

# Volume 26, Issue 6

## A Journal of the Plague Year Volume 6

Lifeless in appearance, sluggish  
dazed spring approaches—

They enter the new world naked,  
cold, uncertain of all  
save that they enter. All about them  
the cold, familiar wind—

Now the grass, tomorrow  
the stiff curl of wildcarrot leaf  
One by one objects are defined—  
It quickens: clarity, outline of leaf

But now the stark dignity of  
entrance—Still, the profound change  
has come upon them: rooted, they  
grip down and begin to awaken

- William Carlos Williams, "Spring and All"

Sluggish and dazed, cold and uncertain; I think we can all relate to Williams' rendering of the stark dignity of Spring. I write to remind everyone that we remain rooted in our educational mission by ritually recognizing undergraduate student achievements in English. This year our students have been particularly resilient and creative, not only in pursuing their own individual development as readers and writers but also in collectively transforming the climate and culture of the department as a whole.

But first, I want to thank Director of Undergraduate Studies **Adam Hooks** for steering our undergraduate programs through unprecedentedly choppy waters with a steady hand. Adam kept us all informed and equipped to deal with the multiple challenges posed by the pandemic, making it possible for us all to continue to teach and learn and grow together even as we stayed socially separated. But Adam couldn't have done this alone. He had the expert support of Undergraduate Advisors **Kate Torno** and **Allison Wanger**; English administrative staff **Rebecca**

**Isaacs, Hannah Sorrell, and Corey Campbell**; and faculty administrators including Honors Program Director **Kathleen Diffley**, English & Creative Writing Director **Ed Folsom**, and Chair of the Undergraduate Awards and Scholarships committee **Matt Brown**. Administration is a collective endeavor, and I am particularly proud of how well our faculty and staff have cooperated this past year to ensure that our undergraduates are informed, engaged, and supported. I would also like to thank this year's English front desk staff, who kept the ghost ship of EPB afloat on a virtually abandoned campus: kudos to **John Lyons, Samantha Mayer, and Mikey Waller**. It was always a comfort to see you holding down the fort. Thanks as well to the dedicated corps of Undergraduate Ambassadors who assist with prospective student recruitment: **Elizabeth Johnson, Kathleen Kenney, Alia Mnayer, and Mikey Waller**.

This year I want to offer special thanks to the founding members of the Change UIowa English (CUE) committee: **Autumn Diesburg, April Bannister, Shalini Jasti, Emmy Lane Palmersheim, John Lyons, Henry Oliver, Jarod Vallejo-Cheng and Spencer Owen**. A profound change is indeed upon us, and we owe it to these committed undergrads, many of whom will be leaving us this year. I want to use this space to pledge to them that we will continue to build on the groundwork they have established in making the English department a truly inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible space to read and write and teach and learn collectively and collaboratively.

Finally, some words to the Class of 2020, who are indeed entering a changed world full of uncertainties: Wherever you are, I hope that you are safe, healthy, and supported by friends and family. Although this is not the graduation you expected when you enrolled at the University of Iowa, please know that your class is one of the most memorable to have passed through the halls of EPB. We have witnessed history together and will carry that bond into the future. Together we mixed the soil into which your roots grip down and I hope we can continue to nurture and sustain you moving forward. Please remember that we will support and cherish you wherever you go and whatever you do.

And to returning English and English & Creative Writing majors: Next Year in EPB! Please have a safe and relaxing summer.

## **From the Director of Undergraduate Studies**

Although the classrooms and hallways of our beloved English-Philosophy Building have been mostly empty this year, as we accommodated ourselves as teachers, advisors, mentors, and students to online learning, the vibrancy and energy of our undergraduate majors remains undiminished; indeed, our dedicated and resilient

students are thriving, even amidst the most difficult of circumstances. We have all collectively engaged in the important work of reading, writing, and making — the very heart of humanistic inquiry to which we have all dedicated ourselves. It is a privilege and an honor to help recognize the outstanding work of our English, English & Creative Writing, and English Education majors, along with those on the Publishing Track and in the English Honors Program. My sincere thanks to all of those involved in the successes and accomplishments in this most difficult of academic years: faculty, advisors, staff, and above all our students. Reading about your work brings a welcome measure of joy and hope to us all.

### **Adam Hooks**

Director of Undergraduate Studies

## **Undergraduate Matters**

On March 25<sup>th</sup>, **Harry Stecopoulos** staged an outreach event with West High guidance counselor Paul Breitbach. The Zoom workshop featured **Ian Shank** (MFA candidate in the NWP) on the dos and don'ts of the college admissions essay. Thirty-eight Iowa City high school juniors attended Ian's wonderful presentation. The English Department will sponsor another workshop for area students in the fall.

