

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



Hello English Department Alumni!!!

Dear all,

Thanks to everyone who sent in their updates for the year!! Despite a challenging job market, it seems that most of us have had a very good year: many alum have started grad school or secured jobs that they love. Others continue to enjoy the jobs that they have, and on a more personal note, I'm happy to report that several of us have gotten married.

Earlier I asked if anyone had job-seeking advice for other former students. Several of you (Ashley Farrand, Sarah Lichtner, and Tiffany March) offer some excellent suggestions, and Sarah has provided us with an interview prep sheet that she found helpful in her own job search (attached to this email). Other alumni (Julia DiCarlo, Sarah Lichtner, and Lisa Kline) note that their companies are either hiring or will be doing so in the near future. Note too that the current job list for September 2009 is attached to this email as well. Happy hunting!

I'll let you know when our Facebook page is up and running as well as the details for our next get-together/field trip. In the meantime, good luck in all of your endeavors!!!

All best,

Orianne Smith, English Department Alumni Liaison

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2005 - 2006

In addition to going back to school for a degree in interior design, **Kara Gallegos** was also recently promoted to an assistant merchandiser position at Fire & Ice. She is in training to eventually take over the Art Glass Buyer position. Congratulations, Kara!!

2006 - 2007

Jemima Buchanan reports that she is doing well and that “this is such an exciting time!” Jemima is in her third year of teaching at Mount Royal Elementary/Middle School in Baltimore City, and will graduate from Morgan State in May 2010 with an MA in English. Her thesis focuses on gothic tropes in Black Literature. As this reporter can attest, Jemima’s interest in the Gothic began during a senior seminar at UMBC: “The Gothic Revival in Britain.”

Andrea Clarke attended teachers college after graduating from UMBC and is now in her second year of teaching high school English in Canada where she grew up.

Julia DiCarlo is now working as the proposal manager for AECOM (a company that does

engineering, consulting, sustainability and architectural work). Note to the UMBC English grads who are still looking for jobs: AECOM is hiring. Julia writes that they “always need people with superb writing and editing skills. If anyone is interested in working for the company (www.aecom.com) I would be happy to submit cover letters and resumes for internal review.” Her email address is: Julia.dicarlo7@gmail.com

Ashley Farrand graduated from UMBC in May 2009 with an MA in Teaching. She is currently teaching at a small private school in Columbia and “enjoying every minute of it.” Ashley writes that she is “very excited to teach 5th and 6th graders authentic writing and reading, including book talks, newspaper and even a LitMag.” She is sympathetic to the job seekers out there, mentioning that she too had a very hard time getting a job. What she believes helped land her “the perfect job” was googling and persistence. Ashley invites anyone interested in visiting her school to talk about writing or English-related matters to contact her at crashfrandicoot@gmail.com.

Sarah Finkelstein was married in August, and is now Sarah

Rausch (congratulations, Sarah!!).

Jennifer Jones was also recently married (in November 2008) and is now Jennifer Dulski. Congratulations, Jennifer!! She started working for the Social Security Administration at its headquarters in Baltimore (Woodlawn) as a Claims Technical Examiner in April. Although she is still in training, Jennifer writes that she is “really enjoying it so far.” She is also “happy to see that UMBC has gotten a lot of good press lately too!”

Rebekah Krolus is in her third year teaching English at Winters Mill High School, and working on getting her MA. Last year she married Mike Scheffel (another UMBC alum). Congratulations, Rebekah!!

Tiffany March began graduate classes over this past summer at the University of Maryland's Philip Merrill School of Journalism, and she also completed an internship with the Prince George's County Gazette. She writes that “Journalism school is difficult but stimulating. I have already published at least two dozen clips in various newspapers since June, including one in the Washington Post!” She is currently working as an intern at

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the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Public Affairs.

Tiffany's advice to job seekers is "to complete as many internships as possible, because they definitely open doors to better positions. And if anyone is interested in journalism, offer to write for free. Papers are crunched right now and can use the help, and then you can build up a portfolio of clips to impress potential employers."

