

THE CHRONICLE



*A Newsletter for the Department of English and Foreign
Languages at Texas Southern University/Fall 2006*

First thoughts...

"If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else."

"I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by
the position that one has reached in life as by the
obstacles which he has had to overcome while trying to succeed."

Booker T. Washington

McCleary 2007 Program Set: "The Black Church Past, Present, Future"

The Department of English at Texas Southern University, Houston, TX has announced the program for its 2007 J. Marie McCleary Interdisciplinary Symposium: "The Black Church: Past, Present, Future." The symposium will run March 29-30.

The 2007 McCleary Symposium will include presentations that incorporate such various approaches as the black church as a social, cultural and political transformational edifice; literary interpretations of the church; music and song in and outside the church; architectural interpretations; the church in painting; the role of the minister and ministering; and other topics. You are encouraged to look beyond these guidelines and to challenge traditional notions. This is the Eighth Annual J. Marie McCleary Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Arts. Selected papers will also be eligible for publication in an electronic edition of the conference's proceedings.

For more information, contact Dr. Shirley Walker Moore at moore_sw@tsu.edu or 713-313-7652.

Publications Reach High Water Mark

Four Published

In SCAASI's *Griot*

Four members from the Department have had their writing published in the Fall 2006 (Vol. 25, No. 2) issue of the *Griot*, the official publication of the Southern Conference on African American Studies, Inc. (SCAASI). Dr. Betty Taylor-Thompson published a review of Anna-Lisa Cox's book *A Stronger Kinship*. Dr. Shirley Walker Moore published an essay on "Shattering the Silence in Francis E. W. Harper's Minnie's Sacrifices, Sowing and Reaping, Trial and Triumph." Three poems by Ron C. Samples are included in the publication: "Mutability," "The Question of Andy Moran," and "Poems for Common Fathers." Dr. Alexis Brooks de Vita's essay on "Murder, Suicide, and Salvation: The Fisher King as Savior in African Diaspora Myth, Folklore, and Literature" was also published in the issue of the *Griot*. Additional congratulations go out to Dr. Thompson for being named the publication's official book review editor.

"Matters of Fact"

And *Thomas Hardy*

Dr. Michael Zeitler's article "Matters of Fact: Benjamin Disraeli's *Sybil* and the Romance of Realism" was published in *EAPSU Online: A Journal of Creative and Critical Work*. Vol III Fall, 2006: 151-167. Also, his book *Representations of Culture: Thomas Hardy's Wessex and Victorian Anthropology* will soon go to press for an early 2007 printing and release.

A Cast of Writers

For the World Novel

The entire manuscript of the *Compendium of 20th Century World Novelists and Novels* has been submitted to the publisher Facts on File, Inc., by its editor Dr. Michael Sollars. The 2400-page *Compendium* contains contributions on 600 novelists and novels from around the globe. Many TSU faculty and students, in addition to the editor, contributed manuscripts to the publication: Arbolina Jennings, Charlene Evans, Donna Kimble, Iris Lancaster, Rhonda Saldivar, Keith Jardim, Alexis Brooks de Vita, Michael Zeitler,

Thorpe Butler, Rita Saylor, Haiqing Sun, Marcel Crespil, Dan Haworth, Esmeralda Lopez, Rosarito Rodriguez-Gonzales, and student scholars Cathy Clay, Neshon Jackson, and Anne Martin. Publication of the *Compendium* is expected in July 2007.

Department to Send Disaster Team to SCAASI

Courting disaster? Not really. Dr. Ron Samples has organized a panel featuring presentations on disaster literature from four Department members for the upcoming 2007 SCAASI annual conference in Baton Rouge. The general panel topic focuses on natural disaster as portrayed in literary works. Rita Saylor and Thorpe Butler will discuss flood literature; Michael Zeitler will examine *The Grapes of Wrath* as disaster literature in his paper "Uprooted: Narrative Accrual, Community and the Deep Ecology of *The Grapes of Wrath*"; and Ron Samples will speak on "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington: The Lesson of Self-Sufficiency from John Smith to Booker T. Washington."

