

**FALL 2007**  
**Vol. I, Issue I**



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### ***from* Casey Charles, the English Department Chair**

I am very honored to occupy the position of head of English for this inaugural Alumni Newsletter, a publication that I am sure will survive my term as manager of one of the University of Montana's oldest and most venerable departments. In 1919, Rhodes Scholar H. G. Merriam began one of the first creative writing programs in the country, and now almost a hundred years later, the English Department—which has employed writers and scholars such as Richard Hugo, Leslie Fiedler, Walter van Tilburg Clark, Bill Kittredge, and Patricia Goedicke—continues to maintain a nationally-ranked MFA program as well as thriving graduate and undergraduate programs in literature, English Teaching, Film Studies, Irish Studies, composition, and linguistics.

In all these fields, we aim to impart an understanding not only of the aesthetic richness of literature but also historical and cultural forces that have contributed to their making. Undergraduate and graduate students in all of our different options learn to read, write, and think both critically and creatively in classes small enough to foster these skills through discussion and close reading. These skills, we feel, are central to the goal of making our students informed and capable public citizens.

English continues to be one of the biggest departments on campus, with 27 tenure-track faculty, approximately 20 adjuncts, and over 35 teaching assistants that serve more than 600 undergraduate and graduate students. Amazingly, any given semester over 20% of the student body is enrolled in composition, film, literature, English Teaching, creative writing, or Irish Studies classes.

### ***from* Prageeta Sharma, the Director of Creative Writing**

It is a pleasure and a privilege to be joining the UM Creative Writing community. While I am originally from the Boston area, and have lived in New York City for the past twelve years (except for my visiting professor position at UM for the 2005 academic year), I am pleased to be integrating into the Northwest, and the region's extraordinary creative and intellectually stimulating community. It seems that everyone agrees that Missoula is conducive to an enjoyment and fostering of the "life of the mind," and I am grateful for the opportunity to involve myself in it.

Kate Gadbow, the former director, has left me with a wonderfully solid foundation—including archives alerting me to fabulous projects and possibilities for future programming. In the coming months, I plan to overhaul the website, create alumni networking projects, and celebrate the talent that comes through this program. So far we are making good progress: we have already presented and hosted successful readings, social events, and get-togethers to orient the new and returning students, visiting writers and new faculty (which includes me!) to the program. We hope to get more promotion out there (in the form of advertising, promotional materials, and events) and celebrate the creative writing achievements of the UM community at large. It is clear to me that this program demands the excellence that it possesses and produces, from its diverse and talented students, visiting writers and scholars, faculty and alumni.

## Casey Charles, continued

Our faculty's recent accomplishments include two ongoing grants in English Teaching—Professor Chin's Writing Proficiency and Assessment funding and Professor Heather Bruce's expanding Montana Writing Project, which now provides continuing education to English teachers across Montana, including some of the reservations. In August of this year, faculty member Greg Pape was named Poet Laureate of Montana and earlier this year Debra Earling received a Guggenheim Fellowship, while books by Professors Klink (*Circadian*) and McNamer (*Red Rover*) debuted this year to critical acclaim. Professor Glendening, who lectures to alumni on Darwin and literature, has recently published *The Evolutionary Imagination in Late-Victorian Novels: An Entangled Bank*, while Robert Pack's *Willing to Choose: Volition and Storytelling in Shakespeare's Major Plays* also appeared in 2007.

The English Department has also recently inaugurated two new programs and a new class. Film Studies received approval last year and Irish Studies the year before, while a senior seminar for literature students promises an opportunity to receive individual attention as undergraduate gain an opportunity to complete a capstone project. Traolach Ó Ríordáin now teaches Gaelic and Irish Studies and Sean O'Brien has joined our department as one of the directors of the Film Studies program.

Needless to say, English is alive and well in Montana, but its continued wellbeing, now that more than half the university's budget comes from sources other than tuition and state dollars, depends on support from alumni like you. Contributions to English are crucial for our continued mission to promote the love and nurture of literature, its critical interpretation, its creation, its teaching.

Maybe Hector in Alan Bennett's award-winning play, *The History Boys*, captures my feelings about our goals most poignantly. "The best moments in reading," the old teacher tells his students "are when you come across something - a thought, a feeling, a way of looking at things—which you had thought special and particular to you. And now, here it is, set down by someone else, a person you have never met, someone even who is long dead. And it is as if a hand has come out, and taken yours." This is the parcel we ask you to remember and pass on by giving back to English. "Take it, feel it and pass it on," Hector tells his students. "Not for me, not for you, but for someone, somewhere, one day. Pass it on, my friends. That's the game I want you to learn. Pass it on." My hope is that alumni, faculty, and students alike will feel the urge to pass on those moments of intellectual connection the English Department at the University of Montana has given them.