## **Creative Writing Matters**

**Ed Folsom** writes:

The undergraduate major in English & Creative Writing celebrates another successful year of creative endeavors and community-building, made all the stronger this year by the addition to our permanent faculty of the distinguished poet **Donika Kelly** and by the work of four remarkable Provost's Visiting Writers (PVWs)—**Micky Hill** in poetry, **Caroline Froh** in literary translation, **Darius Stewart** in nonfiction, and **Matthew B. Kelley** in fiction. These four inaugurated what we hope will become an annual event—a two-part PVW Reading Series that this year drew an audience of nearly 100. Everyone, including our wonderfully talented group of TAs who taught our Foundations of Creative Writing courses, worked a lot of overtime this year as we figured out together how to best translate writing workshops into viable online experiences. We wish all the best to our graduating creative writers; may your open mindset take you far in your creative writing, and into fulfilling creative lives.

## **GEL Matters**

We all know that this year has presented vast teaching challenges, but it has also been a gold banner year for GEL instructors receiving Outstanding Teaching Assistant Awards from the Council for Teaching. I don't believe we've ever had so many TAs win the award in a single year. Several of these instructors were teaching for the very first time, meaning that they received all their orientation and training online, learned how to use entirely new technology with just days of preparation, and still delivered courses that their students routinely described as the highlight of their semester. Their success is not only a great testament to their own skill and dedication, but also to the Program Associates who helped direct the program this year – **Maria Capecchi, Mariah Spencer, Kassie Baron, Kirsten Johnson, Jon Gleason, and Ruben Cota**. We also owe a huge thanks to all the faculty and nominators who wrote letters, compiled student testimonials, and uploaded materials.

But above all, I'd like to recognize the winners of this year's OTA awards, who truly are an outstanding group even within a program that is distinguished by the skill and dedication of its teachers:

**Jeremy Lowenthal**

**John Rubio**

**Kassie Baron**

**Khaled Rajeh**

**Margaret Yapp**

**Sarah Adler**

**Tatiana Schlote-Bonne**

When you see them – and I hope you will see them and not just “see” them on Zoom before they graduate – please join me in congratulating them.

## **Honors Program Matters**

**Kathleen Diffley** writes:

Warm congratulations to this year's seniors graduating with departmental honors! Almost a third of them arranged capstone projects with faculty advisors, who were first intrigued and then outspoken in their praise. Despite virtual demands, all of these seniors filled honors seminars that have been vigorous, astute, and engaging. Thanks to them and their mentors for doing the department proud.

*Seniors Graduating with Honors in English, 2020-2021*

**Michael Borro, Hartley Christensen, Laura Flores, Molly Hill, and Megan Lilly.**

*Capstone projects:* **Maya Dasmalchi** (adv. Adam Hooks), **Rachel Poppen** (adv. Jon Wilcox), and **Nichole Shaw** (adv. Harilaos Stecopoulos).

*Seniors Graduating with Honors in English and Creative Writing, 2020-2021*

**Shelby Atkinson, Alexis Barrett, Sofia Benitez, Jenny Eikre, Sydney Ginter, Mekhia Hillgren, Emily Hott, Elizabeth Johnson, Taylor Kohn, KayLee Kuehl, John Lyons, Alia Mnayer, Nicole Pagliari, Alli Paltzer, Paige Pearson, Jordan Prochnow, Matteson Quint, Kate Struckman-Johnson, Tommy Tallman, and Mia Ugalde.**

*Capstone projects:* **Kailani Biehl** (adv. Harilaos Stecopoulos), **Julia DeValk** (adv. Louisa Hall), **Shalini Jasti** (adv. Bonnie Sunstein), **Danie Oberman** (adv. Bennett Sims), **Amanda Pendley** (adv. Marie Kruger), **Kaya Schafer** (adv. Anahita Ghazvinizadeh), and **Jacqueline Spiegel** (adv. Inara Verzemnieks).

## **English Society Matters**

Congratulations to these students for a job well done leading the English Society this year: President **John Lyons**, Treasurer **Stella Tarlin**, Publicist **Scott Magnuson**, Education Chair **Shalini Jasti**, Event Manager **Kate Struckman-Johnson**, Marketing and Outreach Co-Chairs **Evalyn Harper** and **Bruce Tanlim**, Social Media Chair **Jenny Eikre**. We're grateful for their contributions to the department's vibrant undergraduate culture!

## **ATI Honors Society Matters**

**Anne Stapleton** writes:

Despite myriad challenges in the 2020-2021 academic year, Alpha Tau Iota (ATI) officers and members have maintained their spirit of fellowship and dedication to the chapter, bringing creative ideas to fruition in a variety of ways, including on Zoom!

