Employee of the Month!

Administrative Associate Senior Robin Holladay has worked at the University of Kansas for 32 years, half that time in the Department of English. On Wednesday, 25 April, her consistently cheerful and devoted service was recognized by the University as she was named Support Staff Employee of the Month for April 2012. Robin received this designation, including a cash award of $750, as a result of an enthusiastic nomination package, which included letters from supervisors, co-workers, and students, combined with a sparkling work record. The award was a complete surprise. Senior Vice Provost of Academic Affairs Sara Rosen and Human Resources Liaison Lynn George, along with a bevy of colleagues and grads, lurked in the hallway of the office suite, while Associate Chair Laura Mielke, bearing a suspicious bouquet, encouraged a puzzled Robin to step outside her office. The officials pounced, Rosen read a summary of Robin’s duties and a compilation of the praise contained in the nominating letters, and Robin declared herself grateful for and honored by the award. The summary/compilation will be published in KU Today (watch for it soon) and Robin automatically becomes a candidate for Employee of the Year. Congratulations, Robin!

Fellowships, Awards and Grants

From within and without, for research and teaching, three KU English faculty members received word of financial support over the last few weeks. Giselle Anatol has received a three-month Schomburg Center Scholar-in-Residence Fellowship that begins almost immediately to advance research for her monograph on black female vampires in the literature of the African diaspora. She will work in the archives of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, a research unit of the New York Public Library with a long and distinguished history. The scholar-in-residence program also facilitates interaction among participating scholars and provides dissemination of findings through lectures, publications, colloquia, and seminars. Doreen Fowler has earned assistance in the publication of a competed monograph, Drawing the Line: Boundary Negotiation in Faulkner, Wright, O’Connor, and Morrison. This work, scheduled for release by University of Virginia Press in early 2013, won the Hall Center for the Humanities 2012 Friends Book Publication Award that defrays up to $1500 of the publishing costs “of meritorious book manuscripts resulting from humanities research by KU faculty members.” Fowler’s book received the full award. The Friends of the Hall Center is an organization of faculty, community members, and students who support the Center’s programs. Jonathan Lamb’s grant from KU’s Institute for Digital Research in the Humanities will assist him in developing a new course in which at least 50% of the content employs digital humanities skills, methods, and tools. Not surprisingly, his course is entitled “Digital Shakespeare.” Lamb will receive a $1000 stipend. His course must be taught on the Lawrence or Edwards campus within three semesters of receiving funding. These IDRH Course Development Grants are part of an effort to generate an interdisciplinary palette of courses in digital humanities at KU. Congratulations to all three recipients!

Calendar

F 27 Reading (and illustrative performance) from Brit Wits: A History of British Rock Humor by Iain Ellis, English, 7:00 pm, The Raven Bookstore. Opening act: Brian Daldorph.

M 30 HBW Special Lecture, “Langston Hughes in China,” Luo Lianggong, English, Central China Normal University, 12:00 pm, 503 Watson Library.

T 1 Digital Humanities Seminar, “‘Grounds More Relative Than This’: Towards Semantic Computation in Digital Literary Studies,” Patrick Flor, English/Computer Science/IDRH, 3:30-5:00 pm, Hall Center Seminar Room.

Voting Department Meeting, 4:00 pm, 4019 Wescoe. Agenda: 1) Doctoral Advising proposal; 2) PhD Annual Review proposal; 3) Merit Formula Study Group proposal; 4) 105 and 205 goals; 5) Undergrad Major Study Group proposal (discussion only).

R 3 Department of English Milestones Celebration, faculty, staff, and graduate students invited. Program will recognize faculty rank advancements, departing colleagues, and graduate students who have earned advanced degrees since May 2011, 4:00 pm, North Gallery, SRL.
Annual Milestones Celebration

The Department will hold its third annual English Milestones Celebration on Thursday, 3 May, from 4:00-5:15 pm in the North Gallery of the Spencer Research Library. The event is a meeting and reception for all faculty, staff, and graduate students to honor retiring and departing colleagues, faculty members advancing in rank, and graduate students who are completing (or have recently completed) advanced degrees in English. Light refreshments and beverages will be served. There will be a brief program beginning at about 4:20 pm. Come enjoy this end-of-year tradition with colleagues and friends.

