickinson does not know if there is a god or a void, an afterlife, a stasis, or a zero at the bone. But reading her theologically inflected poems allows us to wrestle with these unanswerable questions with her—and to come out not with answers, but with a deeper sense of the questions.”

Reading poetry allows us to connect with the poet, whether they are speaking in front of us or if we are reading something written long ago. It allows us to identify and empathize in new ways. The slam showed this in many ways, as people pondered existence with Emily Dickinson and reflected on the human experience with all of our poets.

## Contact Us!



The English Department newsletter is meant to inform professors, alumni, and students alike of the goings-on at Fredonia. If you have any questions about one of our articles or would like to write something for us, please let us know. We will be happy to follow up on any events or information.

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## *Interview with Matt Pisarski at the Zweig Archives*

Kelsey Radomski

**What are some specific duties you fulfill as GA for the Zweig archive?**

Most of my work in the Zweig Archive has to do with the transcription of handwritten letters. Some of the letters that I've dealt with have been from Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, who is the sister of the Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Buber, a Philosopher and Zionist. I've also worked with a typescript of Zweig's last story, mapping out the corrections that he made in order to take a closer look at his writing process.

**How did you become interested in this position? How long have you been doing it for?**

My interest in the position relates to the focus of my studies at Fredonia. Stefan Zweig is the focus of my degree project. I've always been intrigued with the story of his life in addition to be-

ing a fan of his work. I think the fact that we have the archive on this campus is remarkable. I first became interested in Zweig's legacy and work in undergrad when I read a collection of his short stories for Critical Reading with Dr. Vanwesenbeck. I just started working in the archives this semester and couldn't be happier with the position.

**What is something you would like to see more of in your work with the Zweig archive?**

The only thing that would make my experience in

the ar-

***"I hope students that visit the archives will leave with an appreciation for the historical significance of Zweig"***

archives better is if I was fluent in German. The work itself is great and rewarding, I just wish I had a better grasp of the language.

**Have any of the pieces in the archive influenced your school work at SUNY Fredonia?**

Yes, I've been doing research on Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche's life and the content of the letters and hope to come up with a good conference paper from it. In addition, working with the manuscripts and letters have given me a new perspective on Zweig as a writer and as a person. It's amazing to see the vast web of correspondents that looked to him for help.

**What do you hope students will take away from visiting the Zweig archives?**

I hope students that visit the archives will leave with an appreciation for the historical significance of Zweig as someone who helped burgeoning writer's make their way in the literary world and have their interest in his

work piqued. It is a great resource on campus and it would be great if more people on campus did scholarly work on Zweig.



***I transferred to Fredonia in the Spring semester of 2010 from ECC and graduated in the Spring '13 with my B.A in English and Philosophy. I started my Master's here in the fall semester of 2013. While I am focusing on Zweig, I also enjoy many of the European Modernists, particularly the literature that came out of the Habsburg Empire***

## *Socarides cont. from front page*

Hymn of the Republic,”  
“The New Colossus,” and  
“America (the Beautiful).”  
Though these poems (some  
adapted into song) are well  
known

throughout  
history well  
into the pre-  
sent, the au-  
thors are not.  
She clarified  
that these  
works were  
indeed written

by women,  
and posed the question of  
why their names had be-  
come unhinged from these  
unforgettable parts of

American pride. Socarides  
posed her hypothesis that  
because these women did  
not project themselves into  
their poems and because

***“The erasure of female-  
written poetry from  
nineteenth  
century America is evident ”***

they wrote without intimacy,  
they give the sense that they  
are authorless. The erasure  
of female-written poetry

from nineteenth century  
America is evident and  
Socarides believes that her  
next book will provide a  
more efficient means of  
recovering this work  
for future generations  
to examine and enjoy.

After the presenta-  
tion, Socarides made  
herself available for  
Q&A and many mem-  
bers of the audience  
participated, discussing  
topics such as male po-  
ets of the time in com-  
parison and Dickinson’s  
work and publication,  
among other things. The  
opportunity to hear about

Socarides work proved to  
be intriguing and certainly  
attributed to Fredonia’s  
participation in the Big  
Read initiative.



## *Sukrungruang visit cont. from front page*

able to ask him questions. Most of the questions di-  
rected toward him were about his writing process.

Sukrungruang’s  
outlook and un-  
derstanding of  
the writing pro-  
cess offered fresh  
and constructive  
insight for stu-  
dents and faculty.

During  
his reading,  
Sukrungruang let  
us in on some of  
the strategies he  
utilizes when he  
writes. He told  
the audience that  
in order to turn off his internal editor, he’s been writ-  
ing on his iPhone a lot. He told the audience that this  
represses his ability to delete and overedit what he  
writes. This allows him to not think too carefully and

***“He spoke about finding a  
balance between all of the  
different languages we utilize  
daily and determining what  
languages to evoke in the  
writing you  
produce.”***

to just get the words down. Because he has less control  
over obsessive deleting this turns off his internal editor.

