

WORDHORD

Spring 2015

Northwestern College
English Department Newsletter

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Living Life Fully in Laramie, Wyoming

by Professor Kim Van Es

**Northwestern English graduates live all over the world,
but how likely is it that one will land in Laramie, Wyoming?
Isn't that residence rather random?
Maybe not.**

David Bray (NW '07) came to Northwestern College from Colorado. He didn't plan to major in English, but in Dr. Lundberg's College Writing class, he got lost in his paper on wilderness therapy camps. He was surprised to find himself in what seemed like an ethical dilemma: his research findings were contradictory on the value of these camps, so what position was he supposed to take?

Bray's lover-of-the-outdoors professor guided him through. Dr. Lundberg helped him understand that an argument can be complex: a writer does not have to be polarizing to present a compelling thesis. This type of critical thinking was attractive to Bray, so he signed up as an English Teaching major.

So, eight years after graduation, where did the trail take him? Well, the horse brought him to Laramie, Wyoming, home to rodeos and also Dr. Lundberg's alma mater, the University of Wyoming, the only four-year institution of higher learning in the state.

In 2013, Bray earned a master's degree in English at the U of W, then was hired that very summer to coordinate the university's Synergy Seminars. Synergy is a first-year learning community for students who are academically at risk. He is also a lecturer in the English Department, teaching courses such as Introduction to Literature and Technical Writing.

Bray also uses his love of words to link with his other love: athletics. He is a live-coverage commentator for the popular wrestling website, Flo Wrestling. Bray dons a headset and gives color commentary for duals at the University of Wyoming. When he started as a volunteer in 2011, this company was a small upstart. Now with over 100 employees, FloWrestling is tripping over its own success, and Bray has been along for the ride.

Journeying through life with Bray is his wife Brittany (Osborn, NWC '09), a member of Northwestern's first graduating class of nurses. She is a labor and delivery nurse at Iverson Memorial Hospital. The Brays are expecting their second child in the near future. Their Laramie location is conveniently located within driving distance of grandparents in Colorado and South Dakota.

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At right, David Bray in Dallas, TX where he presented at a First Year Experience conference.



SPECIAL TOPICS - FALL 2015

ENG 380.01 WRITING FANTASY

DR. SAM MARTIN TUESDAY/THURSDAY 9:25 AM 1ST HALF

Reading & Writing Fantasy is a junior-level, fiction writing workshop designed for aspiring authors interested in creating far-fetched tales of sprightly seriousness. Though fantasy literature is often criticized as being escapist and unconcerned with real life, we will work from the premise that good fantasy stories always return us to our own worlds with fresh insight into the weirdness and wonder of human nature. We will begin by discussing the art of writerly wizardry: the elements of craft and technique needed to create convincing worlds and conjure believable characters. And we will spend the rest of our time work-shopping our own stories

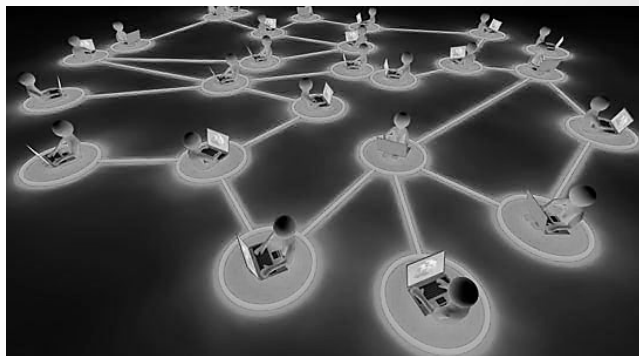


and discussing classic and contemporary fairy-stories, from Norse Myths to J.R.R. Tolkien, Ursula K. Le Guin to Neil Gaiman. A final portfolio, the presentation of a critical reading of at least one author, and participation in peer critiques and group work will form the basis for evaluation. Please keep in mind that this course is for writers who are not content with the comfy cottages of safe storytelling; our goal is to pass through imagination's dark wood in search of stories that illuminate what it means to be human. There's no telling what we'll find.

