

English Department Newsletter

A Message from the Chair

Welcome to the first issue of our newsletter about the exciting events going on in the English Department at Eastern Connecticut State University. We plan to publish two issues per academic year to keep in touch with our alumni, current students, community members, and friends.

Although the newsletter will be produced by the English Department under the supervision of faculty, it will be created entirely by our students. Thanks go to volunteer Akaya McElveen for all of her work designing and editing this first issue!

Besides covering events such as student conference presentations, visiting writers, and book debuts by faculty, the newsletter will spotlight news from our alumni. Please let us know about your grad school program, a new job, promotion, publication, or anything else you'd like our community to hear. Also feel free to offer suggestions for articles you'd like to see.

Lisa Rowe Fraustino

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CONTEST!!

Our newsletter needs a name! Please send your suggestions to **ENG4@easternct.edu**. The winner will receive a gift certificate to Barnes & Noble! **Deadline: Feb. 1**

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Eastern Students Participate in English Conference

By Akaya McElveen '14

Eastern Connecticut State University students participated in the 2013 CSU Undergraduate English Conference hosted by Central Connecticut State University's English Department at Central's campus on Oct. 11 in New Britain, CT. Participating in the intercollegiate conference were Renee Ann Drouin, Adam Phelps, Angela DiLella, Shelbie Greene, Amy Hietala, Arielle Rose, and Daniel Dolly. The conference was organized by Central's faculty members Aimee Pozorski and Brian Folker.

For presenters Dolly and Rose, the CSU conference was a new experience. Dolly commented, "It's really exciting; I've never been to a conference like this before." The research done by the Eastern students was thorough and precise. "I'm very proud of our Eastern presenters," said Fraustino. "Everyone was well prepared and well organized."

Drouin's presentation, "The Cooper Case of Anthropomorphism," moderated by Steve Cohen, professor of English at Central, was a part of the "Multiple Voices in Literature" panel. She discussed the use of anthropomorphism in video games as a way "to introduce children to traumatic and serious events in an easier manner."

The next panel titled "We Stand at a Crossroads: The Future of Publishing" was moderated by Dan Donaghy, Associate Professor of English at Eastern. The panelists each took a stance on the issue of digital e-books versus traditional print books. (Continued on page 8)

English Department
Newsletter

About the Writer:

Akaya is a senior majoring in English.



On Tuesday, November 12, 2013, alumna Kileen Gilroy returned to Eastern Connecticut State University for a poetry reading. Gilroy graduated from Eastern in 2010 with a B.A. in English and Secondary Education, including a minor in writing. She currently teaches English at Lincoln High School in Rhode Island while writing poems and working on mixed-media projects. While at Eastern, she was the vice-president of the English Club as *Eastern Exposure's* editor-in-chief, helping to create the literary magazine's foundations.

Gilroy discussed how the English faculty inspired her to keep writing. She insists that students take advantage of the services the English Department offers and establish a relationship with their professors. She discussed how students need to be self-motivated, as these classes and people matter even after graduation.

Spotlight on Kileen Gilroy

By Bryan Mitchell

"You're not a number here. You're a person," Gilroy said.

On writing, she told students to find their mentor; whether it is a professor, a close friend, or otherwise. These people will help to acknowledge the passions and inspirations that motivate students to write or major in English. After they graduate, Gilroy emphasizes that the bills and jobs that make up reality will never replace her experience at Eastern. Through establishing relationships with professors like Donaghy and Mama, Gilroy continues to write and submit poetry. Her published works and achievements reflect their encouragement and inspiration from the English Department.

✦ About the writer:

Bryan is a senior majoring in English.



The Effects of Racism

Racism. It is a malady that has afflicted our society for centuries, creating wounds so deep that their true extent has yet to be fully realized. In order to truly face this issue as a society, all aspects of racism, but especially its causes and effects, must be analyzed. Sadly, it is only recently that racism and its causes have begun to be looked at from a more balanced perspective. On Oct. 22 Dr. Tim Parish of Southern Connecticut State University gave a presentation in Science 104, concerning his own battle with racism. What makes Dr. Parish's struggle unique is that he had once been the perpetrator of numerous hateful activities against African Americans while living in Baton Rouge, Louisiana during the late 1960's and 1970's.

After describing the themes of his two novels, *Red Stick Men* (2001) and *The Jumpers* (2013), Dr. Parish began to discuss the central theme of his presentation: his memoir, entitled *Fear and What Follows* (2013). The memoir is a radical departure from Dr. Parish's earlier work, and describes his gradual descent into a racist ideology during his early teen years.

