



English Matters

Working for Student Success

Summer 2016

A Word from the Chair

This summer, signs around the campus announce upcoming celebrations of the 175th anniversary of Samford University. We in English share this milestone: according to Dr. Jonathan Bass, Samford historian and professor, the university's original name was The Howard College of English and Classical Studies. English has been going strong ever since, as the contents of this newsletter illustrate. Alumni are spreading the Samford name in their graduate studies and their creative endeavors, our students are leaders of the university, and our faculty are changing lives through their teaching and scholarship. Highlights included a vibrant BACHE reading series, leadership awards, and a visiting Fulbright scholar.

Our efforts at excellence have been generously supported this past year. We are ever thankful for the many gifts that have enabled our students to study abroad and our faculty to excel in their scholarship and teaching. We thrive on interaction with alumni and friends of the department, and we hope that, if you are ever in the vicinity of Divinity North, you will stop by. We are planning for another strong 175 years of Samford English, and we want you to be a part of it!



Dr. M. Brad Busbee,

English Department Chair

Pictured at left: Dr. Brad Busbee at an English Department student reception held in North Divinity.



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We Need Your Support!

Your gift directly impacts the lives of current and future generations of Samford students! To make a donation to the English Dept.-just note it on the memo area of your check.

Alumni in Action

Caleb Zorn ('13), just received a promotion to Producer in the Video department of Time, Inc., Birmingham. He produces videos for all the major Time, Inc.

brands including *People*, *Cooking Light*, and *Southern Living*.

Destiny Soria ('12) Just published her first novel, *Iron Cast* (out October 11, 2016). She has also been collaborating with Katie Ormsbee on a web series called, *Weird Sisters*, based on Shakespeare's

witches in *Macbeth*.

Caitlin Branum ('14) completed her MA at Mississippi State University and has been accepted into the doctoral program at University of Tennessee, Knoxville where she will begin work on a Ph.D. in Medieval literature.

Christian Finn ('12) an English film studies alum from several years ago, has just been accepted into the University of Miami MFA program in motion pictures. This continues a long trend of

successful grad-school placements for English film studies graduates.

Drew Young ('13) and **Caroline Harbin** ('13) married June 18.



Drew is working in the Media department at the Foundry in Birmingham. He creates commercials for the Foundry to encourage support and donations or

to let those who seek help that they can find it at the Foundry. Young also does the internal communications and promos within the organization. Caroline Harbin has begun her job search in the Birmingham area.

Elizabeth Gardner ('14) graduated from University of Georgia with an MA in English. her thesis was titled "Narrow Vision, Short Life: The Doomed Perspective of Edna Pontellier". It was about Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*.

This fall she begins work on a PhD at Louisiana State University where her area of study will be American/southern literature.

Katie Ormsbee ('12) recently published her third novel *The Lucky Few* (Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, June 7, 2016) She is out touring for the book now. When not working on her next novel, Ormsbee is collaborating on a web series, *Weird Sisters*, with Destiny Soria.



Special thanks to the following donors for their generous gifts:

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These faithful donors continue to support the department's efforts to nurture articulate, insightful, and successful graduates. We appreciate their ongoing contributions to this cause.

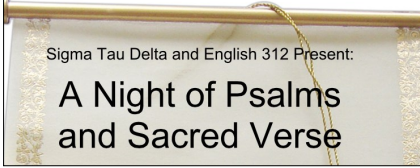
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Thank you!

Student Activities

Creative Writing and Sigma Tau Delta—together hosted an evening of shared verse. What a night! Seventy five students from across campus came out for a poetry reading. Thirteen students read and then members of the audience, inspired by the night, came up to share some of their favorite poems. Dr. Julie

Steward notes, “We had a very successful Night of Psalms, Sacred Verse. Even better than the great turnout, many former students signed up to read, and at the end of the evening, when I asked if anyone wanted to share a favorite psalm or poem that was sacred to them. Hands shot up in the air! One student, said his father is a poet and he pulled up one of his dad’s poems on his cell phone and read at the podium! The night went longer than planned as students were quite caught up in sharing favorite poems. It certainly felt like “church” to me.” Hopes are to host such an event in a larger venue with even more participation and to ignite a passion for hearing and sharing the written word. A senior from another department said, “Wow. I wish I had taken creative writing. This night was amazing, to hear everyone reading things they loved.”