Buffalo Soldier Receives Recognition

During the November Veterans' Day program at TSU, a special video was shown in the MLK auditorium as a tribute to the Buffalo Soldiers National Museum in Houston. The video was developed by Dr. Shirley Walker Moore, chair of the Department of English, and Captain Paul Matthews, the founder and curator of the museum. A portion of the video featured Captain Matthews receiving the Carter G. Woodson Award in Orlando, Fla., in 2006 for his work in preserving history and for his community service. Dr. Moore appeared in the video as an advocate of Matthews selection as the award recipient. The prestigious award honors the award's founder Carter G. Woodson, the person recognized as starting Negro History Week. Copies of the video, which also showcases images of the Buffalo Soldiers Museum, have been made available to TSU and the Buffalo Soldiers National Museum in Houston.

Recording Roles of African American Women In World War II

The role that African American women played in World War II is being chronicled in video by Dr. Shirley Walker Moore. Over the past four years, Dr. Moore has sought out this aging group of American soldiers in order to save their stories for posterity. Thus far, Dr. Moore has interviewed four of these women who served their country in the 1940s to show the contributions that some African American women made during one of this country's most trying periods. More than 100 hours of video tape have been amassed. Some of the women subjects worked in oversea mail rooms where they were responsible for censoring sensitive information. They guarded against soldiers in battle who might inadvertently send home sensitive war information like their next offensive destination. Dr. Moore says that the goal for the ongoing project is to amass a more complete history of the role these women played. The Library of Congress, the TSU archives, and the

Buffalo Soldier's Museum are recipients of copies of the present video record. Dr. Moore's work is in cooperation with the Library of Congress's national initiative towards a Veterans' History Project.

LIT Elects New Officers, Sets 2007 Induction

The recent meeting of the Delta Alpha Chapter of Lambda Iota Tau International Literature Honor Society was held November 15. The purpose of the meeting was to elect officers, discuss the chapter's collaboration with the monthly Minerva Symposium, and plan the upcoming initiation of new members in 2007. The official induction and presentation ceremony of the Delta Alpha Chapter will be held on February 28, 2007 in the MLK Humanities Building. Newly elected officers of LIT include Neshon Jackson, president; Alexandra Diro-Brown, vice president; Deborah A. Johnson, secretary-treasurer; and Iris M. Lancaster, parliamentarian.

The purpose of LIT is to recognize and promote excellence in the study of literature in all languages. Founded at Michigan State University in 1953, LIT has approximately 50 active chapters and over 40,000 members. Members of LIT are majors and minors in literature, regardless of what language that the literature may be written in.

Students Take the Podium At Monthly Minerva Lit Association

The Department's most recent regular Monthly Seminar for Fall 2006 was held November 29. The topic for the program looked at "The Victorian Nightmare: Unconscious References to the Atlantic Slave Trade in Classic Victorian Literature." Presenters included English majors Johnnea Armstead, Natalie Baker, Debra Johnson, and Toni Walker. This program, chaired by Dr. Ronald Samples and hosted by the Minerva Literary Association and Lambda Iota Tau, was the first Monthly Seminar filled by student presentations.

Expansion of Popular Monthly Seminar Program

The long familiar lecture program known as The Monthly Seminar in the Department of English has prompted the establishment of a similar Monthly Seminar for the College of Liberal Arts and Behavioral Sciences. The new lecture program features a speaker from a different department each month. The first two programs during the Fall 2006 program featured speakers from the Sociology and Foreign Languages departments.

At the October 5 session, Dr. Earl Wright II of the Sociology Department presented his paper on "Am I My Brother's Keeper?: W. E. B. DuBois and the New Talented Tenth." Later at the November 8 meeting, Dr. Haiqing Sun presented her work on "The Globalization of the Kung Fu Genre." Both programs received support from an enthusiastic gathering of scholars. Dr. Ron Samples acted as the chair and organizer of

the programs. The program was hosted by the College and Dean Merline Pitre, and was held in the conference room of the MLK building.

Seeking News And Views

Dr. Thorpe Butler, the longtime editor of the Faculty Assembly Newsletter, encourages faculty members from across the campus to submit ideas and suggestions for articles for the publication. Your issues and concerns may likely be reflective of what others are thinking.

Salute To Two Artists

Donna Kilgore-Kimble served as chairperson of the Juneteenth Celebration of the Arts, held in the Martin Luther King auditorium, and sponsored by the non-profit group The Arts Collective in Houston. Participants included local visual artists and NuRoots poet Kangsen Wakai. NuRoots is the creative writing group sponsored by the Department of English and the School of Communications.