ENG 380.02 The Art of Blog-Writing

Dr. Sam Martin Tuesday/Thursday 9:25 am 2nd Half

The Art of Blog-Writing is a two-credit, junior-level writing workshop designed for writers interested in the world of online writing, reviewing, and commentary. Anybody can write a blog, but there's an art to writing an intelligent, culturally-relevant blog that brings other online writers' opinions into conversation with your own ideas and insights. And there's an art to promoting your blog and connecting with your readers. In this workshop we'll learn about and practice the art of



such blogging: 1) choosing a topic you're interested in, 2) reading writers working on that topic as well as relevant online interviews, features, and research, and 3) writing a series of posts on your own personally-designed blog that introduce, organize, and add to that online conversation: giving us your version of the story. The skills honed in this workshop will prepare you to be a smart and edgy online writer: an informed cultural critic of stories that matter today.

Ice Skating Anyone?

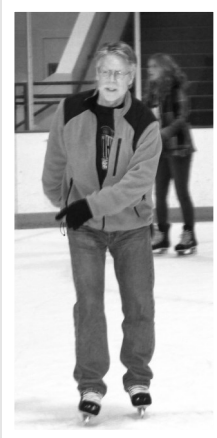
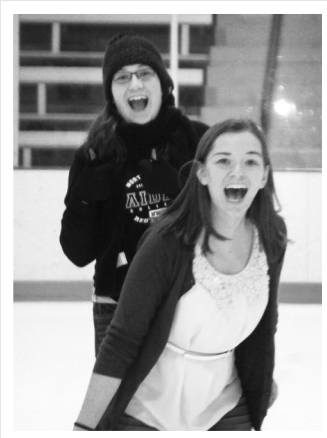


Poem on Ice

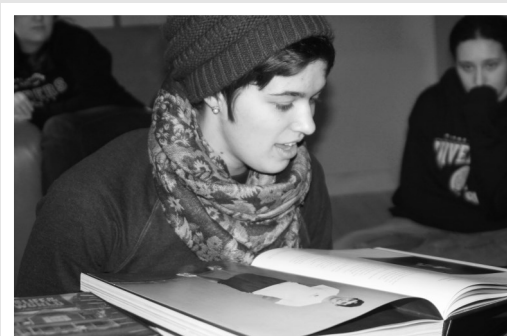
I carve in cursive with my feet
looping letters 'round the rink.
My blades shape lines of poetry
all by themselves. I do not think
of how to rhyme or what to say.
I let my ice skates write today.

© Amy LV

On Friday, January 9th the Friends of English drove over the Great Sioux Divide to the All Seasons Center in Sioux Center for a slippery evening followed by hot chocolate at Prof. Van Es's home.



Students and professors alike enjoy a fun evening on the ice followed by warm conversations in a cozy home.



Writing Boldly by Erin Brassler

For many writers, being publicly recognized through publishing is their dream. For four Northwestern students, that dream is no longer fantasy, but reality.

Every fall, English professor Dr. Sam Martin teaches Introduction to Narrative and Verse. Martin assigns creative fiction and non-fiction poems and short stories, all of which are workshopped and critiqued by classmates and Dr. Martin. Toward the end of the semester, Dr. Martin encouraged his students to consider submitting their best pieces to Valparaiso University's literary journal, *A Common Thread*, whose fall issue took on a quite emotional theme - "Scars."



1 Sophomore English Teaching Major Nicole Montgomery was intrigued by the idea of submitting some of her poems from Martin's class: "I didn't expect anything of it, but I entered anyway because it seemed like a fun opportunity for others to see my work and see how other people outside our school would respond to the poems." Much to her surprise, two of Montgomery's poems, "Seeking Lifelines" and "On Heartache and Hands," made their way into the journal. After finding out that her pieces had been published in "A Common Thread," she "[ran] up and down the hall of [her] dorm screaming for excitement and calling [her] parents in tears."

