Welcome to the 2008-2009 academic year! Last year was busy and successful for the Student Association of Graduates in English. SAGE helped the department conduct nine job candidate visits, including nine SAGE meet-and-greet open houses. We were grateful for (and exhausted by!) this opportunity to get to know so many outstanding job candidates. SAGE also initiated new community service activities this past year. Two successful projects included KanCan, a food drive to help restock local food pantries, and participation in the national Make a Difference Day effort, for which SAGE members worked hard to restore Clinton Lake walking and riding paths destroyed during the year’s strong storms and flooding.

SAGE intends to continue community outreach and service projects, facilitated by the organization’s committee for Public Relations and Sustainability.

SAGE’s bi-annual book sale was a big success in 2008. This enabled us to offer larger travel awards to SAGE members who have exhausted grad school and English Department travel funding opportunities. As a way to meet and network with graduate student colleagues in other departments, SAGE organized the first “Wescoe Mixer” evening during the spring semester. We are planning a follow-up Wescoe Mixer for the coming year.

In addition to helping with candidates, increasing community outreach, and expanding grad student professionalism support, SAGE was proud to speak for its GTA and lecturer members when the college announced preliminary plans to house our department’s teachers in an unsecured area of the Military Science Building during the ongoing Wescoe renovations. SAGE’s Resolution on GTA/Lecturer Office Space enumerated members’ concerns about security, privacy, and the perceived importance of undergraduate education in the college. As a result, the college changed its plans and assigned the department temporary office space in the library and the fourth floor of Wescoe hall, preserving teachers’ access to secure computers and files and ensuring that the department's undergraduates will be able to find their teachers during office hours. SAGE considers this a huge success for its members and looks forward to another successful year.

In 2008-2009, SAGE will continue professionalism activities such as workshops and participation in departmental hiring procedures. Also, we will function as liaisons between members and the department/administration, work to keep things running smoothly during the Wescoe displacement, and, as necessary, act to regain the GTA/Lecturer offices in summer 2009. Watch the SAGE listserv for announcements about upcoming meetings and activities, and please feel free to contact either one of us at any time.

Have a great semester,

Keri Behre and Stephanie Scurto, SAGE Co-Presidents
Welcome to our New Graduate Students!

M.A. STUDENTS

Margaux DeRoux
Juneau, Alaska
She’s here studying literature. She loves to paint and would be a famous artist and humanitarian if she could have any other job. If she were a literary character, she’d be Ferdinand the Bull because they share the same interests.

Jeremy Miller
Branson, Missouri
He’s studying 20th Century American Literature, Southern Literature, and theory. His special talent is being a slow-pitch softball pitcher. He’d be Huck Finn if he were a literary character because of his endless adventure, and if he could have any other job he’d be a National Geographic photographer.

Lisa Stockton
Lawrence via KC, MO
She’s studying Rhetoric and Composition, but if she could do anything else, she’d be a forest ranger. And her special talent is gift buying—finding the perfect gift. If she could be any literary character, she’d be Thursday Next because “fighting for jurisfiction would be my passion.”

Rob Topinka
Madison, Wisconsin
He is at KU to study books. He has an encyclopedic knowledge of Seinfeld and Northern Exposure. Plus, he’s a highly skilled player of Madden and Mario Kart. If he were a literary character, he would be Frankenstein’s monster because he “learned language by observing a family while hidden in a hovel.” He would love to teach high school English and coach football.

M.F.A. STUDENTS

Nate Barbarick
Lawrence
He’s studying creative writing, but if he could do anything else he would be a spaceman. His special talents include juggling, drumming, and whistling. If he could be any literary character, he would be Oblomov because he has a good work schedule.

Joe Miller
Kansas City, Missouri
He is studying creative writing, and his special talent is idea generating. If he could do any other job, he would be a world-class elite runner. He says he wouldn’t choose to be any literary character because, “If the book is any good, they have to suffer and be flawed, and I’ve already got plenty of both.”

Lisa Schlegel
Hays, Kansas
She is studying non-fiction writing at KU, and her special talents include painting, photography, and making jewelry. If she could be any literary character, she would be Ginny in Harry Potter. She also would love to be a Field Geologist or a Travel Writer/Photographer if she could have any job other than this one.