Contact Casey Charles at [casey.charles@mso.umt.edu](mailto:casey.charles@mso.umt.edu)

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## Prageeta Sharma, continued

While I sit here on a lovely rainy Sunday in September, I am grateful for the rain that will replenish and nourish the lovely green landscape that had suffered the summer heat and wildfire smoke for the last several months. I am thinking about the kind of nourishment (intellectual, creative, and otherwise) that I have been invited into these past two and half months in Missoula—from the community and here at the University of Montana. I have found everyone so giving of their time, their ideas, and their energy. No doubt, I look forward to contributing to the nourishment I have already received.

You will find the faculty has come together once again to present you with an amazing list of writers for this year's series, generously funded by the President's Writers-In-Residence series. This year we will have Tomaz Salamun, Andrew Joron, Linh Dinh, Mary Gaitskill, Ed Roberson, Madeline DeFrees, and Bryan Di Salvatore (profiled here in the newsletter). We also hope to have a few more writers who plan to come our way this spring, and/or through Second Wind and the downtown New Lakes reading series. We will also be hosting "high teas" once a month for students, alumni and faculty to discuss special topics connecting creative writing to other disciplines, genres, or topics; we look forward to seeing you at these events and readings!

This newsletter reflects the accomplishments of our faculty and our alumni through engaging interviews, profiles, and reviews. Brandon Shimoda, my new assistant, has been instrumental in the creation of this newsletter; both of us are excited by the achievements here—the range, scope, and breadth of our UM community. We hope to offer you this quarterly as a way to keep in touch, announce your exciting news, and get some good feedback about the info you need to stay connected. I hope these projects, readings, and events will find their way to you, nourishing your brain, heart, and soul. I am reminded of the final stanza of Patricia Goedicke's poem "For All the Sad Rain": "The horizon is yours, and the books and all the opinions." Please share the horizon with me—come by my office (Liberal Arts Building, Room 211), tell me when you are in town, tell me some of your ideas for the program and I will let you know when I am in your area. I'd love to make sure we stay in touch.

Contact Prageeta Sharma at [prageeta.sharma@mso.umt.edu](mailto:prageeta.sharma@mso.umt.edu)

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# The Story Is In The Details, an interview with Bryan Di Salvatore

## by Robert Stubblefield (MFA '94)

*Bryan Di Salvatore received a BA in English from Yale in 1970 and an MFA from the University of Montana in 1976. He has taught at the University of Montana, University of Guam, and the University of Louisiana Monroe. Bryan has published a couple hundred, many score at least, articles in publications including The New Yorker, Sports Illustrated, Outside, Doubletake, and many literary magazines. He currently teaches undergraduate and graduate non-fiction writing at the University of Montana and is working slowly on a novel.*

*Bryan Di Salvatore and Robert Stubblefield recently spent an hour talking about writing, teaching, Missoula, baseball, and Merle Haggard.*

**Robert Stubblefield:** I guess the first question would be what brought you to Missoula? You graduated from Yale. How did you end up in the MFA program here at the University of Montana?

**Bryan Di Salvatore:** I'd never heard of a program where you could write and read, talk about books and writing with smart people, and receive credit for it. I had an old friend who absolutely loved Richard Hugo, and he recommended the program to me. It sounded like something I wanted to do, and I was into it from the start, but it was a big wake-up.

**RS:** How so?

**BD:** Well, Bill Kittredge. He immediately called bullshit on writers I had considered wonderful. It's like being the best hitter in A ball and you feel pretty satisfied with yourself, and suddenly you're seeing major league curve balls. You don't even know exactly what you're seeing at first, and that's how I felt. In some ways, it took twenty years to understand, and it was worth it. Look where you're from. Say there's Joe's Pizza in Monument, and you eat there every week. Joe's Pizza is great, then one day you go to Portland and someone takes you out for pizza, and guess what? Joe's Pizza sucks. It's all exposure. It's a revelation, but a little disconcerting at first.

**RS:** But you seemed to find and become part of a community pretty quickly.

**BD:** I grew up in a tedious suburb of Los Angeles, went to New Haven, but I never felt at home in the world until I came here. There were students as crazy about books, as crazy about the things I cared about, as me. I didn't want to live anywhere else, and I still don't. Missoula, for all its faults, as much as we complain about the parochial bullshit, the provincialism, Missoula is a great place to live and write.

**RS:** You came here at what is looked back upon as a great time for Missoula and the writing program. People look back upon that time fondly. Was it a better place to be then?

**BD:** It's better now. The main reason is that women are allowed into the club. They're included. Debra, Dee, Liza Ward—women are writing here. People are smarter and more ambitious. At that time, in many ways Missoula was racist and sexist and the scene thrived on alcohol. Ian Frazier told me that he didn't think it was authentic anymore. I said authentic what? Authentic Western. What does that mean? To me it means torpor and bad coffee. It's ten thousand times better now. At that time this was a place where people still wanted to kick your ass if they thought you were a hippy. There's less of that nonsense now. Dizzy Dean, the great Cardinals pitcher and announcer, took a baseball off his toe and came back too soon and changed his delivery and it hurt his arm and he never pitched as well again. He said it ain't what it used to be, but what the hell is? No, the program and writing scene is better now. We're less isolated. One of the things that was nice earlier on is that there was less pressure, because we were so out of it we didn't have to worry about what was hot. But overall, much better now.