Sukrungruang’s constructive and persona-  
ble approach led to a successful conclusion  
to the Visiting Writers Series this academic  
year.

## *Graduate student Shirley Ibach discusses her newly accepted work to MARC at SUNY Brockport*

Kelsey Radomski

### **First of all, what is your proposal about?**

The use of the beauty and the Beast motif within the Gothic novels Dracula, Carmilla and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Specifically how these texts use the monster to express forbidden sexuality.

### **For those of us who don't know, could you explain what MARC is?**

Marc is a master's level conference hosted by SUNY Brockport.

### **About how long have you been working on your proposal and what first triggered your interest in the subject?**

I am presenting on the materials I have developed as my culminating project in the program. My interest in monster lore began with an obsession with Buffy the Vampire Slayer in high school. I have always been interested in why some thing seemingly horrifying holds such mass appeal.

### **What is the process of**

### **having a proposal accepted like?**

I presented my work at Fredonia during the SCREE event. It was actually a little more nerve wracking than Brockport because of the familiar faces in the audience. [For Brockport] I submitted an abstract detailing in under 300 words what my presentation would entail. In both cases, I received an email from the conference director that my proposal had been accepted and I had been invited to present.

### **How has studying at Fredonia influenced your body of work?**

The professors at Fredonia helped me hone my interests and discover the theorists I needed to be familiar with. In fact, I had never read Carmilla until my advisor suggested it. I worked with my thesis advisor Shannon McRae through-

out the whole project and it was her suggestion that I include Carmilla in my research. I also must thank Emily Van Dette and fellow graduating senior Melissa Mallabar for their support while working on the drafts of my article. My presentation is part of a larger project that I have submitted for possible publication in the Journal of Dracula Studies.

### **What impact do you hope your work will make once read by others?**

My hope is that it will cause both genders to look more closely at the

***“I have always been interested in why some thing seemingly horrifying holds such mass appeal.”***

beauty and the beast trope and the baggage that comes with it. The fantasy of a man who is only good because of a



woman is pleasing to both sexes because the woman feels she has power and the man does not have the burden of his own conscience.

### **What's next on your reading list?**

I plan to continue this vein of research by focusing next on the television and film adaptations of these novels.

*I am a native of the area and graduated from Brocton Central School in 2003. I earned my Bachelors degree at Dartmouth College in Hanover, NH where I majored in English and double minored in film and theater. I worked as a reporter for several years before returning to school to complete my masters. I hope to go on to a Ph.D. program in the future.*

## *The Page and The Stage: Stratford*

Experience professional theatre by studying and seeing six plays at one of North America's most acclaimed venues! This team-taught course will meet T/Th 5-6:20 p.m., until the class travels together to Stratford, Ontario, on Fall Break (Oct. 9-12) for performances and study. After the trip, students will complete independent projects.

This course for students in all majors will focus on the texts, history, and productions of six plays: *King Lear*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Man of LaMancha*, *Crazy for You*, *The Beaux' Stratagem*, & *Hay Fever*.

We will travel by coach to Stratford and stay at bed-and-breakfast inns. In addition to tours and exhibits, we'll have our own sessions with actors or designers in the Festival Company. For more information, contact [loughlin@fredonia.edu](mailto:loughlin@fredonia.edu) or [horvath@fredonia.edu](mailto:horvath@fredonia.edu).

## *Why not study abroad?*

### *Literary London*

The London Program provides students with the annual opportunity to study in London with two faculty members. The program involves two separate courses, one on Women Writers whose work focuses on London and a second course that varies each year. The two-week course involves daily discussion sections and outings to study archival materials and related historical, art and design exhibits in London museums. Students will also take day trips to various locations, such as Oxford and Stonehenge, and have a chance to live and study in the heart of Bloomsbury.

This year, Assistant Professor David Kaplin and Professor Adrienne McCormick will teach students about Charles Dickens and London examined in both past and present cultural geography.

Students will experience excursions such as an angel tour at Highgate Cemetery, research on Roman



Members of Literary London, 2013.

Photo credit to Courtney Loiacono.

London and militant suffragists at the Museum of London, review of Dickens manuscripts at the National Art Library, housed within the Victoria and Albert Museum, and related exhibits at the British Library, the British Museum, and the Docklands Museum. Time in London will also be allowed for general sightseeing, so that students can experience the London Eye, Shakespeare's Globe, the Tower of London and the like.

The program is offered every year during summer sessions. It's cost covers round-trip airfare from Buffalo to London, all travel costs in England, all fees for museums and excursions, dorm costs, and daily breakfast and dinner. Applications are available in the International Studies Office in LoGrasso Hall, and can be also downloaded from the International Education website. For more information about next year's trip, contact [adrienne.mccormick@fredonia.edu](mailto:adrienne.mccormick@fredonia.edu).