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# English Department Newsletter

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The SUNY Fredonia English Department is located on the second floor of Fenton Hall.

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## English Alum returns from China

Ren  
That's the Chinese word for "endure," which describes both daily life and the experience Philip Razem had while serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in China.

Razem was a long-time Fredonia student, completing both bachelor's and master's degrees and working as a Teacher's Assistant in the English Department. While in his last year of grad school at Fredonia, Razem applied for a position to teach English in a foreign country and received an invitation to spend two years in China.

In June of 2007 Razem departed, leaving everything that he

had taken for granted behind. China's society is one that doesn't foster creative or opinionated citizens—something that doesn't



Razem teaching in China, avoiding his stage.

sit well with Razem. The classes he taught while in China strove to provide a different learning experience for his students. Only

the best students are accepted into the universities, judged by a single test for which they work to memorize information. China's population issue results in only 30 percent of students attending college.

Razem's shock on his first day of classes must have been noticeable. Desks are bolted to the ground, prohibiting any use of the "circle" that is common in the United States. The teacher is also stationed on a stage, placing them on a pedestal above the students, a sort of glorified teacher. Razem also described his first class as a shock to his stu-

*Story continued on page 6*

## Graduate Heads to London for Masters

Recent graduate Meghann Boltz has chosen to spend her next year studying at Goldsmiths of London in pursuit of an M.A. in comparative literature. She only found out a few weeks before the semester began that she was accepted into their program and preparations for the move to

England began with haste.

At the time of the interview, Boltz didn't know whether she had a place to live but she was hoping there was a place for her on campus. Students at the university live in single rooms and a concept of a meal plan does not exist, although there are many

places to eat on campus. Even though she has a lot to figure out before leaving, Boltz is very excited about this opportunity to return to London for study.

Last year Boltz worked in London through the BUNAC

*Story continued on page 7*

# Who's Who in the English Department: Guide to New Faculty

## Heidi Frame, Teacher's Assistant

Undergrad: SUNY Fredonia English major with american studies minor

### Is this your first time in a teaching environment?

Yes. I have had some experience through presentations as an undergrad, but this has been a huge learning experience for me. Other professors have been really supportive and haven't given me advice. I recognized all but one of my students—they were freshmen that I worked with at Summer Orientation. It has been extremely enriching and I am enjoying the challenge!

### How are you juggling everything between classes, teaching and family life?

Up early and to bed late. There is more reading and it's a faster pace but I love the classes I am taking. Saturday night I set aside some time for myself and make a huge dinner from the Farmer's Market bounty for my husband and I.

### What do you like to do outside of class?

I run the Farmer's Market and I like to knit and cook.

### What is something you didn't expect as a teacher?

The awkwardness of the awkward silences. I experienced them as a student but I was unprepared for how awkward it is for the teacher.

### What has been your most memorable day of class?

It's neat to walk around on workshop days and hear their responses and see their genuine interest for each other.

*For the next few issues, the English Department Newsletter will introduce you to the new faculty for Fall 2009.*



Picture: Heidi Frame



Picture: Heidi Frame

## Katrina Hamilton-Kraft, Teacher's Assistant

Undergrad: Buffalo State, secondary education in English  
Graduate: Stony Brook University in liberal studies with a concentration in literature and society, completed online

### What are you pursuing for your masters at Fredonia?

I am pursuing an M.A. in literature because I need a stronger literary background to move on toward my Ph.D. My Stony Brook experience was outstanding but what I am receiving in the classroom here at Fredonia is exactly the content exposure that I was missing.

### Is this your first time in a teaching environment?

No. I taught at the secondary level for 5 years and have been at the post secondary level for 5 years... 5 years at Jamestown Business College and 3 years at Jamestown Community College (concurrently). What is new about this environment, aside from the university setting, is the mentoring and support. Every person in the department, from professors to administrators to other graduate students, have been very gregarious. The relationship among all of them seems highly supportive.

### How are you juggling everything between classes, teaching and family life?

Juggling... I have created a very tight schedule that requires a great deal of discipline and not a great deal of flexibility. My family is amazing. I am married with three children; 12, 5, and 3 years old. My husband is completely invested in goals and has been a true partner through this experience.

