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UA68/6 Newsletter #9

WKU English

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This newsletter is an internal publication to help keep everyone informed about activities related to English teachers and English teaching at Western Kentucky University.

SELECTED MARCH DATES
1 Ralph Ellison 1914
12 Edward Albee 1928
15 Ides
18 John Updike 1932
19 Philip Roth 1933
20 Spring
25 Flannery O'Connor 1925
26 Robert Frost 1874; Tennessee Williams 1914

ACTIVITIES

On February 26 RON ECKARD (along with Dr. Joseph Mestenhauser, University of Minnesota) directed an all-day workshop at Ohio Dominican College in Columbus, Ohio. Co-sponsored by the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs and Ohio Dominican, the workshop focused on "The Needs and Expectations of International Students."

CHARLIE GUTHRIE will speak to the Cumberland County High School Gifted and Talented Program March 10 on "Kentucky Literature."

MARY ELLEN MILLER and Alice Rowe are scheduled to present a paper (on the 055/101 course they taught last fall) at a conference of the Kentucky Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel in Louisville April 5-7.

JOE SURVANT lectured on "The Post World War II American Novel" at Cumberland County High School in Burkesville on February 10. His presentation was part of a series of lectures set up to help Cumberland County H.S. initiate a "gifted and talented" program.

BOB WARD and CHARLIE GUTHRIE will present papers at the Southeastern American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies March 4-6 in Chattanooga. Bob's paper is "Eighteenth Century Book Piracy" and Charlie's is "Thomas Johnson, Jr.: Eighteenth Century Kentucky Poet."

BOB WURSTER spoke on "Hospice of Bowling Green" to the Business and Professional Women's Club of Bowling Green at their regular monthly meeting on February 15.

WILL FRIDY, JOE GLASER, WANELLA HUDDELESTON, AND CHARMAINE MOSBY are scheduled to be on the program of the KPA meeting March 5-6 at Georgetown College. Will's topic is "Robert Penn and 'K': The Evolution of an Oral Source in the Writings of Robert Penn Warren." Joe's topic is "Marvell's 'Bermudas': Signaling Uncertainty." Wanella's topic is "From 'Summer Dust' to 'One Against Thebes': The Evolution of Caroline Gordon's Theme of Initiation." Charmaine's topic is "Guy Rivers, Clement Foster, and Edward Saxon." Also, MARGARET BRUNER and FRANCES PERDUE are scheduled to serve as chairpersons of paper-reading sessions.

Sandra McPherson was on campus the week of February 21-27. Her week of uplifting and promoting the cause of poetry included poetry readings, workshops for writers, addresses to student groups, and conferences with individual students. Her visit was sponsored by the English Department and the Kentucky Arts Commission.

Double negatives are no-no's.
Batteries behind your eyes
light my dim ways
and your green ways
refresh the dry and yellow taste
of nights once full of dreams to waste.

May I never
burn your light as mine
or borrow at the source
of your rich growing

but spend the wasted light of spendthrift sun
and drink below the spring's fresh flowing.-- M.E. Miller

SUPERLATIVES II (with apologies to Ron Eckard)
1. Most Unjustifiably Underrated and Unread Victorian Novelist: Anthony Trollope
2. Most Deserved Judgment by a Great Critic of a Great Poet: Samuel Johnson's judgment of "Lycidas"
5. Most Preciously Lingered-Over American Poet: Emily Dickinson
6. Most Overrated Medieval Lyric: "Sumer Is Yoomen In"
7. Most Verbose Novelists Who Make the Verbosity Worth It: Henry James, Charles Dickens, Joseph Conrad (see Superlatives I, Newsletter #2)
8. Most Overrated Major Grammatical Error: The Comma Splice
10. Most Overrated Elizabethan Play: Marlowe's Dr. Faustus
11. Most Justifiably Unread Novel by a Major American Novelist: Across the River and into the Trees
13. Most Deservedly Forgotten British Poet: Ernest Dowson
14. Most Deservedly Forgotten American Poet: Jones Very
15. Major Novelist Who Stands Up Best with Repeated Rereadings: Jane Austen (Ah!)
16. Novel I'd Most Like to Read Again and Haven't: War and Peace
17. Most Frequently Acknowledged Influential Novelist That Nobody Reads: Proust
19. Best Long Title of a Long Work: almost any of Dickens' novels (for example, The Personal History, Adventures, Experience, and Observation of David Copperfield the Younger of Blunderstone Rookery, Which He Never Meant To Be Published on Any Account)
20. Most Dubiously but Frequently Anthologized Short Poems by a Major Poet: Browning's "Meeting at Night" and "Parting at Morning"

--Jim Heldman
READING TREND?