Lance Turner
Salina, Kansas
He is studying fiction writing, but if he could do anything else it would have to do with viruses and microbiology. Lance’s special talent is doing cartwheels, and if he could be any literary character he would be Hermione from Harry Potter because she’s smart, funny, brave, and feisty.

Daniel Rolf

PH.D. STUDENTS

Amy Ash
Las Cruces, New Mexico
She is studying Contemporary American Poetry/Poetics and Creative Writing. She is especially good at losing money at poker, and if she could have any other job, she would be an editor.

Amanda Frost
Michigan
She is studying poetry/creative writing, but if she could do anything else, she’d be an editor. Her special talent is writing.

New Graduate Students, continued...

**DaMaris Hill**  
Baltimore, Maryland  
She is studying creative writing, and her special talents are writing, teaching, and inspiring. If she could be any literary character, she would be the old gypsy in *One Hundred years of Solitude* because he knows all, is spiritually grounded, protects his friends, and spends his life traveling the world. If she could have any other job, she would be a journalist.

**Lauren Kiehna**  
Steeleville, Illinois  
She is studying 19th Century British Literature, but if she could have any other job, she would be a museum curator. Her special talent is playing handbells, and she was even featured on a CD in college. If she could be any literary character, she would be Jo March—minus the civil war and the poverty.

**Eric Hood**  
Detroit, Michigan  
He is here studying British Romanticism. His special talent is consuming unholy quantities of French toast. If he could be any literary character, he would be Byron's Corsair or Geraldine from “Christabel” for, he thinks, fairly obvious reasons.

**Adam Long**  
Arkansas  
He is here studying literature. If he could have any other job, he would be a travel writer.

**Adrian Richwell**  
Jana Tigchelaar  
Pella, Iowa  
She is studying American Literature, post 1840 to WWII, and women immigrant narratives. If she could be any literary character, she would be Laura Ingalls Wilder because she always wanted to be a frontiers woman. Her talents are that she is a personable teacher and student, and she thinks of herself as fairly creative and artistic. If she could have any other job, she would be a National Geographic photographer or a farmer.

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A Note from the Director of Grad. Studies

Welcome (back) to the English graduate program! I’m excited to serve as the new Director of Graduate Studies. But I am new to this job, so I’d like to ask for your help. First, tell me what you want and need from the program. I can’t guarantee I can produce it, but if I can, I will. And let me know how the program can be improved (especially if you’ve already found out the hard way!) Secondly, take a look at the Graduate Handbook (the PDF is at the Dept. web page). Familiarize yourself with the contents, as these are our de facto by-laws for the program. And if you feel that any of those by-laws are not being observed – or not being observed consistently – please let me (or the appropriate administrator) know. Thanks for reading this to the very end. I look forward to working with you for the next three (!) years.

- Joe Harrington, Director of Graduate Studies

“I had a great time at the Nagoya American Studies Seminar in Nagoya, Japan. This pic shows the grad. student Literature and Culture group with Prof. Rey Chow (sitting in the middle of the front row), our keynote speaker.”

-Katie Egging
This summer my wife Erin won a scholarship to study in Tianjin, China for a year. We moved all of our belongings into the barn at her parents’ place north of Topeka, at the end of August. Before leaving Lawrence, our two cats landed a gig for the year of our absence protecting two of the KU’s finest MFA students, Elliott Stevens and Robert J. Baumann, from making a slow descent into rambunctious misdemeanoring and recidivism. Our cats are good at moral instruction and we have faith that when we return, Mr. Baumann and Mr. Stevens will be much-changed, and probably resemble Mennonite ministers. While in China I am spending 50% of my time reading copious books. Norton anthologies chip away at airline weight-restrictions like nobody’s business. During our first week in China we visited six different police stations. It took me about three weeks to get my residency permit straightened out. Originally, the teaching job I acquired before leaving the states was to teach conversational English to primary school children. I am actually teaching English pronunciation and writing to three different classes of Korean High School students, as well as one class of World History, and one class of American History. This week I explained the Socratic method using hand-gestures and circumlocution. I also had to explain to ten brilliant, sensitive Korean students that YES, Henry Hudson’s crew really DID leave him behind, and he probably froze to death. In my spare time I’m also writing a series of prose poems inspired by my taxi drivers in Tianjin. I know about three words of Mandarin, so I function essentially as a mute, and carry around a notebook with characters Erin has written down for me. Also, I miss the Bourgeois Pig. I am the only Bourgeois Pig in my neighborhood in China.