As may be surmised, the discussion of his hatred toward African Americans in the teenage years of his life was extremely difficult for Dr. Parish. Nonetheless, he continued with his discussion of this incredibly violent and controversial period of his life. As Dr. Parish elaborated upon what factors caused

Guest Lecture by Southern Professor Tim Parish

By Zachary Marotte '14 History Major

him to develop a racist perspective of the world, one aspect of his life in the southern United States during this period became abundantly clear: although desegregation had been achieved, racism still lingered in force.

For example, Dr. Parish mentioned the principle of "white flight," or large groups of Caucasian Americans leaving the suburbs and cities of the south to move away from the African Americans that were moving into their neighborhoods. This was primarily because Caucasian Americans at that time believed African Americans were a threat to their way of life and also would devalue their homes.

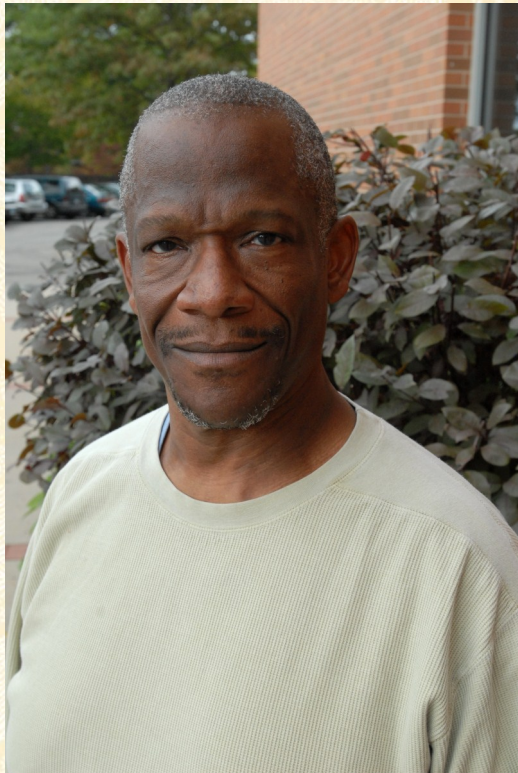
Dr. Parish's presentation illuminated the horrors of racism as it existed in the period immediately following the Civil Rights Movement, thereby showing how difficult it is for deep-rooted prejudices to be eradicated from a society, despite revolutionary changes having been achieved. Another, more troubling conclusion of Dr. Parish's presentation is the effect such a prejudicial environment can have on the developing perspective of a child. Hopefully, Dr. Parish's memoir will serve as a means of preventing a resurgence of racism in the United States in future years.

✦ About the Writer:

Zachary is a senior majoring in History.

Spotlight on Dr. Reginald Flood

By Brooke Baldwin



Dr. Reginald Flood, Associate Professor of English and the African American Studies Coordinator at ECSU, recently published *Coffle*, a book of poetry. Dr. Flood describes his book as “an attempt to negotiate between a Eurocentric tradition of English letters and the stark reality of African American language, rhythms, and music.” The book consists of anchor poems that function as interior monologues of slaves that have consistently had their voices mediated by outside influences, such as anti-slavery committees and churches. “Coffle tries to grapple with the way history shapes the big events in our lives and bleeds into our own personal histories—whether it is sharecropping, civil rights, or the end of a relationship,” said Flood. The relationship between the tension, language and subject make the poems relatable to a diverse audience.

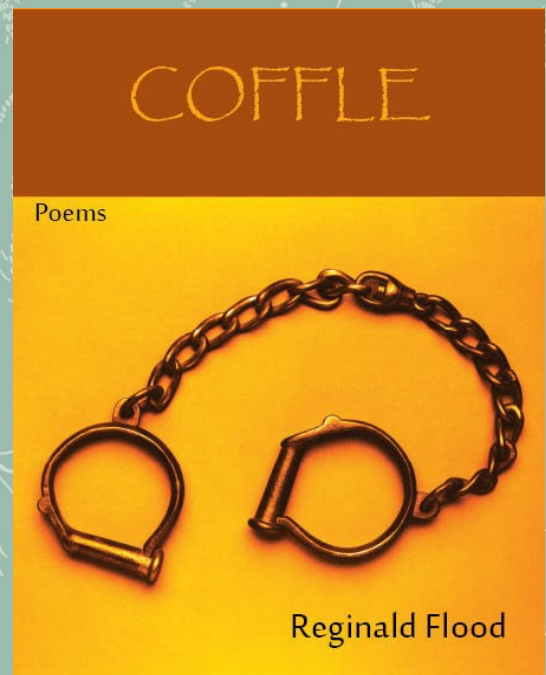
He describes his efforts in writing *Coffle* not as a deliberate writing exercise, but as “a failure to censor, a failure to conform to traditions, a failure to place any boundaries on expression in terms of diction, syntax and poetic forms.”