**RS:** How did you come to the subject of John Montgomery Ward for *A Clever Baseballist*? I'm a baseball fan, and I'd never heard of the guy. What advice would you give a young writer looking for their work?

**BD:** Find an obscure, interesting dead person. If you do—be on that like a hobo on a hot dog. There's that book out now about Amerigo Vespucci; it's reviewed in this week's *Times*. America's named after him, a couple of continents, yet no one knew much about him. I wrote this piece that was never published, around 30,000 words about the NFL Players Association. I started looking around, and baseball and unions were two things I was interested in. Baseball had a union in 1885. John Montgomery Ward. Pure luck. Nobody had heard of this guy.

**RS:** It's challenging work to bring someone to life. How did you pull it off?

**BD:** It's the same way I teach my classes. I believe in what I teach students—not necessarily just that God is in the details, but details create divinity. I learned that from reading Jack Kerouac, James Joyce, a host of others. Kerouac begins *Doctor Sax* by describing the tar on the streets of Lowell, Massachusetts, and the story emerges. Writers tell stories, they reveal and express the world. That's our job. We're not that smart, not visionaries. Smart readers and critics see the greater things and can tell us what it means, but we watch and record. It's more self-conscious than that, of course, but that's the primary job. Faulkner, of course he's disingenuous, but he said he had this vision of Caddy up in the tree with her muddy drawers, and from that came *The Sound and the Fury*—the best material comes from the sub-atomic. Of course he was more self-conscious, self-aware than that. He wanted to write great things. You have to make it real and then allow people to figure out what it means. People write dissertations to explain what it all means—they'll write on Dee someday (Deidre McNamer, married to Bryan and author of the recently released *Red Rover*). They'll see themes, but the writer doesn't. That's not the business of the writer. The business of the writer is to record. We're recorders. It's compulsion. It's like falling in love. Sometimes it works, sometimes not. But there's nothing rational about it. You can't help yourself.

**RS:** What about the MFA program? How has it changed?

**BD:** I was here from 1974-76, and the program was barely started. There weren't many MFA programs in the country. If I applied now with what I had back then when I graduated from Yale, I wouldn't be admitted. Wouldn't even be considered. Students are smarter now, more accomplished. Bill Finnegan and I went through the program together and I remember Bill Kittredge telling us we'd never publish. Nobody had lofty expectations for us. And I suppose that was somewhat of a challenge. Finnegan's a staff writer for *The New Yorker* and I've published half a dozen long non-fiction pieces in *The New Yorker*, about twenty *Talk of the Town* pieces there, so I suppose we've done okay for now.

**RS:** It's a daunting task to interview you, Bryan. You've interviewed a lot of people and have a lot more experience and expertise in it than I do. Who's the most interesting person you've interviewed.

**BD:** Merle [Haggard]. Without a doubt, Merle.

**RS:** Why?

**BD:** He was two things that most everyone else isn't in the world—a supreme and talented artist, something of a savant, and seemingly without any pangs about the need to tell little lies and obey social conventions. He said what he wanted to when he wanted to, without meanness necessarily, or motives, he just...did it. He made the absent-minded professor seem like an A-type accountant. He asked about me *two months* after I had been on the bus with him and his band for six or ten weeks. "Where's that Bryan fella? He said he wanted to talk to me." (After a billion requests.) He also said, when I asked him about something of his earlier life, "Where'd you hear that?" "I read it in your autobiography." "Damn, but I *got* to read that some day. Find some things out." In a way I half admired and was half envious and a third-half of me appalled at his disregard for social lubrication. He was like a cat in that sense. Without manners, without conscience, and without venality. He just...is.

**RS:** What advice would you have for students, for beginning writers?

**BD:** Discover your stories. They say write what you know, but it's more than that. Explore what you know. Too many students start out with some giant vision and it's all overheated and underbaked. Write a scene—focus on the little details. Don't just write what you know, try to understand and express what you know. It takes a long time. I wrote a piece for *Doubletake* on the Montana Review of Books softball team, and I realized that covered twenty years of my life. Twenty years. Looking at the details that closely really helped me understand the importance of the long haul. All the nicknames, those little things, they told a story. We explore our obsessions and try to overcome our ignorance. We try to understand where we are. Young writers want to go to a place and tell us something important about it, and that's innocent and lovely and all, but you can't always do that. You have to be there for years. You screw up and that's totally required. You can't always come to conclusions. Conclusions are overrated. It's important to keep finding ways of knowing. It gives you confidence and some of that comes with age. Some of it is luck. Luck isn't a bad thing to have. Fiction, non-fiction, it doesn't matter. The story is in the details.