BACHE

This year’s BACHE visiting writers took the campus by storm during the spring semester.

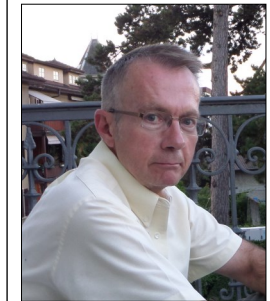


Visiting authors included **Ann Pancake** (left), winner of the 2003 Whiting Award who came in February. In March students were

treated to **Major Jackson**, (at right) an American poet, professor and author of three collections of poetry: *Holding Company* (W.W. Norton, 2010) and *Hoops* (W.W. Norton, 2006), both finalists for an NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literature-Poetry and *Leaving Saturn* (University of Georgia, 2002), winner of the 2001 Cave Canem Poetry Prize and finalist for a National Book Critics Award Circle. Multi-award-winning writer, **Donald**



Ray Pollock (left) was the final author to visit in April. Over thirty students attended his reading and found it to be interesting and challenging. Pollock read from his 2012 novel, *The Devil All the Time*. The book has gone on to win multiple international awards.



Balcony Bash Celebrates End of Spring Semester



Homemade brownies and blondies highlighted the treats at this year’s Balcony Bash, where all English majors are invited to celebrate the end of a successful semester. Perfect weather also made for enjoying the balcony this year.



Film Club Team Wins in Scramble-

Samford Film Club team, Jud Potter, Hudson Reynolds, Mack Sexton, Sarah Sullivan, and Channah Willis took the ‘Best Writing’ prize at the Birmingham Sidewalk Film Festival’s ‘Date Night Scramble’ contest held in February. This was a 48-hour film creation contest held for the Birmingham area. ***Love: A Parable of Modern Anxiety*** was the title of their film.

Other Film Club screenings this spring semester included: *The Mission*, *Suffragette*, and *The Stanford Prison Experiment*. After each of these screenings the club coordinated a panel discussion of that film. The event was well attended with an almost full house. The Film Club also held **Snapshot**, their own 48-hour film contest. Winner of that event was a team headed by Hunter Grantland.

Pictured right: Mack Sexton, Jud Potter, and Sarah Sullivan with their Best Writing Awards from the Sidewalk Film Festival’s Scramble contest.



Prickett and London Receive Leadership Awards

Laura Ann Prickett (photo below) was named winner of the James M. Sizemore Award as the student in the senior class who best demonstrates character, personality, scholarship and unselfish service to Samford. Prickett is a double major of English and Political Science from Decatur, Alabama, she served as 2015–16 president of the Samford Student Government Association.



Congratulations to Emily London (photo right) and J. D. Tyler who received the Omicron Delta Kappa Freshman Leadership Awards as the male and female students who showed exemplary character, leadership, service and scholarship during their first year at Samford. London is an English major.



Wide Angle's Dr. Geoff Wright who works with the staff to create each issue of the journal was on sabbatical this spring, so *Wide Angle* took a break. This is the perfect time to catch up on all those past issues!

To read *Wide Angle* go to — <http://www.samford.edu/arts-and-sciences/english/wide-angle/>

Bioethics Bowl Team Success

We are proud of Samford University's Ethics Bowl team which made its first-ever appearance and advanced as far as the quarterfinals at the Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl National Championship Tournament in Reston, Virginia. Four of the six members of that team (pictured left) are English majors: Bailey Bridgeman, Stone Hendrickson, Laura Ann Prickett, and Caleb Punt. In the quarterfinals, the top eight teams competed in single-elimination rounds. Samford was matched up against Whitworth University, whose team placed second last year. Samford lost a split decision by two points, making the round a



close call, according to the team mentor. This marked Samford's first time winning the Southeast Regional Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl and getting on the national stage. Placing fifth in the nation capped a successful year.

ENGLISH Award Winners

Graduate **Laura Ann Prickett** received one of the English Department's prestigious awards—the Ladell Payne Exemplary English Major Award. This honor is given to the senior English major who best exemplifies the She received the trophy from Department Chair, Dr. Brad Busbee during the Awards Banquet for the English Department.



Prickett continues her studies this fall as a student with a full-tuition & living expenses stipend and teaching assistantship to the Masters of Public Administration at the University of Georgia.

