English Professor Wins Distinguished Service Award

Beverly Ann Chin, professor in The University of Montana English Teaching Program, is the recipient of the 2012 Distinguished Service Award from the National Council of Teachers of English. The award recognizes a person who exhibits valuable service to the profession, scholarly or academic distinction, excellence in teaching and distinctive use of the language. She received the award during the NCTE Annual Convention in Las Vegas in November.

Chin has more than 35 years teaching experience and has published articles, textbooks and video programs on the teaching of writing, reading and literature. She has received several teaching and service awards, including the UM Distinguished Teacher Award and the Distinguished Educator Award from the Montana Association of Teachers of English Language Arts. She formerly served as the president of NCTE and as a board member of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

“I am deeply honored by this award for teaching and service,” Chin said. “Throughout my career, NCTE has informed and inspired my work to promote and improve literacy education for all students. “I dedicate this award to the students, colleagues and mentors who have shared my teaching journey and enriched my professional life.”

Regents Professor Returns to English Department

William Kittredge, Regents Professor Emeritus, taught creative writing for 29 years at The University of Montana. We welcomed him back for another semester of teaching this fall as the Kittredge Visiting Writer, a distinguished position named after him. Kittredge is the author of two collections of short fiction, The Van Gogh Fields and Other Stories (1979) and We Are Not In This Together (1984); a novel, The Willow Field (2006); a memoir, Hole in the Sky (1992); and three collections of essays, Owning It All (1987), Who Owns the West (1996), and The Next Rodeo: New and Selected Essays (2006). He has received a Stegner Fellowship, two NEA Fellowships, the Los Angeles Times Award for Lifetime Achievement, and numerous other awards. He was co-editor with Annick Smith of The Last Best Place: A Montana Anthology and co-producer of the popular film, A River Runs Through It. Kittredge has published essays and articles in over 50 magazines, including Atlantic, Harper's, Esquire, Time, Newsweek, The Washington Post, and The New York Times.

If for no other reason, because of my English degree I learned to love Emily Dickinson even though I once swore that I couldn’t stand her.

If for no other reason, because of my English degree I learned how to identify my own interpretations and to never apologize for them.

Rhiannon Potter
Class of 2012
Nonfiction writer, Susan Cheever, and fiction writer, Victor LaValle, both visited The University of Montana this past fall to conduct graduate student workshops, give public craft lectures and read from their new works. Cheever, a Guggenheim recipient and Pulitzer Prize-winning author, teaches in the MFA programs at Bennington College and The New School. She read from her forthcoming biography of E.E. Cummings, saving time to answer questions about her research process. Over 80 people attended her lecture on “The Perfect Sentence,” an elusive yet popular subject.

LaValle taught a lecture titled "What the hell’s going on? Structuring your story" and read from his latest book, THE DEVIL IN SILVER. LaValle has been the recipient of numerous awards including the Whiting Writers' Award, a United States Artists Ford Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the key to Southeast Queens. He teaches fiction writing at Columbia University.

Laurel Nakanishi (MFA '12) is in Nicaragua on a Fulbright Fellowship. She has started an Artists-in-Schools program, placing Nicaraguan writers and actors in schools to teach at-risk children.

Maureen Palmersheim, a UM English major (Literature and Creative Writing) responded to Kelly Barth’s My Almost Certainly Real Imaginary Jesus on “The Write Question”, a weekly literary program from Montana Public Radio.
Faculty Accomplishments

Deirdre McNamers second novel, One Sweet Quarrel, will be reissued in 2013 as part of the Amazon’s Book Lust Rediscoveries series, which is “devoted to reprinting some of the best (and now out of print) novels originally published between 1960 and 2000. Each book is personally selected by Nancy Pearl and includes an introduction by her, as well as discussion questions for book groups and a list of recommended further reading.” Nancy Pearl is a well-known Seattle librarian who regularly reviews books on NPR’s Morning Edition.

Assistant Professor Quan Manh Ha recently has published several articles:


Erin Brown Saldin recently published a young adult novel, The Girls of No Return, which received 3 starred reviews and also published a short story, "Homesteaders," in Five Chapters. Saldin is a Lecturer in the English department.

Kevin Canty’s book, Where the Money Went, was recently featured on the KUFM public radio show “Planet Money.” Read by Jade Davidson, this story is about spending and earning and profiles a failed marriage in terms of goods consumed. It can be heard on the web at www.selectedshorts.org/onair/.

Professor Debra Earling was interviewed by Paulette Beete for the National Endowment for the Arts Artworksblog. The interview can be found at www.artworks.arts.gov/?p=15440.

Professor Brady Harrison published an article in the international journal, Anglophonia: French Journal of English Studies.” His article is titled “arms wide open’: Hope and the Trans-Global Nuclear Family in Yamashita’s Tropic of Orange.” Other recent publications from Harrison include an article in Arizona Quarterly, “man’s meat ain’t proper meat’: The Big Sky, Cannibalism, and the Clap.” 68.2 (2012): pp. 63-88, and several pieces of fiction:

“Gone to Ground.” (Short Story.) J Journal: New Writing on Justice. (Forthcoming Spring 2013.)