Flood’s poetry attempts to capture a slave’s voice without any filter or dilution.

Flood also received a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Fellowship this past semester, allowing him to extend his sabbatical through the summer and focus on writing poetry. He describes this fellowship as “the gift of the most precious resource I have: time,” as he has used it to begin research on his second book concerning slave narratives collected by interviewees during the Great Depression. “There is a feeling of validation that comes with this award - that struggling to write in a uniquely American voice - a black voice couched in traditional British forms has some value, and that has been much appreciated.”

As an accomplished author and professor, Flood’s advice to ECSU’s students and alumni aspiring to become writers is to write every day. “You are in a great place with professors that want to see you succeed,” said Flood. “Take advantage of that.”

Flood’s second book, *There’s Still War in the World*, is expected to be finished in the spring.



About the Writer

Brooke is a junior majoring in English.

Baron Wormser Speaks at Eastern

By Akaya McElveen



Poet and memoirist Baron Wormser presented “Thoreau’s Legacy” as part of Eastern’s University Hour Series on Oct. 23. He also presented a reading later that evening. Wormser spoke of the influence of Henry David Thoreau on Wormser’s life in the woods of Maine.

Wormser cited Thoreau as being the main influence in his life, having been introduced to Thoreau’s work during his high school years. Intrigued by Thoreau’s decision to live “deliberately,” Wormser was inspired to start writing poetry when he was 14 years old. He later built a home in the woods of Maine where he remained for 23 years with his family. The home was built by a humble carpenter named Caleb, assisted by Wormser and his wife. Wormser stated that Caleb offered to build the house since Wormser and his wife had no carpentry experience. Caleb never mentioned anything about being compensated for his work; he had built the home simply because he loved the trade.

Wormser began his presentation by reading a passage from his memoir, *The Road Washes Out in Spring*. In the passage, Wormser read how Thoreau would walk through the woods for hours at a time by himself, and that “mere observation employed him.” Wormser stated that “society is an experiment” and life is about what you do with your time here on Earth.

After the reading of the first passage in *The Road Washes Out in Spring*, Wormser explained how “we take a lot for granted” in life. Because of his decision to live the “simple life,” he was no longer able to take basic things such as water, heat, water and light for granted. Although Wormser no longer lives in the Maine woods, he says how “the simple life” is still a part of him.

Upcoming in the English Department

NEW! VISITING ALUMNI SERIES

We are starting a series of visits by visiting alumni who will speak about what they are doing after graduation and provide a support network for current students. Please mark your calendar for our first event.

English at Work: A Panel Discussion

Wednesday, February 26, 3:00-4:00 p.m.

Science 301

Starsheemar Byrum, Jessica Fontaine, Kileen Gilroy, and Matthew Ryan will discuss their careers after graduating from Eastern with an English major.

Fall 2013 English Night By Akaya McElveen



Eastern Connecticut State University's English Department presented English Night in the Betty R. Tipton Room on Dec. 5. The night included the Constance Campo Scholarship ceremony, the announcement of the spring 2013 first-year writing award winners, the Sigma Tau Delta induction Ceremony and senior seminar presentations. English Department Chair Lisa Fraustino hosted the event.

The evening began with the presentation of the English Major Constance Campo Scholarship awarded to Lauren C. Thomas ([See page 8](#)).

Next was the announcement of the first-year writing awards that are given to students enrolled in the first-year writing courses whose writing demonstrates innovation, creativity, splendid research or is uniquely articulated. The awards were given to Madeline Cahill for her personal writing: "I wish my father was unreasonably wealthy so I could waste his money and go to art school to become a writer" and Sarah Dube for her research writing: "Bottled Water: The Cost of Convenience."

Following the awards was the Sigma Tau Delta induction, which was led by chapter President Emily Story and Vice President Anna Sobanski. Inductees included Elizabeth Allen, Brooke Baldwin, Alexis Ballirano, Mathew Bossi, Jacob Carpenter, Brandon Choquette, Amy Cordner, Sara DeConti, Rene Drouin, Meaghan Eales, Mae Ehrnfelt, Helene Fjeldstad, Molly Gosselin, Chelsea Griffin, Michelle Hoetjes, Vanessa Jones, Jessica Link, Lauren Madison, Chelsea McNamara, Bryan Mitchell, Ashley Parker, Sean Richmond, Alexander Rogan, Meena Roy, Jessica Salkeld, Megan Sargent, Mathew Savona,

Kathryn Shpak, Renae St. John, Alexis Thoma, Jessica Wainman, Ashley Westman and Alyssa Zebrowski.