Hudson Reynolds received the Exemplary Film Studies Award for his efforts this past year as the President of the Film Club and all matters film—from cohosting panel discussions of films, to heading the Snapshot film



contest, to working on films of his own.



Callie Phelps received the Vivian Lankford Campbell Creative Writing Award for her hard work and unflagging enthusiasm in regards to all the creative writing events that occurred this

We Want To Hear From YOU!

Please let us know what you're up to. You can also send us your updated email address. Call us at (205)726-2946, write us at English@samford.edu, or just drop by.

Holm Finishes Fulbright Visit Strong

Danish Fulbright Scholar Anders Holm (pictured below) ended his year at Samford University with a June 6 lecture on the prolific and influential 18th- and 19th-century scholar Nicolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig. His presence in the English Department has been an enriching one for everyone he has come in contact with.



Holm, an accomplished scholar of culture, literature, and church and intellectual history, serves on the faculty of theology at the University of Copenhagen and coedits Grundtvig-Studier: An International Journal for the Study of Nicolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783–1872) with Samford English department chair Brad Busbee.

In his last lecture at Samford before traveling in the U.S. and returning to Denmark, Holm introduced his audience to the man who has 25,000 published pages to his credit, many times that in unpublished work, and surprising influence throughout the world.

Sean Flynt, Howard College of Arts and Sciences reports that Holm said of Grundtvig's approach "Such a way of thinking is always needed, be it at Samford or Copenhagen University or wherever we work with education," Holm said. "In the schools for life, you don't just learn specific competence such as Latin, math, organizing business or managing a new computer program. No, in these schools, the idea is that you learn to deal with the fundamental questions we meet in society and the questions we encounter throughout our lives, nothing less

than the questions that rise from our human existence."

English 302 Course Travels to UK

Following spring semester, 9 students, 2 family members, and 2 professors toured the English countryside in search of the roots of literature for many British writers. In the course ENGL 302-British Literature from 1798-present, Professors Sonya B. Davis and Kathy Flowers, covered Wordsworth to Seamus Heaney and many authors and poets in between. The travelers delighted in the gardens and gorgeous views from locations like William Wordsworth's homes of Dove Cottage and Rydal Mount in the Lake District. In addition to Westminster Abbey, Winchester and Salisbury Cathedrals, the tour also included Jane Austen's home (students pictured right in period clothing), Edinburgh castle, the Churchill War Rooms, and the British Library. Students in the class were: Emily Beroth, Annie-lura Brown, Ellie Burd, Ben Crabtree, Libby Hooper, Anne Howard, Anna Isom, Ann Kent, Ashley Priddy, and Gretchen Sexton. Guests on the trip were Georgia Burd and Alisa Priddy.





Faculty Matters

Brad Busbee was awarded the Southeastern Medieval Association 2015 Excellence in Teaching Award in October and the William E. and Wylodine F. Hull Research Fellowship in March for his project proposal “Living Wellsprings of Christian Humanist Collaborative Research.” During the course of the year, Dr. Busbee completed his second year as co-editor of *Grundtvig-Studier*, an international journal based in Copenhagen, Denmark. He also served on the editorial board for *LATCH: Literary Artifact in Theory, Culture, and History*. In October, he delivered the keynote address “Grundtvig and the Living Words of *Beowulf*” at a conference hosted by the Society for Nordic Philology at the University of Copenhagen. Later that month, he presented “An explication of the first (mostly) accurate modern essay about *Beowulf*: ‘Et Par Ord om det nys udkomne angelsaxisk Digt’ by N.F.S. Grundtvig” at the Southeastern Medieval Association Conference 2015 in Little Rock, Arkansas. Dr. Busbee published “Performative Cannibalism in Richard Coer de Lion” in *Medieval Perspectives* (Vol. 30: 195-216); a translation, “A few words about the recently published Anglo-Saxon poem, the first edition of *Beowulf*” (Et Par Ord om det nys angelsaxisk Digt), in *Grundtvig-Studier* (2015); and two book reviews, the first of *School for Life* and *Living Wellsprings* also in *Grundtvig Studier*, and the second of *Middle English Romance and the Craft of Memory* in *Choice* (April, 2016). His second co-edited book, *Approaches to Teaching the Middle English Pearl*, is scheduled to be published by the Modern Language Association late this summer. That volume will include two of his own essays: “Teaching *Pearl* in the Context of its Sources and Analogues” and “Teaching *Pearl* when Teaching Tolkien” (with John Bowers of UNLB).