“Friday, October 18, Tigilit,” “Saturday, October 19, Tigilit,” “Thursday, November 10, pont du la Tournelle, Paris,” and “Friday, March 2, Harar, Abyssinia,” excerpts from Vieuchange: A Novel. Cerise Press 3.9

Once again, Robert Stubblefield made it to the rankings of “Best Professor.” He was a finalist in the Independent’s Best of Missoula contest. Go Robert!
More Faculty Accomplishments

Jill Bergman’s new book, The Motherless Child in the Novels of Pauline Hopkins, was published and, in December, released by Louisiana State University Press. Hopkins (1859—1930) was well known in her day as a singer, playwright, author, and editor of The Colored American Magazine. Her four novels, Bergman argues, all draw on the popular trope of motherlessness, a trope that resonated profoundly for African Americans living with the legacy of abduction from a “motherland” and familial fragmentation under slavery.

As the Past President of the Western Literature Association, Literature Professor Nancy Cook delivered the Past President’s Address: "Resurveying the Middle Ground: Small Cities and Towns in the Context of Western American Studies," at the 47th Annual Meeting of the Western Literature Association, held in Lubbock, TX in November.

At the same conference, Professor Cook presented on the Roundtable entitled "Literature and the Environment--The Long View: Thoughts from the Founders of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment."

But wait! There’s more! Cook was also elected for two leadership positions, as Vice President of the Rocky Mountain American Studies Association, and as the President of the Phi Beta Kappa Association of Western Montana.

Assoc. Professor Katie Kane Attends Seminar in Palestine

Katie Kane traveled to Palestine in May of 2011, having been awarded a place in the competitive Palestinian American Research Council’s Faculty Development Seminar. (Check out the program at the web page: http://parc-us-pal.org/facultyDevSem.htm) PARC sends American scholars to Palestine to meet with representatives from universities and cultural and activist organizations. Kane met with faculty and administration at five Palestinian universities: Birzeit, Bethlehem, Hebron, An-Najah, and Al-Quds University in Jerusalem. The group also met with members of the U.S. Consulate. Thanks to the generosity of Provost Brown, Professor Kane presented gifts to members of each of the universities visited. In particular, the Lewis and Clark books were appreciated. An-Najah University had just recently inaugurated its American Studies Program and was particularly grateful for the donation. Following on this project, Kane is now at work editing, with Persis Karim of San José State, an anthology of critical articles on Palestinian culture and literature, which will be authored by teams of Palestinian and U.S.
Catherine Bailey (second year MFA) is teaching poetry this year at Rattlesnake Elementary School through the Missoula Writing Collaborative. Samantha Duncan (second year MFA), Jordan Konkel, Rachel Mindell, and Maud Streep (all first year MFA students) are serving as interns with the Collaborative this year.


Alice Blue Books published Trina Burke’s (MFA ’08) chapbook, The Best Divorce.

Jamie Rogers (BA ’11) received a first place "Best of the West" Award for his Missoula Independent story, "The Reckoning," about a man who killed two teenage girls in a drunk driving accident in Missoula.

Cecile Berberat (second year MFA) won the Meadowlark Award ($1000) for her short story, "Want a Piece, Father?" The contest was judged by Richard Ford.

Dana Fitz Gale (third year MFA) was awarded a $1000 scholarship from the National League of American PEN Women for her writing abilities. She also won the Writers at Work fellowship competition, the Arts and Letters Fiction Prize for her story, "Monsters of the Deep," received honorable mention for the Intro Journal Awards, and was a finalist in both the Tennessee Williams Short Story Contest and the Third Coast Fiction Contest.

Melissa Mylchrest (MFA ’12) won the High Desert Journal 2012 Obsidian Prize ($1000) again for her poem, "For Jolene."

Justin Boening (BA ’07) was selected by Dara Wier as the winner of the 2012 Poetry Society of America Chapbook Fellowship.

Christopher Bolin (BA ’00) has a book of poetry coming out with University of Iowa Press, The Tally. Bolin is the recipient of post-graduate fellowships from the University of Iowa and the MacDowell Colony.

Nicholas Gulig (BA ’07) visited Missoula to read from his new poetry book, West of Center (Chamber Press, 2012). Last year Gulig was a Fulbright Scholar studying contemporary southeast Asian poetry in Thailand.

Noel Thistle Tague (MFA ’12) is attending the University of Pittsburgh Ph.D. Program in Critical and Cultural Studies (Rhetoric and Composition track).

Anne-Marie Spidahl (MFA ’09) is attending the University of Minnesota Ph.D. program in Literature.

Your Contributions at Work

“The English program’s aim is to impart to the student an understanding not only of the aesthetic richness of the literatures that have been written in English but also of the historical and cultural forces that have contributed to their making.”

English Teaching graduate student and teaching assistant, Jessica Jones was accepted to present at the MEA-MFT Conference in Billings this October. Her workshop, Painting a Poem: Visual & Language Arts, was aimed to provide middle school visual and language arts teachers with new ideas regarding the relationship between visual and written language.

Jessica Jones was also awarded Phi Kappa Phi’s 2012 Love of Learning Scholarship of $500. Jessica was nominated by Professor Nancy Cook. Ms. Jones’ travel was made possible by generous contributions to the English Department through The University of Montana Foundation.

Contributions from English alumni and friends fund a variety of department initiatives, programs and student scholarships. If you would like to support the English Department, please send check or money order to:

The University of Montana Foundation, P.O. Box 7159, Missoula, MT 59807-7159, with a note in the memo line designating it for the English Department.

Contributions are also accepted online at: http://www.umt.edu/UMF/.

For more information about making a gift (with no obligation to do so), please contact Kelley Willett of the UM Foundation at Kelley.Willett@mso.umt.edu or (800) 443-2593, (406) 243-2646.