Sigma Tau Delta strives to promote good fellowship among members and foster all aspects of literature, language, and writing on campus and beyond. Reflecting this philosophy, officers planned the following outreach events, which were open to all undergraduates: an informational session about Sigma Tau Delta; a Zoom panel with student representatives from multiple organizations who introduced extracurricular opportunities and how students could become involved; a career

panel with **Professor Stephen Voyce** and student advisors from the Career Center to discuss topics like cover letters, graduate school applications, and resumes; a roundtable with professors who explored personal writing experiences (in collaboration with the English Society and including Professors **Blaine Greteman, Stephen Voyce**, and myself); and a discussion with **Professor Donika Kelly**, who shared her personal experiences with Sigma Tau Delta as an undergraduate and read from her newest book, *The Renunciations*. The ATI chapter also held an open-mic night and several social events. While members did not have the opportunity to attend the international Sigma Tau Delta convention in person this year, in February, Treasurer and Publicity Officer **Rachel Poppen** presented her essay entitled “The Pastoral Influences of the Educational System in William Morris’s *News from Nowhere*” at the Midwest regional conference (on Zoom). This year, ATI was also delighted to welcome twenty-two new members. Officers arranged two thoughtfully orchestrated induction ceremonies on Zoom (fall/spring) to introduce **Meghan Anderson, April Bannister, Alexis Barrett, Miah Clark, Grace Culbertson, Kali Postin, Kaya Schafer, Margaret Dalton, Alicia Edmundson, Chloe Epley, Kacie Frederick, Ting Gao, Tobias Graus, Jacob Hartman, Ella Michael, Sarah Moss, Axel Ohrvall, Dexter Provido, Stella Tarlin, Kate Struckman-Johnson, Mia Ugalde**, and **Brett Zach**. The spring induction was followed by a perennial favorite, a competitive game of Jeopardy-style literary trivia.

Seniors, the English Department is very proud of your academic accomplishments, perseverance, and hard work, and we wish you all the best as you set forth from the University of Iowa! I would like to thank our academic advisors **Kate Torno** and **Allison Wanger** (who also serves as our chapter liaison and attended chapter meetings) and the following ATI officers for the fabulous job they have done this year: **Megan Lilly** (President), **Cassidy Pekarek** (Vice President, Historian, and Secretary), **Rachel Poppen** (Treasurer and Publicist), and **Shalini Jasti** (Membership Officer and Alumni Liaison).

## **Award Matters**

The Louise P. Herring Scholarship

Established in honor of Louise P. Herring, who earned her master’s degree from the University of Iowa in 1930 and her doctorate in 1932. It recognizes excellent students with a commitment to English studies as a preparation for life.

### **Cheyenne McGuire**

Darwin T. Turner Award

Established in honor of Dr. Darwin T. Turner, chair of the African-American World Studies Program and Professor in the Department of English. The award

recognizes outstanding students of color who best combine Dr. Turner's devotion to literature and scholarship with his exemplary qualities as teacher and leader.

**Kendyl Green**

Helen K. Fairall Scholarships

For Iowa born and educated juniors or seniors with preference to students interested in literature from 1900 to the present. The English Department has nominated the following students:

**Anna Banerjee, Tucker Chorpeneing, Caitlin Fairchild, Cassidy Pekarek, Kinsey Phipps, Jacob Sammon, Tamara-Jo Schaapherder**

Ruth Gulden Holsteen and Charles Sophus Holsteen Memorial Scholarship  
Established by Jon Holsteen and Nancy Holsteen Lerner in honor of their parents, Charles Sophus and Ruth Gulden Holsteen, natives of Burlington, Iowa. Mrs. Holsteen graduated with a degree in English and this award honors students who share her commitment to excellence in the field.

**Madison Coleman, Natalie Muglia**

Helen Aicher and Kenneth Ward Nelson Scholarship

This award is for individuals who intend to teach at the high school level following completion of their studies.

**Alec Glisson**

Margaret Leuz and Fred Einspahr Scholarship

Established by John Einspahr in honor of his parents Margaret Leuz and Fred Einspahr. Margaret graduated from Iowa in 1912 with high honors in English, and this award recognizes excellent students who plan to pursue a career in teaching.

**Noreasa Higgins, Ethan Seylar**

The Scott A. Anderson Memorial Scholarship

Scott Anderson received his B.A. in English with highest distinction from the University of Iowa in 1984. He was an honors student, a member of Phi Beta Kappa, a winner of the Hancher-Finkbine Medallion, and, after graduation, he worked as a writer for the UI Foundation and in the television industry in New York and Los Angeles. This scholarship honors students who share his love of writing.