Based on a survey of the best selling books in a selected number of college bookstores across the country, a recent article in The Chronicle of Higher Education (Feb. 3, 1982) concludes that college students today are "irresistibly drawn to the simple."

The article lists the top ten best sellers from 1971 to 1981. Ten years ago the best selling books were The Greening of America and Future Shock. However, in 1981 the top five (in numbers of books sold) were The Official Preppy Handbook, 101 Uses for a Dead Cat, What Color Is Your Parachute?, Garfield Gains Weight, and The Simple Solution to Rubik's Cube. -- contributed by Ron Eckard

REQUIRED READING


READING PLUGS

The greatest cure in the world for ignorance, boredom, bigotry, tunnel vision, tennis elbow, and brain shrivel: READING

Support your local brain cells: READ
There is intelligent life in the universe! It's right here on earth. Be part of it. READ

READ: SUCCEED

MARCH VOCABULARY WORDS

stickle, dudgeon, expunge, irenic, velutinous, doyen, hippophagy, tarn, ambulatory, calcify, topiary, eclectic, intaglio, lanate, trammel, thalassic, poteen, Janus-faced, matted, verdure, akimbo, mollify, jetsam, nankeen, scabrous, patina, egocentric, kedge, magniloquent, bacchant, orogeny

TWO INTERESTING QUOTATIONS

Frank Herbert: "Science fiction is the most powerful form of literature ever developed; it is subject to none of the ordinary limits."

Jerzy Kosinski: "As my fiction does not impose on the reader any easily detectable, predigested notions of 'how to' read it or react to it or judge it, it also doesn't soften the impact of the ethical collision. From its start it aims to generate rage, serenity and judgment, to evoke affirmation of the reader's unique moral stand. This is for me the supreme and supremely didactic role of literature."

PHOBIAS

A previous newsletter posed the question, "What do you fear the most?"
Here are some somewhat esoteric phobias: cereunophobia, astraphobia, ophiidiophobia, nyctophobia, acrophobia, pyrophobia, aquaphobia, ailurophobia, cynophobia, agoraphobia, and triskaidekaphobia.

next newsletter deadline: Friday, March 19
next publication: Tuesday, March 23

A special thanks to Jim Heldman for his Superlatives II. Also, thank you, Mary Ellen, for sharing your poem.

Isn't elitism more a state of mind than a quality of mind?
Although the C.B. radio craze has subsided in the United States (thank goodness!), the EFL Gazette, published in London, reports that the craze is about to catch on in England. An article titled "Trucker Talk" warns the unsuspecting British of the debilitating effects this phenomenon may have on the King's English:

To the horror of traditionalists and to the delight of connoisseurs of slang, British English is about to be injected with a vast dose of Americanisms. With CB legalised in the U.K., no self-respecting CBer could possibly go on the air without having first mastered the arcane lingo of their good buddies in the States.

To prepare the British for the inevitable, the article offers a bit of translating:

So, if your pregnant roller skate is dozing behind a tomato sandwich on the Big C when an umbrella fella puts the hammer in the tool box beside you and says 'Hey, Foxy Lady hit me with your 10-84!' don't get too alarmed. All it means is that your Volkswagen was parked behind a London bus on the North Circular Road when a road worker slowed to a stop behind you and asked forthrightly for your phone number.

All of this makes me wonder what would have happened if Paul Revere had ridden through Middlesex yelling, "The British shall arrive forthwith."

--submitted by Ron Eckard

BE A LITERARY CRITIC

From the list below, choose a literary "buzz word" from Column A, graft it onto one from Column B, add another from Column C, and you're in business. Or mix them any way you choose. Here's how:

"Mr. X's new novel is a devastatingly original tour de force."

A
devastatingly
pathetically
uniquely
morbidly
triumphantly
regrettably
richly
hopelessly
superbly
abyssmally
profoundly
uniquely
pretentiously
starkly
remarkably
wonderfully
painfully
warmly
powerfully
masterfully

B
original
rendered
major
minor
perceptive
shoddy
rewarding
vulgar
stunning
erotic
racist
feminist
arch
brilliant
clichéd
poignant
turgid
sensitive
old-fashioned
engrossing

C
tour de force
leitmotif
talent
soap opera
potboiler
satiety
characterization
achievement
symbolism
protagonist
style
failure
success
set piece
analysis
pastiche
epic
talent
sensibility
melodrama

The 1,000 most common words account for 80% of our usage. . . . and 10,000 words account for 98% of everything that is written in the English language.

Individuals who perforce are constrained to be domiciled in vitreous structures of patent frangibility should on no account employ petrous formations as projectiles.