## RECENT FACULTY PUBLICATIONS



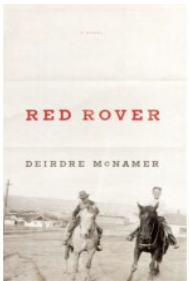
### CIRCADIAN by Joanna Klink

Penguin Poetry Series, 2007  
Reviewed by Rob Schlegel (MFA '04)

The Irish-born novelist Iris Murdoch wrote that the direction of attention is constantly outward, away from the self, which has a tendency to reduce all things to a false unity. What is required then, is an attention toward

the great variety of the world, and Murdoch suggests that the ability to direct such attention is love. In *Circadian*, her second full-length poetry collection, Joanna Klink's direction of attention is characterized most accurately by its range, precision, profundity and the idiomatic subtleties of the book's urgent vision. Klink's world is not a landscape marshaled by the external witness-turned-reflective (a landscape best observed through field-glasses) but rather a vast sea into which—even with all her faculties—poet and reader are afforded only partial entry; partial because the voice in her poems seems ever-investigatory as it considers the depth of its own appreciation of the world: "...I have fought//hard to see, have tried to find some way/around this...the world loved and not loved, two fish/glinting dark-gold beneath the blurred river//surface—have I loved it enough...". Alternately, *Circadian's* gift is its ability to illuminate the "landscape beyond us," the "pure periphery, cast into the immobile black", as well as the speaking-distance between two people,

above which "a single star [is] streaking in cracked silence". Because of Klink's ability to describe scenarios in which she attempts to imagine alternative outcomes, as in "Antelope": "What were our hopes//when we first heard that it broke...their bodies ghosted//where our minds would have them stall," she heightens the sense of hurt when we learn of the antelope's ultimate fate. Consequently, as Klink's poems call us into the responsibility of attention, they also warn that once we open our eyes, we are no longer able to choose the depth in which we will be engaged; the light simply fills them and we are forced to abandon any measure of how much pain we witness. We become vulnerable to what is there, and by extension are forever impressed by the sovereignty of the visible. But because the relationships between language, transcendence and the temporal can often suggest great fissures in that sovereignty, reading *Circadian* becomes an experience that urges us to feel how love (its deliberate attention) ultimately strains against the unendurable.



### RED ROVER by Deirdre McNamer

Penguin Books, 2007  
Reviewed by Erin Kyle (MFA '03)

How well do we ever know the people we love?  
How much of their minds and hearts and even

histories are available to us, and how much forever closed? Where does love end and secrecy begin? These are the burning questions in Deirdre McNamer's beautiful new novel.

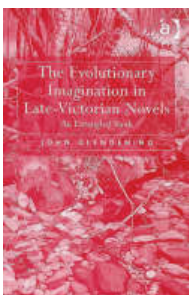
The story tracks the lives of two brothers across twentieth-century Montana and beyond, a broad canvas of life and love and war. The book opens in 1927 when nine-year-old Neil Tierney and his beloved older brother Aidan ride their horses across the Sweet Grass Hills to witness the crossing of Charles Lindbergh's plane. The Tierney brothers are scrappy, self-sufficient masters of their domain. Led by Aidan, the brothers imagine themselves as Argentine gauchos: wild, hearty, untouchable. "It was an easy dream," McNamer writes, "and they fell into it together."

Then comes World War II. Aidan joins the FBI and goes to South America on hazardous duty. Neil becomes a bomber pilot. When the war is

over, Aidan returns home with a mysterious illness. Shortly after, Aidan is dead: gun shot, the family is told by the coroner, in the mouth. Probable accident. Following the death, a visit from Aidan's FBI buddy, Roland, raises suspicion that there is considerably more to the story.

These secrets and suspicions lie dormant until the the next time we see Neil, in his eighties, suffering from cataracts and occasional memory loss. He believes that he has made peace with his life, a sort of sense of things. But then a series of unexpected encounters once again shift the course of his life, and Neil begins a slow collision with the past.

On the surface, *Red Rover* is a mystery. The events surrounding Aidan's death are revisited throughout the novel, again and again, each time through the eyes of a different character with his or her own desires and beliefs and needs. Each new piece of the puzzle creates its own set of



### THE EVOLUTIONARY IMAGINATION IN LATE-VICTORIAN NOVELS: AN ENTANGLED BANK by John Glendening

Ashgate Publishing, 2007, Reviewed by Casey Charles

Professor John Glendening's *The Evolutionary Imagination in Late-Victorian Novels: An Entangled Bank* (Ashgate 2007) traces the influence of Darwinian theories of evolution on Hardy, Stoker, Wells, and Conrad. As a trope for the complex thicket of Darwin's ideas, the entangled bank figures as a metaphor for the way these Victorian authors deal with the relationship of order and chaos, contingency and purpose, in the narrative development of both highly canonical novels like *Heart of Darkness* as well as works like Wells's *Island of Doctor Moreau*. These late Victorian works, Glendening concludes, "adopt . . . a skeptical stance about the existence or knowability of absolute truths," but this "unpredictable and implausible adventure," John writes in a lovely epilogue about this own trip to the Galapagos, can ultimately make us "more at home in a universe existing for its extraordinary, fathomless sake."