2 Sophomore Literature and Writing & Rhetoric Major Victoria Horn also had two of her poems published in the journal. When Horn found out about the opportunity to submit her pieces, she couldn't ignore the irony: "Serendipitously, it just so happened that the focus of the journal - scars - encompassed the exact themes of the poetry I had written for the semester." Horn's two poems, "Touchstone" and "Exhale," reflected some impactful recent experiences in her life, experiences that she couldn't help but put into physical words. "Exhale," especially, captivates the journal's theme with chilling detail:

*I feel the bumpy memories there
I see the shiny, white scar
and the puckered skin rising up
against the phantom feel
of the jagged razor's edge.*

3 Senior Music and Writing & Rhetoric Major Sarah Odom responded to her desire to enter the contest by submitting a work of art that could be admired by all ages and languages: a photograph depicting a melting mailbox amidst a burning house cleverly titled, "Delivery." Apparently a picture is worth not only a thousand words, but also publication as well.

4 Justine Johnson, a junior Writing & Rhetoric Major, also found herself drawn into the "scars" theme and decided to write a non-fiction piece about her relationship with her father, titled, "Watching the Slideshow." Though Johnson's piece underwent extensive revision, as do many written works in Narrative and Verse, she was relieved and full of joy to know that her latest version was appreciated and admired enough to be published by *A Common Thread*. When asked what advice she would give to young, unrealized writers like herself, Johnson said, "Don't write for a competition. Write because you love it, because you have to write it to understand what you are thinking or feeling or experiencing. When you are proud of what you have written, then submit it to a journal or a competition."

WORD-LOVER'S WEBSITES

Have a word-lover's website to recommend?

Send your submission for Fall Wordhord to Lundberg@nwciowa.edu

William Hyndman III (FOE, Study Abroad Director)



Coming to Northwestern College after living in the Boston area there are many things I miss. One of them is the Harvard Bookstore, which thankfully has a great website: <http://www.harvard.com/>. It's not the same as browsing the shelves, but you can shop their remainders, used books and new. They also have a book-making robot, named Paige M. Gutenberg, which can print over four million titles. These are books available in the public domain as ebooks. Now you can have them printed as a real paperback book. If you are ever in the Boston area the store is a must see.

Jose Martinez (FOE, Spanish Translation/Interpretation)

Making learning fun, that is what Freerice.com does. Freerice is a non-profit website that is owned by and supports the United Nations World Food Programme. It's a simple to use website trying to help end world hunger by providing rice to hungry people for free. It includes a wide variety of multiple choice games, my favorite being the English Vocabulary game. It's a fun way not only to further your knowledge and vocabulary but has great goals attached to it. The best part is that the sponsors, who advertise on the website, do so in a very non-annoying, not-in-your-face advertising.



Erin Brassler (English Teaching)



Throughout my time as an English major at Northwestern, I use RhymeZone.com. It's a site that allows users to type in any word and see a list of all possible rhyming words, ones that can be categorized based on syllable, definition, even Shakespeare reference! In a few of my courses here, I've had to write poems and use creative titles in projects, and RhymeZone is my one-stop shop. I even use RhymeZone for the cheesy holiday and birthday cards that I give to friends and family. Who says that rhyming words are just for elementary school students?



(Continued from page 1)

So, how did this Wordhord writer catch the full scoop on this NW alum? It all started with a "Hi, Kim!" in the hallway of the First-Year Experience conference in Dallas on February 8. Not only was this familiar face attending this conference, he was presenting.

I sat in the audience as Bray led a packed room in a session titled, "First Year Spring Admits: The Neglected Population." After explaining the research he had conducted on spring admits at the University of

Wyoming, he posed excellent questions for small groups to discuss about practices at their own institutions. Then, with poise, focus, and humor, he elicited the best ideas in a final discussion. This Northwestern professor was a proud mama.

Back in Laramie, at times Bray feels spiritual oppression on a campus where religious faith is often mocked. But through his genuine personality and quality performance, Bray is able to dispel some myths about Christians and Christian higher education. He said, "I am just so pleased to be doing what I am doing"—living life fully in Laramie, Wyoming.

DEEPSONG READING SERIES

Featured in March:

Kate Brauning

The next Deepsong reading will feature Kate Brauning, Sioux Center author and this year's off-campus judge for *Spectrum*, Northwestern's student literary journal. Her young adult novel, *How We Fall* - released in November, 2014 - blends romance and mystery with an exploration of how taboos are presented and perceived in our culture. Brauning also works as an editor with Entangled Publishing in addition to editing freelance.