The event concluded with student presentations from Associate Professor Daniel Donaghy's senior seminar "The Harlem Renaissance," and Associate Professor Stephen Ferruci's senior seminar "The Rhetoric of the Hollywood Film." Three of Donaghy's students presented: Alexandra Karamesinis presented her paper on "Representations of Women Forsaking Motherhood in Harlem Renaissance Literature and Culture"; Katie Levis presented "'No Great Poet has ever been afraid of being himself': Using Nella Larsen's *Passing* to Examine the Double Door of Segregation and the Importance of Voice in the Harlem Renaissance"; and Sean Richmond presented "Two Doors and A Closet: Lesbian Homosexual Coding and Literary Passing in the Harlem Renaissance."

Three of Professor Ferruci's students presented: Caitlin Breen presented her paper "We Work with What We've Got: Subversion, Convention and Women's Sexuality in *The Cabin in the Woods*"; Molly Gosselin presented "'It'll Put Hair on Your Chest': The Appearance of Bipolar Masculinities in Fantasy Films from the 1980s to the 2000s"; and Eliza Kirchoff presented "From Connery to Craig: The Shifting Portrayal of Gender in the James Bond Franchise."

Following the senior seminar presentations was a Q&A session between the audience and the presenters.





Congrats Lauren

Congratulations Lauren C. Thomas!



The Constance Campo scholarship was established in memory of Constance Campo, who was a longtime member of the English Department staff. The scholarship is awarded to a non-traditional student who demonstrates excellence in their studies, and who shows sensitivity to gender issues as Campo did. The scholarship was awarded to Lauren C. Thomas. Fraustino highlighted Thomas's efforts in supporting many students on campus as well as her volunteer time outside of Eastern.

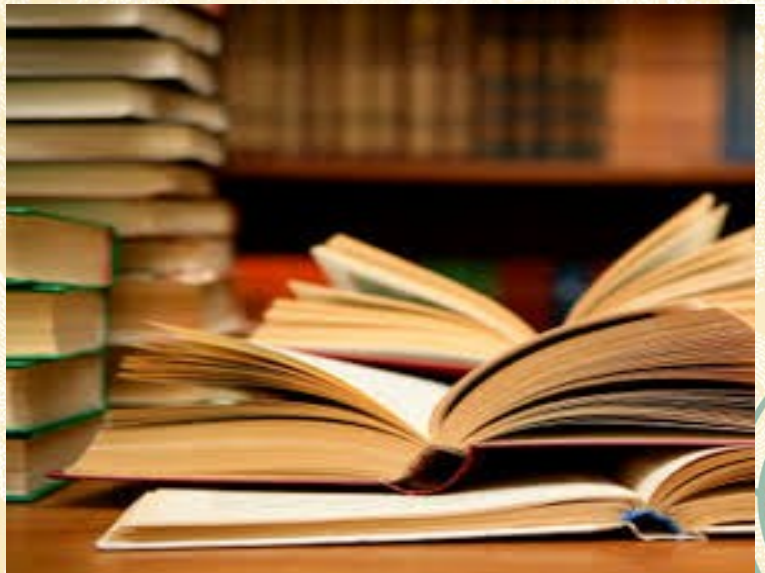
Thomas decided that she wanted to pursue a career in teaching inmates in prison and began to tutor three times a week at the Brooklyn Correctional Institution, where she had been visiting for the last six semesters. Her next step is to graduate in the spring of 2014 and attend graduate school at the University of New Haven to receive her master's degree. Thomas states that she feels "incredibly honored and grateful" to have received the scholarship.

CSU English Conference (Cont.)

Phelps' presentation titled "Some Tree-ditions Shouldn't Die" provided the pros and cons of each distribution channel and decided that "traditional books shouldn't die." DiLella's presentation was titled "To Torrent or Not to Torrent Today's Bestsellers" where she looked at piracy in literary publishing. Greene's presentation "A New Era of Publishing and Reading" provided the pros and cons of e-books and e-readers.

A panel on "Childhood and Children's Literature in the Nineteenth Century and Beyond" was moderated by Dr. Lisa Fraustino.

Hietala presented "J.M. Barrie, The Boy Who Refused to Grow Up," where she compared Barrie's Peter Pan to Barrie's own personal life, examining the perseverance of innocence. Rose's "Allusions to Wordsworth's 'Immortality Ode' in Katherine Patterson's *The Great Gilly Hopkins*" highlights the maturity and loss of innocence in the two texts. Dolly's "The Dark Side of Pan" makes a comparison between Barrie's Peter Pan and Gerald Brom's *The Child Thief*.



✦ **Writers Wanted:** The English Department Newsletter is a student-run publication in need of contributors. Anyone interested should contact department chair, Dr. Lisa Fraustino or editor Akaya McElveen at mcelveena@my.easternct.edu.