

# English Department

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## Birdcalls and Teaching

On Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2012, our very own Dr. Mosher was the star of Coffee Talks, put on by Sigma Tau Delta, the English Honor Society here at Fredonia. With his usual cheerfulness, Dr. Terrance Mosher delighted us all with his stories of past experiences, present delights, and future goals.

At noon, students and administrators alike began to fill their way into the room; and you can be sure that it wasn't the coffee and cookies that drew us there. We had all come to see our beloved professor give his last coffee talk before his retirement at the end of this year.

Dr. Mosher was asked the question of what inspired him to become a teacher. His father was also a teacher and a man who loved the great outdoors. He shared his love of teaching and nature with his two sons. Dr. Mosher told us of nights where his father would be grading papers, with his

mother helping alongside of him. He marveled at what his father did for his students and decided this is what he wanted to do with his life as well.

Nature became a big part of his life growing up in Cato, NY. When asked to do his birdcalls, Dr. Mosher did not let us down. He opened up with the spring time Robin that we were all so happy to see but, Dr. Mosher admitted that among his favorite bird calls were owls. Some of the owls that Dr. Mosher tried for us included the Barred Owl and the Screech Owl. From haunting calls, to bright and cheerful chirps, Dr. Mosher can do them all.

A question from the back of the room pierced the air when Dr. Mosher was asked what will you miss the most when you leave? A smile lit up Dr. Mosher's face as he replied, "You. Each and every individual one of you."

Dr. Mosher will be missed at Fredonia greatly from his



students and fellow colleagues. If there is anyone who deserves to enjoy his retirement it's Dr. Mosher. Dr. Mosher plans to spend some of his new free time writing pieces that he didn't get much time to do while being a full time professor. You can be sure that Dr. Mosher won't give up on his passions, so if you are an avid birder, horse lover, or just love spending your time outdoors, you may very well run into Dr. Mosher along the way.

—Lindsey Buck

## At The Expo



Poster presentations fill the multi-purpose room at last year's expo.

The OSCAR Expo occurred on April 26th and displayed the creative works and research of students from several different departments, including those of the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. This semester, the English Department contributed our students' work from several courses, including Senior Seminar and Literary Publishing.

Dods Hall hosted the Expo in their multipurpose room, where there was a maze of tables and corner-divider walls set up, along with a small area for oral presentations along the side wall. Among the English Department's contributions were poster presentations from Dr. McCormick and Dr. Vandete's Senior Seminar

classes. We displayed the research we had conducted for our final research papers on tri-fold posters. They were all very well crafted; some use imagery to aid their topic, while others were partially interactive. One student researched a soldier poet's work and included a small war of toy soldiers in front of and on the poster. There was also a table for the editors of *The Trident*, our annual literary magazine. Each editor made their own artistic chapbook of creative writing, many of which went beyond the simple book form. One was even held rolled up pieces of writing inside a cigarette pack and candy wrappers. Next to this table was a display of Illuminated Poetry by the Advanced Poetry students.

We found a way to physically, and artistically, embody our favorite poems, such as by writing it in nail polish on a red dress.

There were many more contributions from students of nearly all departments, including the English Department; too many to mention all of them. As I walked around, it was clear that each student put an extensive amount of time into their displays and into their research. Some displays were appropriately professional and well designed, while others were creatively crafted and thoughtfully artistic. I was very excited and proud to be part of it. The Expo did well to show off the diversity of our school, the intelligence of our students, and the creative professionalism of their research.

—Brielle Messina



Poster for *A Scanner Darkly*

## Science Fiction Film Series

The American Studies Film Series offers a chance for students to learn more about films without the pressure of enrolling in a film studies class. Each semester the series screens anywhere from 5-10 films all relating to a certain theme, or fitting into a certain genre. This semester the series, co-

hosted by Bruce Simon and Shannon McRae was titled "Strange Evenings: Science Fiction of the Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century." The series screened 6 science fiction films including, 2001 A Space Odyssey, Blade Runner and A Scanner Darkly. Before the start of each screening one of the two hosting professors would

introduce the film and explain some of the history of the film. After the screening, attending students were invited to have a discussion about the film. I attended the screening of *A Scanner Darkly*.