### What do you like to do outside of class?

Outside of class... I love simply being with my family....Camping and anything outdoors... writing poetry and prose... going to the theatre....trying to fix-up my 100-year-old home...oh, and traveling! I LOVE to travel whenever I can... Chicago, Baltimore, Washington DC, Ireland, Scotland, England, Wales.... love it!

**See page 4 for an introduction to Tulin Tosun, teacher's assistant!**

# Legacies in Words and Music

## A Homecoming 2009 Event

Please join the School of Music, the Department of English,  
and the Fredonia College Foundation in celebrating the careers of  
Professor Emeritus of Music Theodore Frazier  
and the late Distinguished Teaching Professor of English Robert Schweik.

October 10, 2009

3 p.m.

Rosch Recital Hall

Reception to follow at 5 p.m. in the Williams Center Horizon Room

Featuring:



Ted Frazier conducting the Western New York Chamber Orchestra in a performance of "The ABC Adventure," a poem written by Joanne Schweik and set to music by Frazier. The guest narrator for this setting will be Gisele Frazier.

Presentations by the Alumni Percussion Ensemble and the Percussion Department, and readings and remembrances of Robert Schweik by English Department faculty, friends, and family members.



Please attend this event, and consider making a donation to the Frazier and Schweik Memorial Scholarships that have been established by the SUNY Fredonia College Foundation.

Broadside printings for "The ABC Adventure" will be available at the event, and will be given to those making donations to the Robert Schweik Memorial Scholarship Fund.

## New Faculty: Tulin Tosun

I am Tulin Ece Tosun. I was born in Gaziantep which is in the southeast of Turkey. It is a wonderful city and it is famous for its traditional foods. I live in Izmir which is in the west of Turkey and it is the third largest city of Turkey. In Turkey Izmir is called "the heaven of Turkey" because of its wonderful sea and clock tower. I graduated from Ege University which is in Izmir.

In the year 2005, after successfully graduating from the English Language and Literature Department with a degree of honor, I started to work at Ege University Foreign Languages Department as an instructor, and I have been working there for four years. These four years and my students have taught me how to implement teaching techniques or what to do when I have to make an on-the-spot decision. Thanks to my undergraduate studies and my experience in teaching at Ege University, I believe I have developed my teaching and critical reading abilities a great deal.

There is an Exchange Program between Ege University and SUNY Fredonia. I heard lot of positive comments from our students who had studied there before. I applied for the MA program and after a while I learned that I was accepted as a graduate student and also as a graduate teaching assistant. I believe my experience here in SUNY Fredonia will help me develop a great deal. Teaching here is also another wonderful experience for me because I am teaching native English speakers and while I am teaching I am also learning from them. There is a great synergy between me and my students. I like studying drama, especially 18th century drama. My favorite play was Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* because it criticizes the society while making you laugh. I am also interested in women's studies, deconstruction theory and rewriting the myths.

In such a rigorous environment, I can explore the limits of my potential and develop my reading, writing and critical skills. As an international student, I hope to learn from other cultures as well. I am open to new possibilities and would like to develop friendships that transcend racial, cultural and religious barriers. As a Turk, I hope to bring a different perspective to all my classroom discussions. I will do my best to adjust to a new culture. My goals and maturity will hopefully contribute to the university.

I like taking photographs and cooking. Cooking is my biggest hobby. Also I like travelling and seeing historical places and reading anthropology.

## Summer in London

By: Brittany Walsh

Four students returning to Fredonia this fall were able to answer the question, "What did you do this summer?" with "Oh, just doted about London for two weeks." From July 10-26, Drs. Adrienne McCormick and Jeanette McVicker accompanied Matthew Brynski, Samantha Stryker, Ashley DeJohn, Max Soule-Oneto and Margeaux Jarrell on the annual "Literary London" trip.

Students were enrolled in two courses, Bloomsbury Modernism and Women Writing London. The first focused on Virginia Woolf, Vanessa Bell, and John Maynard Keynes but was not limited to just them. The course was set to explore the nuances of the Modernist school of thought and the impact it had on the world. Women Writing London centered on the experience of being a female author in the British twentieth century. Students first read works by Bernardine Evaristo, Tracy Chevalier and Sarah Waters and then moved onto such names as Zadie Smith, Monica Ali and Penelope Lively. In addition to these novelists, they read works by playwright Caryl Churchill and poetry by Carol Ann Duffy, Jackie Kay, and

Moniza Alvi.