Angela Morales is happy to report that she recently found a job as a Marketing Associate for Editorial Projects in Education, the publisher of Education Week (among many other publications). As Angela notes, "I hope that other people are starting to see a light at the end of this unemployment tunnel, I know how difficult it was for me to do . . . After being unemployed for nearly 8 months - I am sure happy. I still plan on going to graduate school, but that plan has been pushed back for a year or two. Though I do have my sights still set on London, England to live, work, study, and play!"

Lisa McAllister is still working for the Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, where she was recently promoted to Associate Publicist.

Lisa notes that "although we are not hiring at the current moment, please include our website for alumni - check back often as sometimes positions appear and disappear rather quickly (www.rlpbooks.com). We are always looking for interns, in all departments ranging from editorial to marketing and publicity. We also have several journals and magazines that could use interns as well. Although these positions are unpaid, I am sure everyone knows the importance of making connections and how wonderful an internship (even a short one!) looks on a resume."

Heather Terry got married in October 2008, and is now Heather Loman. Congratulations, Heather!!

Michael Washington finished a MA in postcolonial literature at the University of Leeds in the summer of 2008, and was hired last month as adjunct faculty at Howard Community College. Congratulations, Michael!!! Michael writes that it took him quite awhile to find a job, noting that job seeking was "a job in itself." He now teaches a college survival course for first year students at HCC, and found a position with Montgomery College teaching writing 101 in their English department.

2007 - 2008

Josh Foster went on a teaching expedition to China this past summer for eighteen days with other UMBC alumni and professors. He writes that "teaching there and experiencing the culture, the food, and the people were incredible." Josh's plan is to leave his teaching position in Montgomery County at the end of the school year to return to China to teach and live for the foreseeable future. Good luck, Josh! We'll definitely want an update next year about your first impressions . . .

Erin Gambrill reports that "Since I've graduated, I traveled to Scotland by myself (for the hell of it), got an awesome job as a Teen Activity Specialist with Baltimore County Public Library, and was made the Fiction Editor for *Verbicidemagazine.com*. I also made the big move from rural farmland to the big city (Hampstead in Carroll County to Hampden in Baltimore City)." All in all, as Erin notes, it was a "red-letter year!"

Khaleel Gheba has, somewhat shockingly, given up smoking and started to exercise. He has recently been promoted to Information Specialist and Instructor at the Howard County Library, and has plans to go to

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grad school to get a Master of Library Science degree. Khaleel is currently thinking about writing a detective story “centered around an overweight private eye called Clark ‘Fatman’ McDoogle, in which his heft is not a detriment to his detective abilities.” He has also started a book club with a colleague called “Dudes on Books.”

Seyed Ali Kolahdouzan is a graduate student at Towson, where he is pursuing an MA in Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities. His plan is to finish his studies by the end of this year and apply to a PhD program in sociology. Good luck, Seyed!!

I am sad to report that **Jaymes “The Baron” MacDougal** suffered firsthand from what he euphemistically refers to as “the effects of the recession.” Jaymes was recently laid off at Rowman & Littlefield along with a third of their office (including his department, Publicity). Not surprisingly, Jaymes’s response was sanguine: “How fortuitous! Just days prior to this auspicious occasion, I sat before the warm glow of a computer monitor and, paying a good deal of attention to the window from my cubicle, stared out to a nearby brick building that very much resembled a school . . . I thought to myself at that very moment, ‘I

cannot be confined to the life of a cubicle jockey! I must find myself back in the classroom . . . only this time, I shall stand before it, reciting the works of Keats, Shakespeare, *~MILTON~*, Joyce, Twain, and whatever other literary works our fair public school system requires our somewhat disinterested youth engage in!’ Fortuitous indeed. Jaymes plans to teach high school English next year where he will “incorporate elements of Renaissance literature with that of works from the Enlightenment, but also hope to toss some ‘Finnegan’s Wake’ in.” Good luck, Jaymes!

Sarah Lichtner continues to enjoy her job at Energetics, Incorporated and has begun taking graduate classes this fall in the Writing program at Johns Hopkins.

