

ACADEMIC PURSUITS

Society of Akron Graduate English Scholars

Election 2012

By Marlia Fontaine-Weisse

With the upcoming presidential election taking the focus of all things political these days, I find it an appropriate time to remind graduate students that we have elections of our own to focus on. This April, SAGES will be hosting elections for our 2012-2013 Executive Officers Committee.

Up for grabs are the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary positions (detailed information on each position is forthcoming), so if you intend to carry a full time class load next academic year and are in good academic standing with the Department by maintaining at least a 3.0 GPA, you are eligible!

Want a leadership role but not sure if an Executive position is right for you? Keep in mind that chairperson elections for the Professional Development, Undergraduate Relations, and Academic Pursuits Committees will be held at the start of the fall semester. Each committee is responsible for delivering information to students in the best way they see fit, which can provide a fresh perspective every year.

If you have questions, contact us via email: sagessociety@ymail.com.



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February 2012

Academic Pursuits Committee

Chairperson

Marlia Fontaine-Weisse
Vice-President, SAGES

Members

Kevin Kelsey
Brian Harrell

February Deadlines

Rubbertop Review. Feb. 1st

<http://www.uakron.edu/english/academics/get-involved/rubbertop-review.dot>

This journal blends tradition with innovation and is looking for excellent craftsmanship in fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction. Each issue of *Rubbertop* will feature 1/4 of its content from undergraduate and graduate students at The University of Akron. The remainder of the journal will feature the very best of work by writers living in Ohio. Submissions are considered from any Ohio resident. No university affiliation is required; we solely consider the quality of writing and the passion for the craft. Please adhere to the following guidelines: 3-5 poems only, short fiction/creative nonfiction of no more than 4,000 words, paste submissions directly in email, include a brief summary of you and your work, electronic submissions only with your name and genre in the subject line to the appropriate editor—fiction.rubbertop, poetry.rubbertop, or nonfiction.rubbertop@gmail.com

Awkward Austin: Feb. 14th

<http://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/node/43803>

Jane Austen fits awkwardly into existing literary, historical and critical paradigms. Her work refuses categorization as belated entries into Enlightenment discourse, as Romantic novels, or as proto-Victorian texts. She eludes critics who would celebrate her as feminist, castigate her as conservative, or otherwise pin down her politics. Her image as 'Aunt Jane', is a mask through which uncomfortable, disruptive, sometimes downright nasty remarks, like those above, slip. Contributions are sought for a collection of essays which address Austen's awkwardnesses. For submission information, follow the above link.

Narratives Mediated: (dis)junctions 2012—Feb. 17th

<http://disjunctions2012.wordpress.com/>

Papers that explore the construction and definition of "narrative" in all its mediated and mediating forms are invited for this year's (dis)junctions conference, held at the University of California, Riverside, April 13th-14th. The word narrative is typically associated with storytelling and plot, but for this year's conference we want to understand "narrative" as any instance of producing meaning or "truth." In this regard, a piece of literary criticism, while often explicating a literary narrative, is a type of narrative in itself. Find out more at the above address.

THE FANTASTIC IN HOLOCAUST LITERATURE: Feb. 28th

<http://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/node/43847>

Abstracts of 500 words are invited for a critical anthology entitled, "The Fantastic in Holocaust Literature," to be published by McFarland & Co. in 2013. This anthology is interdisciplinary in scope and seeks to explore what literary effects will succeed in making more credible the reality of the Holocaust when the evil of it seems like a fantasy, and how these effects can help the reader comprehend its human meaning. For submission guidelines and other information, visit the above website.



"We are
what we
repeatedly
do.
Excellence,
therefore,
is not an
act but a
habit."

-Aristotle



Spotlight: Evan Chaloupka & Tabitha Martin

By Kevin Kelsey

This month, *Academic Pursuits* turns its spotlight on Evan Chaloupka and Tabitha Martin, graduate assistants working in the Law Writing Lab. Most students don't realize the Department offers these positions, so we thought it a good idea to get some insight from these two on what it's like and what they've learned along the way.

Q. What was the interview process like?

Tabitha- *The interview itself was a little intimidating (for me at least), since I interviewed with five of the LARW (legal writing and research) professors—Nothing like having 10 eyes on you to make you nervous!*

SAGES:

A student organization that focuses on helping graduate students of all tracks (Composition, Fine Arts, and Literature) in the English field develop professionally during their time at The University of Akron, by providing members with resources to help them publish, present, and prepare. SAGES also strives to promote unity among graduate students of the three tracks by creating events and providing resources that will benefit scholars regardless of their field.