Counting themselves among a lucky few, the students were also taken on several trips including an angel tour of Highgate Cemetery, a walk around Westminster Abbey's poet corner and a taste of India at Brick Lane in the south-east part of the city. They visited areas of interest including the British Museum and the Museum of London, the Women's Library and Tate Modern. Of course, the students were free to explore London and chance visits at the British Airway's London Eye, the infamous Tower of London, and William Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. In addition to those, a day was spent in Stonehenge, Avebury and Glastonbury, and a few overnights in Cambridge and Oxford.

Here, we asked the students if they would be willing to craft a short memory of their experience to share. Obviously, there is no faithful way to endeavor a description of the whole trip, but we wished to have them share just a taste of their experience (page 3). Perhaps their scenes will pique your interest and convince you to inquire in the English Department Office about the Literary London trip for Summer 2010.

*"I felt as if I was walking side by side with Zuleika in old Londonium"-Ashley DeJohn*

*"We sat in the quiet and waited for the clock to chime midnight on Big Ben, which was just across the river"-Samantha Stryker*

# London Scenes

**By: Samantha Stryker**

Classes and outings kept our group busy, but my favorite memories of London were when we simply ambled around the city, with no destination in mind.

One night, four of us walked down to the Strand and ate at a Thai restaurant across from the deliciously gothic Royal Courts of Justice. Later, we wandered down Fleet Street, past St. Paul's Cathedral and across the Millennium Bridge. We kept walking until we finally settled on a bench by the Thames. With the London Eye hovering above us and a street per-

former crooning into the microphone behind us, we sat in the quiet and waited for the clock to chime midnight on Big Ben, which was just across the river.

We came down to the Thames later on in our trip, during the day, to find it busy and bustling with people. Seeing this change in the city from night to day made me understand why Virginia Woolf wrote, "I love walking in London." Whether we took the tube to Leicester Square to see a film or walked to Covent Gardens to see street performers, we saw a different London

every time. These carefree moments made the trip utterly worthwhile.



Big Ben, across the river Thames.

**By: Ashley DeJohn**

I felt so privileged to have the opportunity to meet with Beverley Cook and Jenny Hall at the Museum of London, the same two curators that Tracy Chevalier and Bernardine Evaristo worked with upon completing their research in order to write their amazing works of literature. Having private access to the suffragette collection and Women's Social and Political Union archival holdings, with a brief lecture from Beverley Cook, helped me to better understand the Hyde Park rally that was held June 21, 1908. I was astonished with the amount of photographs, banners,



newspaper articles and other resources that Beverley Cook had access to and was able to share with us. I was unaware that these items were still in existence. One of my favorite pictures captured Joan of Arc riding a white horse in armor, which was similar to the outfit worn by Mrs. Black in Chevalier's novel *Falling Angels*.

Throughout the tour of the Roman London section of the museum, I felt as if I was

walking side by side with Zuleika in old Londinium (the protagonist of Evaristo's novel *The Emperor's Babe*). The descriptions that were included in the novel were so close to the visual exhibits displayed within the museum. I never realized how much faith the people of Roman London had in their gods to carry out their desires and needs before hearing her lecture. I loved the way in which Jenny Hall read excerpts from the novel in order to demonstrate Evaristo's presence and extensive research in the museum that she used as a prime source for her information.

Spending time in London, has provided me with the opportunity to re-evaluate my overall understanding of the literature we read for class. I strongly encourage any student seeking more than just a lecture about a novel to sign-up for the Literary London Program. If I would have studied these works of literature in a classroom setting I honestly do not think I would have retained the amount of information and appreciation I have for these fundamental works.

# Ren: Peace Corps opportunities abroad



The Chinese symbol for *ren*, which means "to endure."

dents, as never before had they done something other than copy PowerPoint lectures while in class.

After learning this Razem made it a point to avoid lecturing whenever possible. He took his students outside, encouraged class discussions and creativity. This of course, put him at odds with the government, an entity that promotes a "harmonious society" in a country that doesn't have room for opinions and instability. The government censors various Web sites, such as

YouTube, and there was a period of time in which Razem's blog site was banned (to read up on Razem's adventures in his travels go to [www.philiprazeminchina.blogspot.com](http://www.philiprazeminchina.blogspot.com)). China's population gives officials the power to remove someone who speaks up against something they believe is wrong and replace them with someone who won't make any trouble.