Her advice to job seekers is to be prepared as possible for job interviews by combing through the company’s website. This demonstrates “an actual interest in the job and the company . . . Writing a cover letter that is specific for the position helps, as does sending a thank you after the interview.” In addition, something that she found helpful as she prepared for her interviews was to consult “Interview Things to Remember” (a list of questions

that Sarah is sharing with the alumni list, which is attached to this email). Thanks so much, Sarah!

Sarah also notes that as of several weeks ago the technical/science writer job that we posted on this list was still unfilled. If you are interested, please contact Sarah at Sarah.lichtner@gmail.com

Jennifer Matthews is getting her MA in History at the University of Delaware, where she is a Fellow in the Hagley Scholars Program, studying the social history of technology, consumption, and material culture. She hopes to go on to a career as a curator or an archivist.

Jen writes: “even though I did not go on to study literature at the graduate level, I have found that the knowledge I picked up in my English classes has really helped me. Not only did I become a better writer, but I also picked up a lot of background historical knowledge as well. I think I learned more about British history from Dr. Falco than I have from any history professor! Additionally, learning to analyze and deconstruct the written word is an important skill when looking at both primary sources and historical monographs. Finally, the introduction to critical theory that

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I received in ENGL 401 has been a MAJOR help. Critical theory is regularly employed by historians, and if I hadn't taken 401, I'm sure I would still be swimming around extremely confused trying to figure out who Foucault is and why everyone is talking about him. Please let the department know what a great job they are doing in terms of preparing students for graduate study not just in literature but across the humanities. Thanks for everything!"

Paul Norton writes that he is in his first year of law school at Tulane University School of Law in New Orleans. Congratulations, Paul!

Matt Poland just finished his MA in English Literary Studies from the University of York. The title of his dissertation was "'A good broken music': Shakespeare, Marston and Dramatic Experimentation in the Repertory Companies, 1599-1604." Congratulations, Matt! In the next few weeks he will be moving to Durham, North Carolina, to "try living in the 'real world' for a spell." Matt will also continue to write freelance criticism for the Baltimore-based website Splice Today (www.splicetoday.com), where Zach Kaufmann, another English alum is assistant editor.

Matt is hoping to start a regular DVD review column.

Brooke Tyson has just begun her second year as an English Literature MA student at College Park. She was also recently accepted into their Creative Writing MFA program, which she will defer until next year. Brooke writes that she "would love to teach at a community college, so I'm hoping to find a job teaching at a community college next year." Good luck, Brooke!!

2008 - 2009

Rebecca Blocher has started her own company as a freelance graphic designer and photographer. She is currently working in Budapest, Hungary, and the first book she designed has recently been published. Rebecca writes that, as a designer, she has "found it incredibly helpful to have my English background . . . it makes me even more valuable to clients when I can also be a trusted copy-editor!"

Lisa Kline continues to enjoy her job as a Technical Writer/Editor for BAE Systems, and has recently relocated to Virginia. She is adamant that we should establish a job networking pool, noting that she got her job

because she had someone within BAE recommend her for the position. As Lisa notes: "As an employee here, I can refer others to positions throughout BAE and that really does help someone get an interview. I'm sure I'm not the only one in a job where we can do this. If we had a place where alumni who don't have jobs right now could post resumes, it would be a lot easier. Basically, if someone gives me a resume, I can upload it with a recommendation to however many positions suit them and they get an email asking him/her to confirm his/her application to the position. I think MOST government contracting companies have similar systems."

Hopefully, a Facebook page for alumni will help. In the interim, however, feel free to email Lisa if you are interested in working for her company:

lisak_87@yahoo.com

Patty Kwon is working part-time at a law firm as a legal assistant, and considering applying for a publishing internship.

Mary Meier is working as an Executive Team Lead in Human Resources for Target in Glen Burnie. She is also engaged to be married in February 2010. Congratulations, Mary!

