

# ET CETERA

NEWSLETTER OF THE HOPE COLLEGE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

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## A WORD FROM THE DEPARTMENT MANAGER



Myra Kohsel

*Lubbers Hall has changed! It's deceptive—the outside still looks the same. But wait until you see the inside! This summer's renovation was an adventure for all of us who call Lubbers Hall home. Here are a few highlights:*

\* Everyone who resides in Lubbers vacated the building for the summer. Some of us just went home and didn't set foot on campus unless absolutely necessary; some found a carrel or spare room in the Library; others in

Martha Miller, and even in the new field house. But the best place to be was in Graves Hall. That building has almost as much character as Lubbers did. Old, smelly, unwieldy, comfortable, lovely. The four academic office managers shared the space once used by the Dept. of Modern & Classical Languages, and were (almost) sorry to leave.

\* I dare you to find your favorite prof—only a couple of 'em are still in the same office. The renovation seemed to be a good time for profs to upgrade their space; a little larger, down the hall, closer to the copier. Whatever the reason for change, profs were up for it. And not only did they change space physically, the designers, in their infinite

wisdom (more on this later), changed the room numbers as well. So the old English department office number, 321, is now the number for the copy/work room.

\* We're a little confused by some of the things the designers did, or didn't do. For instance—who decided to put thermostats and electrical plugs where they would be covered over by tac boards? Why did they reverse the bathrooms on the first floor? Why did they move the drinking fountains from one end of the hall to the other? Who chose gun-metal gray for shelving and filing cabinet flippers? Why does the third-floor

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## HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION

BY JONAH OGLES

In late June, I traveled to the campus of University of Massachusetts at Amherst for a writing workshop, the Juniper Summer Writing Institute. On the plane out there, I was excited. I had never been to a writing

workshop outside of the ones offered by the English department. I was fortunate enough to be in the workshop led by Dean Young, but I was nervous that I would seem young or inexperienced. There were going to be fifty other writers around. Some of them, like James Tate, had won numerous awards. I had not published anything.

When I arrived, it was raining. Hard. And I had forgotten  
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## UPCOMING EVENTS

November 13 — Arts & Humanities Colloquium with John Cox. See more information on page 4

November 14— Department Colloquium with Natalie Dykstra

November 30—VWS, Rane Arroyo

*English Course  
Descriptions are online:  
<http://www.hope.edu/academic/english/>*

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## SUMMER, CONTINUED

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Memorial, still lived. Luly, my umbrella. Great start, I told myself. The first night there was a dinner scheduled at the University Club, the oldest house in Amherst where, it was said, the Ghost of Daniel French, the sculptor of the Lincoln Memorial still lived. Luckily, Matt Baker was also at the workshop, so I knew at least one person. Looking around, I realized that I was one of the younger ones at the conference. But Matt was younger than I was. That made me feel better. The majority of the writers were older, though. Some of them were in grad school. Others had careers that they balanced with writing. Some taught writing in universities.

As I sat there, worrying myself, making small talk, Dean Young came up and sat down to have dinner with us. I found myself across the table from Dean Young talking about books we each were reading and why Sufjan Stevens is such a force in the modern music scene. Over the course of that dinner, I realized that we were all in this together. All of us at the writing conference were trying to create something artistic and genuine.

The next day the workshop began. In the mornings, we went to craft sessions, which focused on certain aspects of writing. I attended sessions on titling,

getting past writer's block, and creating the mindset of a writer. Published writers led the sessions, and they provided a lot of inspiration and insight into the writing life. After an incredible lunch, we met in our workshops. We looked at two poets' work throughout the three hours. Dean helped focus us on what the poem was aspiring to be. He placed emphasis on identifying what was done right so that we could continue to grow as poets. In the evenings, the poets and fiction writers gave readings. It provided a great opportunity to hear writers such as Grace Paley, Dara Wier, Matthew Zapruder and Srikanth Reddy read their own work.

While the workshops, sessions, and readings were inspiring, the most gratifying experience was being around other writers. It was great to hear everyone around me talking about a poem or story they were working on, or a great book they had just read. It was inspiring to see others trying to do the same thing I was. I was introduced to new writers that I had never heard of before, and picked up ideas that I am still employing in my daily writing. Even more, I spent a week with writers who worked in publishing houses and were editors, and grew to know them by name. I was amazed at how much I took in during the week that I was there. I came back to Hope with a new sense of dedication that I would not have had without the conference.

So to you, reader, I say: go to a workshop. It doesn't matter if it's in Massachusetts or in Ludington. It could be a writing group that meets here at Hope. What's most important is the sense of community. In order for any writer to stick through the hard times, we have to have support. We need to be told, "It's ok. You'll find an ending to that story." And to do that, we have to surround ourselves with a support system of other artsy/literary types who will give us that gentle push that we so often need.

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## LUBBERS HALL, CONTINUED

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women's room have only one sink, when the highest percentage of women in the building work on the third floor? Why is water pouring (again) from the ceiling in the hallway?

\* We've gotten to know the contractors and their workers quite well. As we find little glitches that need to be fixed, redone, or replaced, they come back and we greet them with smiles, and "good to see you again!" However, their smiles are becoming a little forced—

\* The clocks scattered about the building are wonderful. Some chime on the quarter, half, three-quarter, and full hours; some just click as the second hand moves. Some have pendulums, others are obviously school-room clocks. All are beautiful, and chosen by Dean Nancy Miller for each individual space. Come walk the building and see what can be done with clocks.