Donna Kilgore also served as mistress of ceremonies at a Christmas salute to the artists by the Arts Collective, "Christmas with the Artists 2006," Saturday, December 2nd, at the Sunnyside Multi-Service Center. Dr. Betty Taylor-Thompson, a member of the Grace Praise Dance Ministry of Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church, also participated in this holiday celebration.

New Names Added To Graduate Faculty Status

Department faculty members newly named to Graduate Faculty Status include Alexis Brooks deVita and Michael Zeitler. These professors join current Graduate Faculty members Shirley Walker Moore, Betty Taylor-Thompson, and Michael Sollars.

Graduate Committee Appointment

Michael Sollars is serving on the Graduate Catalogue Review Committee for TSU. The committee is chaired by Dr. Fennoye Thomas and includes members Drs. Joyce Jones, Shirlette Milton, Victor Obot, and Mammo Woldie.

Faculty Present Papers At HBCU Symposium

Rita Saylors, Arbolina Jennings, Donna Kilgore, and Iris Lancaster formed a panel on Curriculum Design and Instructional Strategies in English at The Thirteenth National HBCU Faculty Development Symposium *"Leading and Learning in an Age of Accountability,"* on October 19-21, 2006, in Houston, Texas.

Iris Lancaster's topic "In the Zone with the Urban Student: Collaborative Learning inside Zone," explored the mixture of race, culture/community, and gender in the multicultural classroom. Using Mary Louise Pratt's Contact Zones and Bell Hook's Engaged Pedagogy, Lancaster came up with "Jazzy" teaching strategies based on the premise that inside the "safe house" that the contact zone produces, students learn more from each other than they will ever learn from the teacher.

Donna Kimble-Kilgore's talk on student collaboration in creative endeavors offered a five-step approach to writing, critiquing, and performing creative work. Her aim is to encourage and to develop the individual student voices in every step of the creative writing process. She described a variety of successful approaches to building both the quality of the creative work and the confidence of the writer and performer while whittling down the oversized egos. This presentation became a mini-workshop on nurturing the creative process. Many in the audience asked if they could attend Kimble-Kilgore's creative poetry writing workshops.

Arbolina Jennings' expertise in using instructional technology in online and hybrid courses aided her presentation of "E-Learning Applications in World Literature Classes" at the HBCU program. Among the practical suggestions offered were to (1) prepare materials for redundancy and predictability; (2) prepare students for e-learning; (3) insist on the immediacy and primacy of the text; (4) build community and collaboration among students; (5) present writing as process with rubrics and models; (6) and assess and correct at every juncture of the learning process. Jennings has found that using online tools, even in a hybrid class that is part online and part actual classroom environment, presents a steep learning curve for the instructor who has to re-think every aspect of a course delivery, communication, and assessment. Students, on the other hand, after minimal training take to the Internet, and Jennings reports that her students call the Blackboard presence one of the aspects that they like most about her courses.

In a final presentation on Collaborative Learning Strategies in the Humanities Classroom, Rita Saylor revealed how collaboration by faculty experts and e-learning tools through Blackboard have facilitated the development of a capstone course for English majors at TSU. Dr. Saylor discussed the process by which English faculty planned the Capstone course as a way of improving the program for majors. She also explained the way technology is used to add materials and to increase communication and collaboration. Discussion with the audience at the end of the presentation resulted in a helpful sharing of ideas for similar courses existing or planned at other schools.

Final Thoughts...

We must carry the arts to the people,
Not wait for the people to come to the arts.

---Arthur Mitchell, *founder of the Dance Theatre of Harlem*

Poetry is an orphan of silence. The words never quite equal the experience behind them. We are always at the beginning, eternal apprentices.

---Charles Simic

Adversity draws men together and produces beauty and harmony in life's relationships, just as the cold of winter produces ice-flowers on the window-panes, which vanish with the warmth.

---Soren Kierkegaard

And he said, "What is a poet? An unhappy person who conceals profound anguish in his heart but whose lips are so formed that as sighs and cries pass over them they sound like beautiful music."

---Soren Kierkegaard

The Chronicle, Newsletter for the Department of English and Foreign Languages, is published each semester. To submit information for a future issue of the *Chronicle*, please send your topics and copy to the publication's editor Dr. Michael Sollars. The *Chronicle* results from the efforts of its contributors, writers, and editors, including Shirley Walker Moore, Arbolina Jennings, Ron Samples, and Rhonda Saldivar.