Leanna Powell is working as “an administrative assistant/proofreader/general desk jockey” for the Success for All Foundation in Towson (a job she started several days after graduation). This spring she was nominated for a program in the Peace Corps, but her plans changed when she got engaged to another UMBC alum (Ian Bukowski, Poli Sci, '05). They are now planning to move to Boulder or Denver, Colorado next summer. Congratulations, Leanna!!

Like many others, **Danielle Willis** has had a difficult time finding a job given the current economic downturn. She writes that “after six months, and applying to over 450 jobs, I am currently working as a receptionist/bookkeeper at the printing company where my father and numerous other relatives work. It's not where I want to be, but after the struggles I had with looking for a job, I'm happy to have it for now and at least I'll also have the opportunity to connect with people in the publishing field.” On a positive note, Danielle adds that she and her fiancé are moving to Silver Spring, and are beginning to plan their wedding.

Faculty Updates

From Jessica Berman: “This fall, I'm keeping more than busy chairing the department, teaching 401 and trying to finish up a book on transnational modernism and politics. I always love teaching 401 but in the last couple of years I've also had the chance to teach an elective on modernism. and a seminar on “Joyce, Proust and Faulkner” (which I secretly call the course on “Big hard books”). I'm looking forward to developing a new elective on postcolonial literature next year.

This past summer I gave a keynote address at the International Virginia Woolf Conference in which I discussed Woolf's responses to Spanish Civil War propaganda posters and her opposition to war. The posters are all online, so if anyone out there gets curious about what they're like, I'd be happy to send on a link. I was also lucky to be a short-term fellow at the Newberry Library in Chicago, which allowed me to spend some time reading through many folders of papers from the collection of the radical 1930's

writer Jack Conroy. My work is all about the connections between politics and experimental writing, so I was happy to see Conroy's ideas about literature and about the social problems of the Great Depression developing together in his letters.

I'd love to hear from any and all of you via email (jberman@umbc.edu) and wish you well. We are all hoping for full employment, especially for English majors!”

Christopher Corbett's new book - *The Poker Bride: The First Chinese in the Wild West* - is due out in February from Grove/Atlantic Monthly Press. The new year - 2010 - also marks the 150th anniversary of the Pony Express. Professor Corbett will be the keynote speaker in April at the national celebration in St. Joseph, Missouri - site of the start of the Pony Express.

Piotr Gwiazda spent his sabbatical as Writer-in-Residence at the James Merrill House in Stonington. In addition, last December he gave a reading at the New England Poetry Club in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the oldest poetry reading series in the country.

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From Lucille McCarthy:

“I continue to enjoy teaching English courses ranging from Freshman Composition to senior courses like “Language and Society” and “The Teaching of Composition” and graduate courses like “Dewey and Freire.” Last fall I taught a new senior seminar titled “The Discourses of Happiness” in which fifteen students and I explored notions of happiness and how to achieve it from philosophy, psychology, and literature. My favorite literary texts in this class were works by Alice Walker, Leo Tolstoy, and Willa Cather.

Regarding my research, I have just published an article that speaks to an issue that has received much attention recently, one that we English majors care a great deal about: the fate of liberal arts education. In this piece, I explore the question that was posed by both W.E.B. DuBois and John Dewey in the early 20th Century: How can education help students not only earn a living but also shape a life worth living? In this article, I suggest some ideas based on my research in various classrooms, but I would love to hear from any of you about your answers to this question.

My best wishes to you all. I hope that in these hard economic

times, you are surviving and even thriving.”

Gail Orgelfinger notes that her work on Harry Potter has “finally” made it into print: “J.K. Rowling’s Medieval Bestiary,” *Studies in Medievalism XVII* (Boydell & Brewer, 2009): 141-60.

Orianne Smith’s edition of Mary Robinson’s novel *Hubert de Sevrac* (1796) was published this past summer. She also gave birth to a daughter, Annalise Elizabeth, on May 4, 2009. Orianne notes that this past year she was on research leave in the fall and maternity leave in the spring, so “I am excited to get back to teaching this fall. Yay Milton!!”