# Every Student Deserves a Highly Accomplished Writing Teacher

## by Heather E. Bruce, Associate Professor of English

Writing is a powerful means of purposeful inquiry, communication, and action in the classroom and in the world. Every student deserves a highly accomplished teacher of writing. To these ends, Montana Writing Project (MWP)—a member site in the National Writing Project (NWP) network, the premier effort to improve writing in America and housed in the Department of English at the University of Montana—conducts professional development programs for Montana teachers in every subject area and all levels pre-school through college. Through its professional development model, NWP sites build the leadership, programs, and research needed for teachers to help their students become successful writers and learners. In Summer Institutes, Academic-year In-service Programs, Professional Conferences, Youth Writing Programs, Indian Education for All Initiatives, Poverty Outreach Initiatives, MWP aims to help every teacher in Montana accomplish NWP goals of reaching every student through every teacher.

Montana Writing Project (MWP) conducts professional development programs for teachers all over the state. Summer Institutes are available in Missoula at the University of Montana, in Billings-area K-12 schools, and in Browning in collaboration with Blackfeet Community College. A Rural Conference on Writing is held annually in Great Falls. Montana Writing Project-sponsored workshops are offered at the Annual Meeting of MEA/MFT. MWP contracts with schools and districts around the state to offer on-site Academic-Year Programs. Youth Writing Programs are available in Missoula year-round. Other areas in Montana hope to develop MWP-developed Youth Writing Programs.

Teachers who attend any MWP program learn promising practices for teaching writing from other teachers, prepare for leadership roles by demonstrating their most effective writing education practices, study research on writing, and improve their knowledge of writing by writing themselves. During the 2004-2006 academic years, MWP collectively conducted more than 9,000 hours of professional development in writing. The model of summer and school-year programs, designed and supported by the Montana Writing Project, is validated by NWP research. Studies of student achievement, both local and national, show positive results.

MWP recognizes that high-quality literacy achievement for all is essential to the democratic project of education; MWP is devoted centrally to making “justice through literacy” our project. With special one-time grant allocations from NWP, MWP’s Indian Education for All and Poverty Outreach programs have increased opportunities for sustained professional development of teachers who work in Native American communities; increased the quality of services offered by improving professional development and making it more relevant to teachers whose students are impacted by poverty; and increased the quality of programs offered by increasing the racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity in project leadership so that teacher knowledge can more closely reflect the diversity of local communities.

The work of MWP is supported by federal funds authorized annually under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; funds dedicated to the project by the Department of English and the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Montana; funds allocated by the State of Montana (Office of Public Instruction-Indian Education) and funds provided to individual teachers through local school district support.

*Private sources of funding are also welcome to support individual scholarships for teachers in high needs areas, for needy students of promise in Youth Writing Programs and for development of local school district programs. Inquiries are welcome. Contact Heather E. Bruce, Director at [heather.bruce@umontana.edu](mailto:heather.bruce@umontana.edu) or the University of Montana Foundation-Montana Writing Project.*

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**Deirdre McNamer, continued**

questions: What happened to Aidan during his time in the FBI? How did his death really occur? Who, if anyone, has the answers? For those who loved Aidan, the question is not *who done it?* but *who was he?*

The heart of *Red Rover* has less to do with the mystery of Aidan's death than with the lives of those who will forever be connected by it: Neil, who remembers his brother as daring and invincible, who still conjures Aidan's level-headed voice in moments of crisis; Roland, the son of a miner, who escaped Butte, to join the FBI only to find himself returned there after the war; Wendell Whitcomb, an ambitious newspaper reporter with a hunger for uncovering secrets; Opal Mix, a lonely nurse turned coroner. In twenty-three concise chapters spanning nearly a century, these characters cross in and out of each other's lives, weaving their parts of the puzzle together. It is a testament to McNamer's storytelling that these characters' lives spread far beyond the events that bind them to each other. Even characters who appear briefly in the novel feel far from minor—their lives are full and complicated, marked by their own losses and disappointments, their own sets of unanswered questions.

*Red Rover* is about the moments that make up a life, the choices, the chance encounters with strangers. "In Montana it usually took about two minutes of conversation with a stranger to establish some sort of connection," thinks Roland, upon finding himself back in the company of men he'd last seen fifty years before. "Either you'd previously met the person you spoke to, or the two of you knew people in common." McNamer's characters are connected by grief and loss, by the unrelenting machine of war, by the Montana landscape, which seems to hold so many secrets, concealing as much as it reveals. It is not so much the answers that count, but the shape the absence of such answers makes on the lives of those who search for them. It's no wonder that McNamer spent nearly eight years at work on *Red Rover*, thinking initially that it would be a work of non-fiction. The complexity of a story that covers so much time, so many events, so many viewpoints, might in the hands of a less accomplished writer seem confounding. But this story feels seamless and complete. Like the lives of its characters *Red Rover* is filled with moments of unexpected beauty, and unexpected heartbreak.