Ask an officer
how to
**Become a
Member
and
JOIN TODAY!**

Evan- *My interview process was a little less intimidating than Tabitha's. I spoke with our supervisor over the phone and met in person with him and one other Legal Writing Professor.*

Q. Did you need to have any prior knowledge of legal writing or how to edit it?

Tabitha- *No, we didn't need to have any previous knowledge of legal writing, and in fact they really don't want us to; that's the big reason that the tutors are from the English department and not the law school—we aren't allowed to help the students with the "law" part of their writing, just the mechanics really. It's easier to do that without even knowing the legal part! (I do have experience copy editing and proofreading, though, which may have helped.)*

Q. Run us through a typical shift. What types of students come in, and what types of papers are you looking at? What are your duties?

Evan- *We focus on legal briefs and memos, but I've seen just about anything law students might be writing: cover letters, law review articles, personal essays, etc. Our "business" is boom and bust. You can always tell when a memo is coming do because of a sudden influx of students (Likewise, you can easily tell when dead periods in the semester are).*

Tabitha- *We also hold about four workshops during the semester. We choose the topics, how to present them—like teaching a few classes—they usually cover areas that tend to trip up a lot of the students, like commas, concision, and editing strategies. We work with the professors, as well, to find out what kinds of problems they are seeing in the students' writing.*

Q. How might this be different than working in the Bierce writing lab? Obviously you're looking at a narrow subset of student papers, but what else might be different? Are you allowed to make corrections as you see fit, or only focus on what they ask you to look at?

Tabitha- *We are really only looking at mechanics, of course, and really only a portion of the assignment. We try to get a feel for what the student is having trouble with and give them the tools to be able to see the trouble spots and work through them. By this time in their writing lives, most of them know if they tend to have trouble being concise, or with commas, or whatever. Most of the biggest problems at the beginning especially are just that they are still writing like undergraduates, for papers. Legal writing (at least how it taught here) is more concise, less wordy than we tend to be in papers for English or History, for example. Things like really complex sentences with lots of dependent clauses and "throat-clearing" phrases (like "There can be no doubt that...") are discouraged, but it's hard to see them in your own writing at first.*

Q. What have you learned from this job?

Evan- *I really have developed a deeper and understanding of discourse standards, how they function, and how the idea of universal, good, "Plain English" plays into them. I've also learned how to apply some of the ideas I was exposed to in comp classes to a unique and exciting group of students. It's been challenging, but very rewarding, to transfer some of the theory from composition to a place like the law school. It's not a stretch to see these two areas of the university on opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of resources and prestige. So it's very fun to see comp ideas translate and work well. Above all, I've learned that inadequate heating and cooling practices transcend all spheres of the University. With the help of my reliable bent paper-clip, I cool against the grain on a regular basis, subverting my oppressive A/C overlords who, at the likely urging of corporate interests, seek to make a quick, sweaty dime off of my seemingly complacent and complicit back. Please don't tell the Panopticon.*

Tabitha- *That I don't want to go to law school! Really, though, I find it interesting to see the changes that are taking place within the legal field in regards to writing. Lawyers are basically writers, and they are trying to learn not only all of the law background, but also how to write in this particular style that is the complete opposite of the stuff they read all day. It's challenging; I found it so interesting that I wrote a paper about it last semester for Grammatical Structures. The other thing that I will say about being here is that while I really enjoy it, especially as a new grad student, it was that much more difficult to figure out how to "fit in" in the English department. I still feel odd in the GA office, for example, but everyone has been really nice and helpful. It's just weird sometimes to have one foot in this world (the law library) and the other in Olin, at the opposite end of campus (we definitely get our exercise)!*

Have Something to Say?

We value student contributions and look forward to your well-written, appropriately - themed articles. To learn more about how to submit or how to become a committee member, email us at:

ua_academic_pursuits
@yahoo.com

Events

THE BIG BIG MESS READING SERIES

Friday, February 3rd, at Annabelle's Bar & Lounge from 6p-9p

THE BIG BIG MESS, a national reading series in Akron, hosts poets Adam Clay, Alissa Nutting, Michael Dumanis, John Estes, and Krysia Orłowski. Don't miss this epic event!

Professional Development Workshop: Writing an Effective Conference Proposal

Wednesday, February 15th, Rm 362 at 4p

Though the focus of this workshop is the UASIS conference held here at The University, anyone with a general interest in presenting at conferences should attend.

Winter Highlights



December BBM visiting poets



Trip to Chicago's Newberry Library



Holiday party at Bricco



January BBM visiting poets