Thursday, March 26 - 7 pm

Location: Te Paske Gallery

Featured in April:

Dr. Samuel Martin



This Deepsong reading will present Northwestern's own Dr. Samuel Martin, English professor and winner of several writing grants as well as Fogo Island Arts' inaugural writer-residency in 2012. He will read from his novel-in-progress, *Odin's Eyes*, which centers on a character from a previously published story collection *This Ramshackle Tabernacle* (2010). He describes the novel as an examination of "the clash and melding of different worlds in a contemporary tale of self-exploration set in Newfoundland, Canada." Philosophy professor Dr. Wacome describes it as being "like Flannery O'Connor on speed."

Thursday, April 9 - 7 pm

Location: Te Paske Gallery

Spectrum

Northwestern Literary
Arts Magazine 2015

RELEASE PARTY

Reveal of Winners
Readings by the Authors

TUESDAY
APRIL 21
7 PM

TE PASKE
ART GALLERY

Senior Profiles

Amber McCoy

Writing & Rhetoric/Public Relations



Looking back through the years, I'm horrified to see freshman-me considering switching my major and leaving the English department behind. There are several reasons switching would have been a bad move for me:

- There is probably nobody on campus who appreciates my cowboy boots more than Dr. Lundberg.
- The English department is hard to find. If I had left, I'm not sure I would have rediscovered them. Instead, I cautiously explored each new home, reveling in Granberg's wooden floors, the nearness of Doorenbos to Hospers, the obscurity of Muilenberg, and sharing a building with other departments.
- There is no wrong answer in the English department. After fulfilling my math and science gen-eds, I happily returned to the world where tests consist of writing essays that make a good case, instead of having to rearticulate facts and formulas.
- English withdrawal. I experienced this my junior year. The only English class I took that year was Dr. Martin's Fantasy writing class, first half of Fall semester. My communications classes are enjoyable, but they function completely differently than English ones.
- The people of the English department are my type of people. They hide away from the rest of the world to read, write, and eat homemade cookies. But each professor is willing to step away from their private world to talk to me or go ice skating or throw birthday parties. And now that they're no longer strangers, I'm willing talk to them as well.
- The English department has helped me flourish and thrive these past four years. For that, I am thankful to all the professors and for my indecisiveness that kept me from leaving.

Senior Profiles

Tyler Farr *English Teaching*



Tyler with her fiancé Kevin

Hello! I hope everyone's spring semester is going well. My name is Tyler Farr, I am a senior English Education Major with a Special Education Endorsement graduating this spring. I can't believe that it is all almost over. College is ending here in the next few months. It is hard to believe that not only will not be signed up for some Literature classes this upcoming fall, but also will be teaching English classes in a classroom of my own. Currently, I am completing my student teaching experience in the Mile High City, or more commonly known as Denver, Colorado. I am completing my student teaching experience through our Denver Urban Semester at Cole High School, which is a low-income high need school in Downtown Denver. I am splitting my experience between Special Education and English Education.

I have loved my time with the English department, and it is hard to pick out only a few things to share with you about my experience at NWC. Mostly, I have loved little moments that made the semesters bearable. I loved having a Shakespeare Quiz Bowl under the trees outside Steggy this past spring with Dr. Kensak. I loved watching and reading interesting movies and texts with Dr. Lundberg (Black Robe, Last of the Mohicans). I loved sharing my work through Spectrum and in Narrative and Verse with Dr. Martin. I also loved spending time under the tree outside Granberg hall my Freshman year during college writing with Professor Turnwall. For those of you who never had Barbara Turnwall as a professor, you missed out. Her compassion for her students, and especially me, has really been a bright light during my experience.

As for the future, I hope that I will get hired here in the next few months to teach in an English classroom of my own. I will be getting married in the summer of 2016 and I am looking forward to spending time with my family and fiancé. It has been hard being so far away from home, as many of you well know. My fiancé, Kevin, and I are looking at different opportunities for travel and employment after we get married. Who knows, we might end up in Iowa again for a couple of years. There are many things to think about and explore as I dive into the future.