The eighty-five-year-old Neil Tierney thinks back on his life and imagines the moments that have made it as stars forming a constellation. This feels like the method of McNamer's book: the individual, vivid, bright moments that turn out to be part of a subtle but profound pattern. *Red Rover* is a long, hard look at the stories we tell ourselves, the ways we make sense of things and the way things continually escape us. At the end of explanations, we find ourselves, and the people we love. A stirring, searching book.

# FACULTY NEWS & NOTES

## VISITORS FOR THE 2007-2008 ACADEMIC YEAR

**Stephen Amidon** (Kittredge Visiting Professor) is the author of six novels, including *The New City* and *Human Capital*, and a collection of short stories, *Subdivision*. He served as a film critic for *The Financial Times* and *The London Sunday Times*, as well as books editor for the UK edition of *Esquire*. He has taught at Washington University and Smith College. His new novel, *Security*, is forthcoming from Farrar, Strauss & Giroux.

**Pascal Bardet** (Visiting Professor, Literature), Associate Professor at the University of Toulouse-Le Mirail, is the author of *From the Green Light to the Valley of Ashes: Exploration of Symbolic Space in The Great Gatsby by Scott Fitzgerald* (1994).

**Tom Berninghausen** (Assistant Adjunct Professor, Literature), Assistant Professor of English at Clark University from 1989-1998, has published essays on Erdrich, Melville, and Shakespeare.

**David Allan Cates** (Assistant Professor, Fiction), Missoula fiction and nonfiction writer, is the author of *X Out of Wonderland: A Saga* (2005).

**Linh Dinh** (Hugo Visiting Poet) is the author of two collections of stories and four books of poems, the most recent of which is *Jam Alerts* (Chax 2007), with a novel, *Love Like Hate*, forthcoming in 2008. Dinh is the editor of the anthologies *Night, Again: Contemporary Fiction from Vietnam* (Seven Stories 1996) and *Three Vietnamese Poets* (Tinfish 2001), and translator of *Night, Fish and Charlie Parker, the poetry of Phan.Nhien Hao* (Tupelo 2006).

**Bryan Di Salvatore** (Visiting Assistant Professor, Nonfiction), fiction and nonfiction writer, is the author of "Golfing in Montana" (*Sports Illustrated* 2004) as well as a biography, *A Clever Base-Ballist: The Life and Time of John Montgomery Ward* (1999).

**Chris Dombrowski's** (Assistant Adjunct Professor) poetry has appeared in *Bloomsbury Review*, *Colorado Review*, and *Crazyhorse*.

**Mary Gaitskill** (President's Writers-In-Residence Series) is the author of the novels *Veronica*, finalist for the National Book Award and the Los Angeles Times Book Prize, and *Two Girls, Fat and Thin*, as well as the story collections *Bad Behavior* and *Because They Wanted To*. She is currently Associate Professor at Syracuse University. Her writing has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Best American Short Stories* (1993) and *The O. Henry Prize Stories* (1998).

**David Gilcrest** (Assistant Adjunct Professor), poet and critic, published *Greening the Lyre: Environmental Poetics and Ethics* in 2002.

**Peter Jones'** (Assistant Adjunct Professor) stories have appeared in *South Dakota Review*, *Pacific Review*, and *Aethlon*. He is currently producing an educational video on the craft of short fiction.

**Andrew Joron's** (President's Writers-In-Residence Series) most recent book is *The Cry at Zero: Selected Prose*. A new collection of Joron's poetry, *The Sound Mirror*, is forthcoming from Flood Editions in 2008. Andrew Joron lives in Berkeley, where he works as a freelance indexer.

**Amy Ratto Parks** (Adjunct Assistant Professor and Composition Coordinator) is a contributing writer for *Poet's Market*. Her chapbook *Bread and Water Body*, won the Merriam Frontier Chapbook Prize in 2003. Her poems have appeared recently in *Mississippi Review*, *South Dakota Review* and elsewhere.

**Ed Roberson** (President's Writers-In-Residence Series) is the author of seven books of poetry, including *City Eclogue* (2006), *Voices Cast Out to Talk Us In* (winner of the Iowa Poetry Prize) and *Atmosphere Conditions* (winner of the National Poetry Series). His work has appeared in *Best American Poetry* 2004 and 2005, *Callaloo*, *Hambone* and *Chicago Review* and many other journals. He is currently Visiting Artist at Northwestern University.

**Tomaz Šalamun** (President's Writers-In-Residence Series) is one of the great postwar Central European poets. He has taught at the Universities of Alabama, Georgia, Massachusetts, and Tennessee, as well as at the Iowa Writers' Workshop. He spent several years as Cultural Attaché to the Slovenian Embassy in New York. He has published over 30 books of poetry, including *Feast* (Harcourt Brace, 2000) and *The Book for My Brother* (2006).