\* As Hope's workmen put in the final touches such as bulletin boards and art from the College's permanent collection, we're getting settled in. We're still unpacking boxes, moving things from one perfect spot to an even better spot, trying to remember what we did with that ball of string or those handouts for class. But we're happy. Mostly.

Come visit us. See what you think of our new digs.

*EX BIBLIOTHECA*  
BY JANE CURRIE, HUMANITIES LIBRARIAN

When thinking of graduate school, you likely start out by imagining the intriguing seminars, accomplished faculty, and dedicated students you'll find at the schools you're considering. Then, reality strikes. Applications, deadlines, assistantships, and, of course, the dreaded standardized test. Here's one way the library can help: LearningExpressLibrary (formerly LearnATest).

LearningExpressLibrary is an online tool that provides you with sample GRE, LSAT, MCAT, and GMAT exams. At least one sample of all of these exams is available. The sample tests are timed, making their simulations as akin to the actual exams as possible. LearningExpressLibrary provides instant scoring, explanations of the correct response to each question, and an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses you demonstrated in your sample test. The "My Account" feature saves your answers and analysis for later

reference.

To access LearningExpressLibrary, start at the library's home page (<http://www.hope.edu/lib/>). Follow the Databases for Research link to the A-Z Listing. Select LearningExpressLibrary from the alphabetized list. Follow the link to Graduate School Entrance Exams on the right side. When prompted to register, create your own user identification and password. With this step complete, you'll be able to take the practice exams and access the stored data about your progress.

As always, ask for assistance with LearningExpressLibrary, or any library resource, at the Reference Desk



Left to right: Bob Hartt, Julie Ridl, Robbi Rietberg Hartt, Olivia Stewart, Matt Nickel, Jack, Jenn, Mark Hillringhouse

*(Can anyone help us recall Jenn's last name? Email Myra at [Kohsel@hope.edu](mailto:Kohsel@hope.edu) so we can update our files. Thanks!)*

*Jack Ridl and Friends  
at the Dodge Poetry Festival*

What a joy to look out at the audience for my reading at the Dodge Poetry Festival and see these wonderful faces from Hope College! It's difficult to describe the Festival. Imagine 20,000 people who care about poetry all in the same place. And it was a delight to realize that among the 40 or so poets invited to read, ten had read at Hope College, and all remember their visit with gratitude and pleasure.



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## *Religion and Suffering in Shakespearean Tragedy*

- How does religion relate to tragedy?
- Is Christian faith compatible with tragedy?
- Are Shakespeare's tragedies Christian or secular?
- How might we understand suffering in Shakespeare's tragedies?

The Arts and Humanities Colloquium Series presents John Cox of the English Department on Monday, November 20 in AWF Center 250 at 4:00 pm. Everyone is welcome; refreshments will be served.

This Series is sponsored by the Dean for the Arts and Humanities.

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## *FRESH WATER: A REVIEW*

BY KARLY FOGELSONGER

*Water: Women Writing on the Great Lakes.* I came as a student and a writer, but also as a child of the Great Lakes hoping to hear a little piece of home. The building's narrow entrance opened into a large room: high arching ceilings, a glossy stage with a covered piano in the back left corner, chairs neatly lined in rows, and fellow writers, students, community members, and homesick souls dotted throughout the seating. In the front row, I saw the backs of the heads of twelve women, side by side. These, I presumed, were the authors who would share their lakeside anecdotes that evening.

Editor Alison Swan introduced the reading, and discussed the evolution of the project. "The first draft of this book was one hundred pages longer", Swan admitted. "I wish I could have kept every page." She added, "We received submissions from all across the country". I silently marveled in my chair. One hundred pages longer? All across the country? How much, I wondered, could be said about the Great Lakes without lapsing into redundancy? How many stories can one long strip of sand give birth to? Swan closed her enthusiastic introduction by assuring the audience, "It's going to be a wonderful night."

The reading began with Judith Minty's piece, which recounted a terrifying (and at times humorous) adventure of a family caught sailing in a sudden storm. Throughout the night, such lively danger was contrasted by Gayle Boss's quiet musings on an ideal death in "Dune top Dying", and Heather Seller's striking portrait of a quirky, auction-loving friend in "Lake Talk". It was clear that the lakes were different things to each author—a child's death to Lisa Lenzo in "Bodies of Water", unparalleled beauty to Gail Louise Siegel in "Hunting the Moon", and a mother's hazel eyes in Linda Nemec Foster's piece, "Lake Eerie as the Color of Hazel Eyes". As each woman made the long walk from her seat on the floor to the podium on the stage, I was absorbed with the sheer diversity of the stories. The lakes were merely a setting, a backdrop for all the varying phases and faces of life. None of the stories were *about* the lakes. They were about life, love, relationships, death, and beauty, and were only framed by those lucky lakes. As Sellers put it, "*Everything* happens at the lake".

After the reading, I had the opportunity to speak with Gayle Boss. We began discussing the writing method I am learning in Sellers' fiction class—a method based on the concept of "being *in* the image". I fumbled and faltered in my attempt to explain this concept, and Boss looked at me, confused. "But doesn't every author *think* they're in the image? How can they know?" The answer to her question didn't strike me until I was half-way back to Holland, when I realized: you just *know*. The wildly differing pieces that night were obviously the products of many "methods" of writing. There is no science to this art: you simply *know*—and when it works, it works. That night, it worked. Swan had delivered on her guarantee of an absolutely wonderful evening, and I left Saugatuck refreshed by *Fresh Water*.