-Ben Cartwright, Ph.D. candidate in poetry
Top City Poetry Reading Series

Last year, MFA candidate Dennis Etzel Jr. decided our neighbor city Topeka needed a poetry series. I asked Dennis about the series, and he shared its story.

Kari: How did you come up with the idea for a reading series in Topeka?

Dennis: After watching Kevin Rabas, a friend and poet from Emporia, play a gig with his band The Petroglyphs in Topeka, we talked about how our writing styles would complement each other. I stay away from vanity, but this idea sounded great because I like the feeling of community a good poetry reading can bring. I also thought about how the open-mic nights in Topeka dwindled away after a good ten solid years, and how Lawrence and Kansas City have wonderful readings. The Top City Poetry Readings allow a chance for people in Topeka to have a taste of poets who live in and around Topeka, in addition to the excellent readings they would need to travel out of town to attend.

Kari: Why did you choose Lola’s Café as the location for the readings?

Dennis: My wife and I hang out at Lola’s constantly. It is the one coffeehouse in Topeka that seems to evoke the sense of community. We know all of the people who work there, as well as the regulars. The owner Joe is a great guy, and he supports the Arts in many ways.

Kari: Who do you look for to read in the series?

Dennis: I’ve started by featuring a poet who has published a book and a poet who is “up-and-coming.” Sometimes I feature a group, like the KU MFA students in the first season.

Kari: Have you gotten a good response from the Topeka crowd?

Dennis: Yes! I like the response from people who have never attended a reading before. They did not know poetry could be such a personal art--and understandable! :) Joe and the baristas have commented that they have never seen the place so packed. I do have to knock on wood, though. I'm happy that poetry can have the exposure it does in Topeka. I think sevenghifive, Topeka's nightlife magazine, also helps by publishing poetry in every issue.

Kari: Where do you see the series going in the future? What are your hopes for it?

Dennis: I would like to try to get some of the big-name poets from Topeka to come back to Topeka for a reading, or whenever they are in town. Kevin Young, Ben Lerner, Eric McHenry, etc. Cyrus Console is reading this season, so I feel fortunate to have him on. I hope the series can also continue with featuring excellent poets wherever they are in their writing journey.

Poets reading this season include Joseph Harrington, Cyrus Console, Izzy Wasserstein, Carl Tillona, Brian Daldorph, Elizabeth Dodd, and Donna Potts. Check out the Top City Poetry website for dates and more info: http://topcitypoetry.blogspot.com/.

“...I like the feeling of community a good poetry reading can bring. ... The Top City Poetry Readings allow a chance for people in Topeka to have a taste of poets who live in and around Topeka.”

-Dennis Etzel Jr.

As for the Wescoe office situation...“The offices in Wescoe 4025 aren't too bad if you are not into using computers, since the computers work when they feel like it and not when you need them to.” —Daryl Lynn Dance
Thanks again to all of you who contributed to this issue of SAGE Advice! I hope you all are enjoying the semester. I can’t believe we’re already stepping into October and choosing our classes for Next SAGE Meeting
November 6, 2008
4 pm in Wescoe 1015

Creative Writers’ Readings
3 pm at Henry’s Upstairs
October 12
October 26
November 9
November 23
December 7

Stay Tuned…
Halloween Party!
Wescoe Mixer!

A Note from the Editor

Thanks again to all of you who contributed to this issue of SAGE Advice! I hope you all are enjoying the semester. I can’t believe we’re already stepping into October and choosing our classes for the spring semester. Pretty soon we’ll be traipsing up Mt. Oread in our snow boots and leaving puddles under our desks. I, for one, am not ready for knit caps and bad hair days. I am, however, looking forward to the spring issue, so if you have anything you want to include, just let me know.

Cheers!

-Kari Jackson