**Brandon Shimoda** (Assistant Adjunct Professor), curator of the New Lakes reading series, has recent writing in *Colorado Review*, *A Public Space*, *PRACTICE*, *St. Mark's Poetry Project Newsletter* and elsewhere. Two books are forthcoming: *the Alps* (Flim Forum Press) and *Lake M, One* (Corollary Press).

**Rob Schlegel** (Assistant Adjunct Professor) has published writing in *Colorado Review*, *Boston Review*, *VOLT*, *Pleiades*, *DIODE* and elsewhere. His manuscript *Iceblink* was a finalist for the New California and Nightboat Poetry Prizes. He co-hosts New Lakes Poetry, a weekly poetry radio show.

**Lisa Simon** (Assistant Adjunct Professor, Literature) is ABD from the University of Washington, with a dissertation on H.D. and classicism.

**David Witzling** (Visiting Assistant Professor, Literature) is the author of *Everybody's America: Thomas Pynchon, Race, and the Cultures of Postmodernism* (2007).

## FACULTY ON LEAVE & SABBATICAL

**Jill Bergman**, International Exchange, University of Toulouse (AY). **Judy Blunt**, Visiting Nonfiction Writer, University of Arizona (Fall). **Debra Earling**, leave for Guggenheim (Spring). **Louise Economides**, research leave (Spring). **Brady Harrison**, International Exchange, University of Toulouse (AY). **Lynn Itagaki**, research leave (Fall), leave (Spring). **Katie Kane**, Sabbatical (AY). **Ashby Kinch**, research leave (Fall). **Dee McNamer**, Visiting Writer, University of Alabama (Fall). **Kate Ryan**, research leave (Spring).

## **Greg Pape, New Poet Laureate of Montana**

Creative writing professor, and long time Bitterroot valley resident Greg Pape began his two-year post as Montana's Poet Laureate this summer. Greg hopes to encourage the study and practice of writing poetry as vital in education, and as a means to enrich Montana's intellectual inheritance. He has expressed a desire to serve as ambassador for the art form, especially in areas of the state that demonstrate interest, but have so far not received much exposure to the medium.

The honorary position, designated by Governor appointment, was made official by state Senate Bill 69 in 2005, and gives Montana a voice of expertise through which to promote interest and engagement in the craft. This bill calls to "expand the state's cultural resources", as well as to "assist freedom of artistic expression essential for the well-being of the arts." Pape is ideally suited for such a role after many years spent writing and teaching poetry. The laureate position both fosters and protects this artistic expression in order to connect with and meet the needs of all people statewide. Pape is succeeding Sandra Alcosser, the state's first appointed Poet Laureate.

Pape is available for contact at [greg.pape@mso.umt.edu](mailto:greg.pape@mso.umt.edu) to discuss potential presentations, lectures, readings, workshops, and for congratulations.

## **New Irish Studies Program**

Taking advantage of the historical connections between Montana and Ireland and promoting international exchange with the University-College Cork in Ireland, the University of Montana has also inaugurated a program in Irish Studies. The program, which is currently administered under the auspices of the English Department, involves an interdisciplinary and inter-collegiate collaboration that brings together leading scholars in the humanities and in the creative arts. English Department faculty offer courses in Gaelic literature and culture, Irish film, Irish and Native American literature and culture, contemporary Irish and Northern Irish literature, and courses centering on individual authors such as Joyce and Beckett.

## **Debra Magpie Earling Awarded Guggenheim**

Debra Earling has been awarded a prestigious 2007 Guggenheim Fellowship. Of the nearly 2,800 applicants for 2007, only 189 awards were granted. The grants were created to support the work of those artists, scholars, and scientists "who have demonstrated exceptional capacity for productive scholarship or exceptional creative ability in the arts." Earling has won the fellowship a year after another member of the Creative Writing faculty, Judy Blunt, won a Guggenheim.

## **Nancy Cook Comes Home**

Professor Nancy Cook writes about the American west from the perspectives of critic and rancher. Raised on sheep ranches in California and western Montana, in 1991, Nancy accepted her "dream job" at the University of Montana. Married to another English professor, Tom Berninghausen, Nancy opted, after four years at UM, for dual employment and headed east for another academic position. After ten years at the University of Rhode Island Nancy was able to rejoin UM's English Department, where she now teaches courses in Western American literature, with a critical emphasis on place studies and ecocriticism. Her recent work includes an essay on ranch real estate advertising and a forthcoming essay on romance novels set in Montana. Her current project looks at social class in the post-W.W.II rural west. Nancy's work on western American culture is informed by cultural geography, cultural studies, and ecocriticism, as well as her own experiences in agriculture. When not teaching at UM, Nancy manages a ranch near Clyde Park, Montana.