Julie Steward had her ACETA paper “Contemplative Practice in the Poetry Classroom” awarded the 2016 James Woodall Award. Dr. Steward spoke about film as an invited lecturer at the University of Montevallo “Talk Back” series event. Dr. Steward also was one of four faculty members chosen by the 2016 graduating senior class to give her “last lecture” as an inspiration to this year’s graduates.

Dr. Geoff Wright served as faculty sponsor for the SU Film Club and as General Editor for *Wide Angle: A Journal of Literature and Film*. He was on sabbatical spring term working on two projects: an essay on postmodern memory in *The Yellow Birds*, which is now under review, and an essay on shame in Iraq War narratives, which is in progress. His article, “Hobbes, Locke, Darwin, and Zombies: The Postapocalyptic Politics of Survival in AMC’s *The Walking Dead*,” will appear in a forthcoming issue of *The Quarterly Review of Film and Video*.

Rosemary Fisk presented a paper “Harper Lee: An Unpublished Letter and a Professor’s Unfinished Project” at the Alabama Council of English Teachers Association at University of Alabama, in February. She also presented the paper “*The Artist of the Beautiful* and Lost Butterflies” at the Nathaniel Hawthorne Society’s conference in June 2016 in Stowe, Vermont. She is happy that the most recent Old Howard 100 bike ride drew 403 riders from across the U.S., helped donations to ‘Sowing Seeds of Hope’ exceed \$50,000 in twelve years, and concluded her role as ride organizer.

Keya Kraft presented a paper titled “The Repressive Gothic History of Thomas Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure*” at the 2016 conference of the Interdisciplinary Nineteenth-Century Studies Association (INCS) in Asheville, NC. She was a member of a panel at the most recent ACTC (Association of Core Texts and Courses) Annual Conference on “Teaching Sex & Gender in Core Texts at Samford” that was held in Atlanta, GA. Together with Jennifer Speights-Binet (Chair, Geography) she won a grant to be part of the ACTC Tradition and Innovation Summer 2016 Seminar at the University of Chicago and Columbia University in June. She also directs the BACHE Visiting Writers Series.

Steven Epley published the article, “‘But I Did Not Love Only Him’: Platonic Values in Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility*.” It appears in the book *Memory, Invention, and Delivery: Transmitting and Transforming Knowledge and Culture in Liberal Arts Education for the Future*, published by University Press of America, 2016.

Jane Hiles presented “Samson, Oliver and Error: The Problem of Discernment in John Milton’s *Samson Agonistes*” at the Hawaii International Conference on Arts & Humanities, sponsored by the University of Louisville, January 2016.

Tim Sutton published “‘Caught Happy in a World of Misery’: Art and Aristotelian Leisure in Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*” (June 2015, JMLA 47.2), he presented “Kairotic Time & Vertical Community in T. S. Eliot’s *Four Quartets*” (Midwest MLA; Columbus, OH), and he gave a public lecture in March 2016, “The Easter 1916 Uprising: From Folly to Freedom” (Naples St. Patrick’s Society, Florida)

Anders Holm (Copenhagen University, Denmark) was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to go to Samford University, spring 2016. Besides articles in Danish and various lectures in Copenhagen, Dr. Holm published “Nikolai F.S. Grundtvig (1783–1872)” in English in *Nineteenth-Century Lutheran Theologians*, Matthew L. Becker (ed.), Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015. At Samford he has given several different lectures and the lecture “The Reformation and the Welfare State” as core text enrichment lecture in March 2016. Also in March 2016, Holm gave lectures in Minneapolis and Des Moines. Dr. Holm has co-edited *Grundtvig-Studier*, an international journal based in Copenhagen. An English monograph on the Danish pastor, hymn writer, politician and educational thinker N.F.S Grundtvig is due out in 2017.

Mark Baggett gave lectures on “Alabama Authors,” as a Scholar on Alabama Literary Tour, sponsored by Alabama Department of Tourism, June 2015; These included “*Go Set a Watchman* and Harper Lee’s Legacy,” Columbiana Public Library (Shelby County) Alabama, August 2015; “Harper Lee, *Go Set a Watchman*, and Literary Legacy,” Law Librarians Association of Alabama, October 2016; “Mark Twain’s Legal Burlesques,” Faculty Colloquium,” Cumberland School of Law, November 2016.