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## Science Fiction Film Series cont.



The film features a unique rotoscoped visual style.

The rotoscoped visual style of *A Scanner Darkly* immediately made me feel disoriented and unsure of what was real, much like the effect of substance d. The illicit drug, substance d, is what the plot of the movie revolves around. The rotoscoping effect definitely helped establish a feeling in the audience that they were on the drug along with the protagonist and his friends. The foreground animation vs the background animation was vastly different. The foreground objects and characters would shift normally as the camera tracked around them, but the background would bend as if it was shot with a fish-eye lens. Also, there were a lot of details which

were ambiguous as to whether they were actually present or not like the blue flowers in the cornfield at the end. I'm still not sure if they were actually there or if he just imagined or hallucinated them.

The conspiracy theory plot immediately made me think of post patriot act paranoia. I then remembered that Dr. Simon had said that the adaptation from the book had been started before 9/11, because the attacks occurred after the decision was made to produce the film, the production became much more timely without the film makers intentions. The film was released in 2006 which is

roughly the same time period as the Bourne series, the Manchurian Candidate remake, and other Hollywood government conspiracy movies like Eagle Eye and Shooter. Throughout all of the 2000's and even today, government conspiracy theories are very popular in American media and culture. The film is actually a corporation conspiracy theory film and with events like Enron and Monsanto in the late 90's early 2000's, it's still relevant. It seems that no matter what stage of history we're at, this is one theme of culture which is almost always applicable just like in 1984, and Fahrenheit 451. Films such as this are even more relevant than when they were written.

—Danny Wright

## English Awards

Award Name

**Recipient**

## Return to Normalcy

Log on to environmentalist Guy McPherson's website and you are greeted with the following message. "Humans have tinkered with the natural world since we appeared on the evolutionary stage. Our days may be numbered: As the home team, Nature Bats Last." This incredibly dark humor was basically the message of McPherson's talk when he visited SUNY Fredonia on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012. He presented to roughly 200 people, including 30 members of a Kurt Vonnegut class and around 30 members of an environmental chemistry class.

As an audience, we weren't presented with the possibility of climate change or the possibility of any sort of drastic restructuring of life on Earth. We were presented with the fact that modern civilization as we know it is close to an end. Now, McPherson made it very clear that he is not saying that civilization is close to an end. Civilization "as we know it" is on its way out. The way that our society consumes is not sustainable; this is not a new concept. What was new and extremely jarring about Guy's

talk was the bluntness with which he spoke of the planet's "return to normality."



When we run out of fossil fuels, the human race will have to quit our energy source cold turkey. As Guy stated, "when you quit something cold turkey that means you are going to withdrawal, and yes, that can be dangerous." Guy told us that he, of course, does not have any definite

answers as to what will happen to our society. But, he did share with us there is an ever increasing list of environmentalist and others that believe we will run out of fossil fuels in the next five years.

McPherson did tell us that this is actually good news. We get to start again. He stated "You are all extremely lucky. The Earth is going back to its natural state, it will be covered in life again. And you get to live through that!" The Earth will return to normal with the absence of humans. At the very beginning of his talk, Guy stated that if you aren't uncomfortable you aren't learning. I quickly learned what he meant by that. McPherson's poetic look at the end of the world was sobering to say the least.

—Pete Byrne

### Contact Us



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*If you would like to contribute articles to this newsletter, or you have stories that you would like to have featured, please feel free to contact either this year's faculty advisor or this semester's editor.*

*The editor for Spring of 2012 is Peter Byrne. The Faculty Advisor is Dustin Parsons. We are interested in knowing what the English Department wants to see in this publication.*