**Sonia Beltz, Madison Coleman, Grace Culbertson, Carmela Furio, Natalie Muglia, Samantha Murray, Axel Ohrvall, Cassidy Pekarek, Katelyn Peters, Kinsey Phipps, Mishma Stefni Nixon**

Sherry Simmons Loring Memorial Scholarship

Established by Eric Loring, in honor of his late wife, Sherry Simmons Loring, who earned her BA in English at Iowa in 1970. The award recognizes students who, like the Lorings, have demonstrated their commitment to and pleasure in the life of the mind at the University of Iowa.

**Mishma Stefni Nixon**

### Sean Wu Memorial Scholarship

This award was established by Dave Wu and Una Yang in honor of Sean Wu and is used to support a freshman English and Creative Writing major who shows promise in this area.

**Kendyl Green**

### Emily Wagner Scholarship

This award honors Emily Wagner, who received her B.A. in English from the University of Iowa in 2002. After graduating, Emily pursued her love of reading and writing by joining the Teach for America Corps, and continued her career as an inspiring English teacher, challenging and engaging middle-school students until her death in 2010. This scholarship supports an English major who shares Emily's love of literature, demonstrates academic excellence, and is a graduate of an Iowa high school.

**Grace Culbertson, Caitlin Fairchild**

### Miriam Gilbert Award for Shakespeare Studies

This award is given each year for the best essay on Shakespeare, renaissance literature, or drama and performance, in honor of Professor Gilbert, who taught Shakespeare at Iowa until 2013.

**Natalie Muglia**

### John C. McGalliard Medieval Essay Prize

This award is given each year for the best essay on a topic from medieval literature, in honor of Professor McGalliard, who taught and wrote on Anglo Saxon poetry and literature until 1975.

**Benjamin Yusen**

## **Advising Matters**

Advisors **Kate Torno** and **Allison Wanger** have continued to meet with students via zoom for the entire school year. It's given them an interesting access into student personalities and home life, which has made holistic advising possible even during these remote times. It's been interesting to see how different learning styles have adapted to online learning. Some students have had to lighten their load to just survive online classes and others have flourished in the zoom environment.

The students have been largely concerned with issues related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in the department and in the world, mental health challenges and access to reliable bandwidth for classes and meetings. They seem eager to get back to "real life" on campus in the fall. Seniors are tentatively applying for jobs and internships, many also done remotely. The job market is remarkably robust right now, particularly in areas related to marketing and social media content writing.

The Advisors have also been busy hosting prospective student events, also through zoom, and it's given access for first-generation students who could not travel to campus to be able to still interact with our faculty, current students and advisors. We expect a reasonable number of first-year students to still enter the major, even as other enrollments across campus are down.

## **Faculty Matters**

**Melissa Febos'** editorial "[What if the Pain Never Ends?](#)" was published by *The New York Times*, and her story "[I Spent My Life Consenting to Touch I Didn't Want](#)" was published by *The New York Times Magazine*. Additionally, Melissa's book *Girlhood* was published this month.

Congratulations to **Claire Fox**, who received a 2021 Regents Award for Faculty Excellence and was also appointed M.F. Carpenter Professor of English.

**Blaine Greteman's** upcoming book, *Networking Print in Shakespeare's England*, was featured by *The Key*

Reporter: <https://www.keyreporter.org/articles/2021/the-social-media-of-the-renaissance-books/>.

**Harry Stecopoulos** is this year's recipient of the John C. Gerber Undergraduate Teaching Award, given to a English faculty member who excels in undergraduate teaching. Thank you, Harry, for all you do in the service of English undergraduate programs!

Congratulations to **Garrett Stewart** for winning the Distinguished Achievement in Arts and Humanities Research Award for 2021.

## **Staff Matters**

Congratulations to **Corey Campbell**, who won the Larry Levis Postgraduate Prize in Fiction from Warren Wilson College. This \$5,000 award is meant to support the completion of a first book of fiction.

Congratulations to **Lynne Nugent** on being recognized as the [Jean Jew Women's Rights Award](#) winner this year.

## **Upcoming Matters**

The Krause Series in Contemporary Nonfiction: Q & A with Joey McGarvey, Senior Editor at Milkweed Editions - April 23, 2021 | 12:00 pm | Zoom

Faculty Meeting - May 3, 2021 | 10:30 am | Zoom

The Krause Series in Contemporary Nonfiction: Reading by NWP Director Gigi Durham - May 7, 2021 | 7:00 pm | Prairie Lights Books (Online)

NWP Graduation - May 8, 2021 | 12:00 pm | Zoom