Abbie Amiotte *Writing & Rhetoric/Public Relations*



If being a Writing and Rhetoric major has taught me anything, it is how very little I actually know. My sixteen year old self would scarcely believe such an admission, but in every single one of my English classes I was consistently reminded that while I am learning a great deal, there are always more questions to be asked, more books to read, more papers to write and then rewrite.

My major, my wonderful strenuous terrifying major, has humbled me and (forgive the melodrama) crushed my soul on more than one occasion. However, it has also rebuilt me from the ground up. I have learned to ask the right questions, to think outside my own first instincts, and to explore topics that I never would have otherwise.

(Continued on page 9)

Senior Profiles

Megan Walhof

Literature

I have been extremely blessed in the past four years to be able to study what I love: Literature. As a senior, I look back with fondness on all the time that I sat in class, the hundreds of books that I had to read, and all the hours I spent meeting with professors and writing papers. And I would not trade it for anything - even a major that trains me for a specific job. As of right now, my plans after graduation consist of marrying the man of my dreams and settling down to start a new life with him. What comes with that is completely up in the air. But I know that my education here at Northwestern will benefit me no matter what job I end up in, or if I end up going to graduate school in a year or two. I will certainly always cherish my memories of Granberg Hall, especially all the time that I spent with Dr. Westerholm in his office, grading papers and contemplating life.



Megan with her fiancé Chad Kischer

Abbie Amiotte

(Continued from page 8)

From my first semester freshman year, when Prof. Westerholm assigned a paper on Creation vs. Evolution in College Writing, I knew I had to change my major to Writing. I wanted to be forced to deal with ideas that I had tried to ignore in high school. My professors certainly challenged me and asked more of my thoughts than my basic "it's what I've always been taught" response.

Richard Sowienski helped me analyze the effects of my past in Creative Nonfiction. Tom Truesdell taught me how to understand and appreciate the process of writing both in myself and in others. Sam Martin led me straight into the daunting wrestling-match of short fiction writing. Ann Lundberg showed me what it means to love my neighbor through my rhetorical skills. The English department stretched me, and I am proud of the woman I have become through this four year process. I'm grateful to all who had a hand in the process.

After graduation, I will take all of the lessons I have learned in this place and move them with me to Minneapolis, MN with my husband and adorable dog. I hope to find work related to Public Relations and copy writing before eventually pursuing some sort of master's degree and going on to work in education.

Senior Profiles

Sarah Odom

Writing & Rhetoric/Music



When I was a wee little Freshman (Ah! So long ago!), I did not think myself a writer. In fact, I did not know that I had the capability of writing anything worth reading—or, for that matter, anything remotely comprehensible. I remember sitting in a classroom in Granberg nervously, watching equally unconfident writers as myself scuttle into the little classroom to take Basic Writing (a class for those who had lower than average ACT scores). I did not know, then, how transformative that semester would be. By the end of the term, I had added a writing major and begun a passion—possibly an obsession—with writing.

I will echo what I said in a personal poetics draft for Intro to Narrative and Verse: I would still say that never really know what I am going to write about. People might talk about purpose, but purpose has never really been a primary focus for me. If your characters are good enough, developed enough, their lives will naturally have purpose. I guess my purpose is to expose the characters and worlds in my head. I think that imaginary characters deserve just as much love as real people—which might sound like I am diminishing the importance of actual, real life relationships. I'm not. I think we need to learn from imaginary characters because the ones in the real world are so stuck in their own reality that they tend to not know what is going on.

I want to write about everything. I want to share. Hardships. Joys. Simple pleasures. Loveable characters. The realistic. The fantastic. Dark stuff. Fluffy stuff. My problem isn't finding something to write about, it's about narrowing it down.

So, what does the future hold for me? I don't know. I will be moving to Portland after graduation, but I know just as much about my future as I know about my writing when I start a first draft. Right now children's books sound good, but who knows? I know one thing for sure—writing, for me, aside from exploration, is exposing truth. I want to be honest with the world and make people think about what they might be lying to themselves about. It's important expose the world for what it is, and I hope, through everything that I write, I am showing people honesty and encouraging people to be genuine and honest with each other. That is all.

Teaching as Play

at Midvale School District #433



'Miss Wiggins' stands amidst her sixth graders displaying their final projects after a unit on Tall Tales and Myths (American, Greek, and Norse).