Chinese Scholar Discusses Langston Hughes

Luo Lianggong, Professor of English, Director of the Centre for English Literatures, and Vice Dean of Foreign Languages at Central China Normal University in Wuhan, China, will lecture on “Langston Hughes in China” on Monday, 30 April, at 12:00 pm in 503 Watson Library. Professor Lianggong is a 2011-2012 Fulbright Research Scholar at the University of Pennsylvania. He has published over forty articles on English poetry, African American literature, and literary translation in China and abroad. According to Lianggong, Langston Hughes may be the most widely read American poet in China. Chinese scholars embraced his leftist writings in the 1930s and Hughes continues to be admired for his combination of artistry and social engagement. Along with Hughes’ reception in China, Lianggong’s studies focus on the interplay between art and politics in Hughes’ literary works, and American literary tradition. Lianggong’s lecture was arranged by the Project on the History of Black Writing. His visit is sponsored by the Department of English, the Langston Hughes Center, and the Center for East Asian Studies.

Publications

Hardin, Richard F.

Kaminski, Megan

Presentations

Daldorph, Brian
Readings and classes, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL, 19 April.

Outka, Paul

Accepted for Publication

Atkins, G. Douglas

Dockery, Mary Stone
“No Results Were Found” (nonfiction). Arts & Letters, Spring 2013.

Fowler, Doreen

Moulton, Iris

Announcements, Notes, & News

• Paul Outka has learned from Palgrave that his book, Race and Nature from Transcendentalism to the Harlem Renaissance will be brought out in paperback next fall.

• Frank Farmer is currently serving as Chair of the MLA Division Executive Committee on Language and Society.

• On Friday, 27 April, Iain Ellis will be reading selections from – and signing copies of – his new book, Brit Wits: A History of British Rock Humor (see “Calendar”). He will also perform some illustrative Brit wit songs. Brian Daldorph will open the proceedings with some rock-related poems.

• Brian Daldorph’s readings and classes at Northern Illinois University this past week focused on his jail-related poetry, collected in his books Jail Time and Douglas County Jail Blues.

• Important! As the end of the semester approaches, the Office Staff reminds full-and part-time faculty that it is inappropriate–and unwise–to have students turn in final exams or papers to the English office. In the past, papers and examinations have been lost because they have been misplaced by students, turned in without names or names of teachers, etc, to the great inconvenience of students, faculty, and staff. During faculty, lecturer, and GTA orientation, this rule is emphasized, but it is difficult to enforce, particularly when instructions to students have already been given. This semester, please collect papers or take-home exams in class or during office hours. The staff understands that some students will turn papers in late because of illness or procrastination, and is prepared to accommodate them. Problems arise when the mailboxes are used as the depository for entire classes.
“BOB!” shouted Marta Caminero-Santangelo. But, as usual when any real crisis arises, Assistant to the Chair Bob Elliott was nowhere to be found. “LORI!” bellowed MCS. This, of course, got results. “ANTS!” shrieked the beleaguered Chair, pointing to a mass of winged insects streaming in her Jayhawk Blvd. window, partially obscuring her pristine view of Strong Hall. As you envision the ensuing carnage (“Hittin’ Whitten” forcefully wielding a royal blue flyswatter helpfully labeled “Department of English” [see below]), let’s pause to analyze this first error of Marta’s term in office.

In point of fact, Facilities and Operations informs us, the invaders are termites, more specifically “flying termite swarmers,” clearly distinguishable from “flying ant swarmers” (see Illustration A). According to <termitesgonewild.com> (look it up), termite swarmers (Termite Alates) are “young king and queen termites sent out to form new colonies.” They are all “intent on starting a new life of connubial bliss.” Marta can take some consolation in the fact that, eventually, members of the swarm will “pair off in couples,” after which “their wings will fall off” and the lovers “will create a secluded place as their first home together.” Anna Neill will be glad to know that “it will be years before they can beget enough worker termites to do any damage at all.”

The initial incursion of swarmer termites into the Chair’s office occurred on Wednesday afternoon, 25 April. A second breach in the Jayhawk Blvd. window’s defenses was observed on Thursday morning, 26 April. At press time, an eerie calm held sway, perhaps because Marta had decamped to her teaching office in the south wing. As these events unfold, English faculty members with windowed offices are asked to be on the lookout for swarms of sex-starved flying termites that may even now be attempting to penetrate your scholarly hideaway. Be alert! Are those termite wings on your windowsill? Is there a low buzz emanating from your bookshelves? The flyswatter can be found between Marta’s computer and phone. In Bob Elliott’s absence, Lori Whitten will be available to handle incoming reports of suspicious sightings and sounds. This incident follows too closely for comfort upon the honeybee assaults of Summer 2010 that caused the relocation of Lawrence Buell’s seminar on environmental criticism, but there is an upside. MCS has more context for her study of border control and illegal immigration.

Illustration A