Razem's experience in China has led him to re-evaluate his personal view on America. America has its problems, as do all countries, but at least the United States gives its people the freedom of speech and movement. According to Razem, Chinese people follow certain stages of life: learning a skill, getting a job, creating a family, becoming old—the true meaning of *ren*. Those who make it into the university do not find that it is a time for

challenging their beliefs like American students, although Razem's students received a small taste of this and enjoyed thinking critically about their world.

Although Razem was stationed in one of the greatest poverty-stricken areas in China, his accommodations, as he said, were better than America. For \$120 a month, Razem lived in a huge apartment with running water. The Peace Corps does have monthly living allowances to make volunteering in a developing country easier. Although Razem taught English, that is not the only choice available. Volunteers can also work towards helping the environment, educating, promoting healthy habits and helping with business development, among other things. To learn more about the Peace Corps visit [www.peacecorps.gov](http://www.peacecorps.gov).

*"Never before had they done something other than copy PowerPoint lectures while in class."*

## Sigma Tau Delta Column

By: Cat Colmerauer

Fredonia's English National Honors Society, Sigma Tau Delta, is excited to be back in action. The club has plans for several events throughout the semester. "Coffee Talks," which are always a favorite, will be held in October and November. The club is also reintroducing the program known as "Meet the Uppers" (held October 19), which is geared toward underclassmen who have questions about the English major or minor. The underclassmen are given the opportunity meet seasoned students who will answer their questions as well as share their own experiences

within the department. "Meet the Uppers" hopes to give students the opportunity to garner advice from their peers, which is something that a meeting with an is unable to provide.

One of the most anticipated events of the semester is the annual "Scary Stories Night," which welcomes Halloween with an evening of spooky tales and refreshments in The Spot. With The Spot decorated for the season and with faculty and students taking turns sharing their own spooky tales, this night is a guaranteed good time. "Scary Stories Night" will take place on Thursday, October 29. Students are encouraged to be on the look-out

for e-mails, fliers and articles in *The Leader* for more information on the events.

The common goal of all Sigma Tau Delta activities is to strengthen the bond between students of the department. It is an often-heard complaint that a student can pass through four years of the English major and still not know their classmates. By providing activities specifically geared towards the interest of English students, it is hoped that connections will be forged.



## DATES TO REMEMBER:

Sept. 30: Coffee talk with Department Chairperson  
Dr. Adrienne McCormick and Associate Chairperson  
Dr. Sandra Liggins, English Reading Room, 12-1pm

Oct. 1: Craft talk and reading by Mike Czyzniewski, McEwen 209, 4pm craft talk, 7pm reading

Oct 1-3: Stephen Zweig Symposium

Oct. 10: Legacies in Words and Music, Rosh Recital  
Hall, 3pm

Oct. 19: Meet the Uppers

Oct. 29: Scary Stories Night with Sigma Tau Delta,  
The Spot, 7pm

Nov. 5: Ross Gay and Patrick Rosal Poetry Reading,  
4:30 craft talk, 7pm reading

## Boltz: Master's in London

program, which gives students a work visa for various countries, including England, New Zealand and Canada (see [www.bunac.org](http://www.bunac.org) for more information). Her last stay was only six months long but in those few months Boltz fell in love with London. The only way for her to return for an extended stay was to enroll in a school, as obtaining a visa is difficult. Her previous stay is making Boltz's transition easier this time, especially in terms of leaving friends and family behind. She is looking forward to seeing the friends she made on her last trip, as well as traveling. While working in a college for her previous stay, she didn't have many opportunities to

travel outside of London, which is a goal of this experience.

Boltz has left the future open with possibilities and hasn't decided on a specific plan. People who complete a degree in England are eligible for a two-year highly-skilled immi-



Photo: Meghann Boltz

grant visa, which Boltz would like to pursue. She is interested in becoming a professor but would really like to write—either research or creative writing.

Although the cost of attendance for one year is more expensive in England, achieving the same degree in the United States where it takes longer to complete a master's degree, would be comparable. Fortunately, Stafford Loans are able to be used internationally. Becoming immersed in a different culture is a valuable life experience, one that should transcend all finances, for it is an opportunity that opens many doors.