My name is Rebecca Wiggins, but these days I am mostly addressed as “Miss Wiggins” by energetic middle school students. I graduated from Northwestern in 2012, and I am well over halfway done with my second year of teaching English in a small rural town in Southern Idaho—not far from where I grew up.

Teaching in a small school has advantages, as well as drawbacks. I am allowed to plan and design my own lessons and units--whatever I want to do, I have the freedom to pursue. However, being the only middle school English Teacher for grades 6-8 can be a challenge. I don't have the benefit of collaborating directly with people who are teaching the same content.

However, because of the size of my school (approximately 120 students in K-12), I am afforded many opportunities that I wouldn't have in a bigger district where everyone is so specialized. I am the track coach, which is a wonderful addition to being a teacher and a great way to get to know my students outside of the classroom. I was also asked to teach a P.E. “fitness” class this semester.

Being a teacher isn't an easy job, but because I love kids, literature, and writing, even the politics, bad behavior, and state standards paperwork don't hinder my passion. I plan to return to school to get a Master's in Writing. But for right now, I simply enjoy the little differences I get to make every day at Midvale School District #433.

Alumni Updates

Jonathan DeReus (W&R 2014) is taking a one-year leave from Drake Law School to train in the Marine Corps Reserve. It is quite an honor to be accepted into this program.

Kelly Burds (Literature 2013) and **Nick Rohlf** (FOE) have announced their engagement.

Kate Wallin Glidden (W&R 2013) is employed as a Sales & Marketing Coordinator at *InterSpec, Inc.* in South Portland, ME. Her work includes quoting and coordinating all revenue for software renewals, as well as writing/designing/editing marketing messages for email, print, PPC and online campaigns. She plans to begin graduate study in Counseling Psychology in the Fall.

Alumni feature | AMANDA KUEHN CARROLL '09

Amanda graduated with a major in Writing & Rhetoric and a minor in Youth Ministries.



If there is a traditional path that one follows after finishing a B.A. in writing and rhetoric, I was not able to find it. After graduating from Northwestern College (in 2009), I took part in NWC's Summer of Service program, spending August through December working with refugees and immigrants in the Midlands of England. I *intended* to begin a community newsletter, but ended up spending most of my time drinking tea, holding babies, teaching English and generally enjoying the people of Derby. During my SOS, I met Mina, an Iranian asylum-seeker, who fled her home country when she was caught by the border patrol with possession of a Bible. I was drawn to Mina and touched by her story, though it was years before I realized that our relationship was more than a chance encounter.

After several attempts to find a job teaching ESL overseas, I moved home to Nebraska, waitressed at an Indian restaurant, and worked in a HyVee bakery. I relocated to Kansas City, where I unexpectedly found myself working as a youth director, making good on the minor in youth ministry and adolescent studies that I hadn't intended to finish. While living in KC, I freelanced for an online newspaper and worked as an assistant to a National Science Foundation evaluator in conjunction with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. After two and a half years working for the church (where my favorite job was writing for the weekly newsletter), I applied for graduate school, quit my job and went to France, where I worked as an au pair outside of Paris for three months.

As a part of this long-overdue European excursion, I returned to Derby, where I spent a month interviewing Mina and other members of the international community in which I completed my SOS. I returned to the Midwest in June and reconnected with friends and family before packing my bags for a move to the San Francisco Bay Area.

I currently live in Oakland and am finishing up my Masters of Fine Arts degree in creative nonfiction writing at Saint Mary's College in Moraga. I am a contributing writer to the Lamorinda Weekly newspaper, a writing tutor at Acalanes High School in Lafayette and a freelance editor who works on annual reports, resumes, academic journals and a young adult novel. I just finished teaching a memoir-writing workshop through Lafayette Senior Services, which delighted me to no end.

This spring, I will be interning with San Francisco magazine and Diablo magazine, while working on my MFA thesis project, *Mina's Song: A Story of Faith*. Following graduation, I hope to secure a job as a journalist or content writer, though I'm never quite sure where my life is going to lead me.



To follow my writing endeavors and life experiences visit my blog: destinationsanfranciscoblog.wordpress.com