## **Apostrophe Books' Inaugural Publications**

Apostrophe Books, a poetry press co-founded and edited by Richard Greenfield (MFA '99) and Mark Tursi, has published its first full-length collection, while announcing the slated line-up of its inaugural publications. Catherine Meng's (MFA '00) *Tonight's the Night* was released in March, 2007, to be followed by collections by Johannes Göransson and Paul Foster Johnson, a chapbook by Amy Wright, and a broadside by Elizabeth Robinson. Devoted to work exemplifying the hybridization and intersection of poetic discourse with theory, philosophy, cultural studies, and pataphysics, Apostrophe promotes work that undermines generic categories and questions, explores, investigates, and/or challenges the very act of creative and imaginative language *with* creative and imaginative language. For more information, visit [apostrophebooks.org](http://apostrophebooks.org)

## **New Film Studies Program**

In the Fall of 2007, the University of Montana inaugurated Film Studies as an optional emphasis under the wing of the English Department. This inter-disciplinary program introduces students to all facets of moving-image culture from historical, theoretical, and other critical perspectives, also providing an opportunity to study production through the Media Arts Department as an elective. Students who chose a Film Studies emphasis will learn the critical language of film as a means of analyzing one of the most pervasive forms of cultural representation today. Taking classes in aesthetics, film history, and various courses—in topics as varied as Shakespeare and Film, German Cinema, and Film Noir—students will enhance their critical media skills through learning in depth how to read and write about film. For more information contact Professors Phil Fandozzi or Sean O'Brien at [phil.fandozzi@mso.umt.edu](mailto:phil.fandozzi@mso.umt.edu), (406) 243-2051 or [sean.o'brien@mso.umt.edu](mailto:sean.o'brien@mso.umt.edu), (406) 243-5791, respectively.



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its various programs  
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office:  
(406) 243-5231  
Fax: (406) 243-2556



## FALL READINGS

**ANDREW JORON, Friday, October 5.** Lecture: 1:00 p.m., Jeanette Rankin Hall, Room 202, UM campus. Reading: 7 p.m., Montana Museum of Art & Culture, Meloy Gallery, UM PARTV Center. *A presentation of the Creative Writing Program Fall Series.*

**ANTHONY HAWLEY & HEATHER TONE, Saturday, October 6,** 7:30 p.m. Ceretana Gallery, 801 Sherwood Avenue. *A presentation of the New Lakes Reading Series*

**ADAM CLAY, KATE GREENSTREET & JEN TYNES, Friday, October 12,** 7:30 p.m. Gallery Saintonge, 216 N. Higgins Avenue. *A presentation of the New Lakes Reading Series*

**TOMAZ ŠALAMUN, Friday, October 19,** 8 p.m. Masquer Theatre, UM PARTV Center. *A presentation of the Creative Writing Program Fall Series.*

**JOANNA KLINK & BRANDON SHIMODA, Friday, November 9,** 7:30 p.m. Gallery Saintonge, downtown Missoula. *A presentation of the New Lakes Reading Series*

**BRYAN DI SALVATORE, Friday, November 16,** 8 p.m. Dell Brown Room, Turner Hall, UM campus. *A presentation of the Creative Writing Program Fall Series.*

**SPRING READINGS:** Madeline DeFrees, Linh Dinh, Mary Gaitskill, Ed Roberson and others

## ART 4 LIT: CUTBANK FUNDRAISER

**Please join *CutBank Literary Magazine*** for a celebration of art and literature benefiting the Creative Writing Program's long-running and acclaimed literary journal, at **ART 4 LIT, Friday, October 26, 6-9 p.m. at Laurie Lane Studios/Gallery Upstream, 141 South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street West.** Jazz, wine and hors d'oeuvres will complement a gallery and silent auction of work by select local and nationally exhibited artists. For information, visit: [www.cutbankonline.org](http://www.cutbankonline.org)

## IN THE NEXT ISSUE...

alumni updates, news and notes...

reviews and discussions of recent publications by Henrietta Goodman, Frances Hwang, Melissa Kwasny, Aryn Kyle, Catherine Meng, Robert Pack, Karen Volkman and David Witzling...

and more...

## NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS

Heather Bruce, Casey Charles, Nancy Cook, Matthew Kaler, Aryn Kyle, Rob Schlegel, Prageeta Sharma, Brandon Shimoda, Robert Stubblefield

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Contributions from English and Creative Writing alumni and friends fund a variety of departmental initiatives, from scholarships and assistantships, to literary readings and lectures, faculty and program development and enhancement, and publication and mailing of this newsletter. If you would like to support these and other programming opportunities, please send a check to The University of Montana Foundation, PO Box 7159, Missoula, MT 59807-7159, with a note on the memo line indicating that it is for the English Department and/or the Creative Writing Program. For more information about making a gift (with no obligation to do so), please contact Julia Horn of the UM Foundation at (800) 443-2593, (406) 243-2646 or [Julia.Horn@mso.umt.edu](mailto:Julia.Horn@mso.umt.edu).

**Please let us know of any recent news (publications, awards, etc.) for our upcoming newsletters, by printing out (and/or detaching), and filling out the form below and sending it to:**

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER**

Department of English, The University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812

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