

THE English Post

Fort Hays State University English Department Fall 2023

Sharon Wilson



Cheers to 42 years!

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The 2023 English Post editorial team, pictured from left to right: Cheryl H. Duffy, CJ Gibson, Rachel Beck, Cosmo Jarboe, Allison Hillebrand and Taygan McBurney. (Photo by Bob Duffy)

Our staff photo might imply that this year's Professional Editing class was a squirrely group, but they were, in fact, quite focused—as evidenced by the quality of this final product you're reading. Their enthusiasm, talent and respect for deadlines (yay!) made for a smooth production process, from brainstorming to interviewing to writing, designing and editing. Special recognition goes to student CJ Gibson, our design editor, whose keen eye and cheerful willingness have resulted in a quality magazine that we are proud to distribute to friends and alumni of the FHSU Department of English.

— **Cheryl H. Duffy**

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Department of English,
Fort Hays State University

Design Editor: CJ Gibson
Cover photo by Amy Richecky

Fort Hays State University is a thriving liberal and applied arts, state-assisted institution with an enrollment of more than 13,000 students. It offers bachelor's and master's degrees in many fields and provides a wide variety of cultural and intellectual resources, not only for its faculty, staff and students but for the western Kansas region and beyond. Fort Hays State occupies the southwest corner of Hays, Kansas, a city of about 20,000 people located halfway between Kansas City and Denver on Interstate 70. The city and its people make their livings from across a wide spectrum of industries — agriculture, education, light manufacturing, medical care, oil, retail and technology.

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Meghan Carafano at the Folger Shakespeare Library

by Taygan McBurney



“Walking into the main reading room is what I imagine it was like walking into the richest man in England’s banquet hall during the Elizabethan era,” Meghan Carafano says. The main reading room to which she is referring is in the Folger Shakespeare

Library, where Carafano secured a position in Washington, D.C. Carafano is a Fort Hays State University alumna who graduated in 2008 with a Bachelor of Arts in English and a minor in philosophy. After graduation, Carafano took life into her own hands and moved across the country to Washington, D.C., with dreams and inspiration driving her.

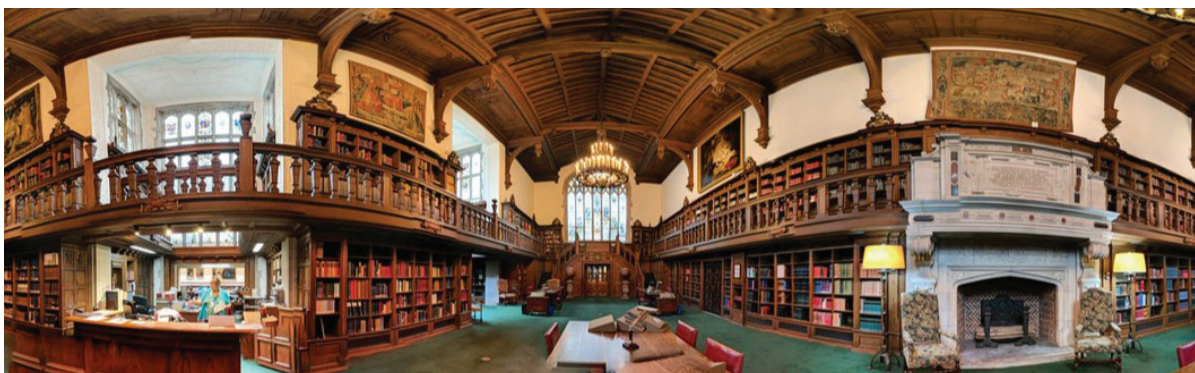
The Folger Shakespeare Library centers on the early modern period and Shakespearean literature. Carafano works full-time there as a Circulation Associate, a promotion she received in 2022. Carafano explains the many tasks for which she is responsible: “I do a lot of different tasks, which include shelving both rare and modern material (modern is 1830s-present), retrieving requested rare items from the vaults, troubleshooting tech problems when necessary, helping create and write policy for Researcher Services, identifying

items that need attention from curators or conservators, and helping our researchers with any reference questions they may have or directing them to our Reference Librarian, who is phenomenal at her job.”

Her position as a Circulation Associate was not her first at the library. In 2013, she was initially hired as a part-time page but quickly moved up in rank to a full-time Circulation Assistant in 2014.

Carafano admires the library’s historical architecture. The library was founded in 1932, and the name Folger comes from the library’s founders. “Mr. and Mrs. Folger, who are interred on-site, were passionate about Shakespeare, and it shows. Their legacy includes treasures of all types,” Carafano says. She describes the library’s captivating beauty: “The tall ceilings, stained glass windows and the (electric) chandeliers with the stunning woodwork everywhere will always astonish a newcomer because it’s the complete opposite of what you’re expecting from the outside.”

Carafano is grateful she has this opportunity to work at the Folger Shakespeare Library. She continues to be inspired by the library and its resources. The library provides her with the necessary tasks to continue her love for English. “English gives you the skills you need to do that heavy research and writing that I adore,” Carafano says.



CHATGPT

ESSAYS CAN NOW (SORT OF) WRITE THEMSELVES

Image credit: Freepik.com, Harryarts

ChatGPT is an artificial intelligence that uses a large language model (LLM) to predict responses based on the billions of words it has been trained on from across the internet.

The AI can give detailed information about obscure subjects, write lengthy essays and even tell stories.

The current version of ChatGPT was made available to the public in November of 2022 and has been a hot topic since.

Academics have raised several concerns about the budding technology, including student reliance on it and a fear of the writing field becoming automated.

With all new technology comes an air of uncertainty. When the printing press was invented, some thought it would cheapen the value of words.

In a world where all text was handwritten, and the ability to read was rare, words were reserved for the elite.

But instead of words losing their value when shared more broadly with the public, they spurred an age of enlightenment.

ChatGPT is unlikely to spur another enlightenment, but perhaps, like the printing press, it is also unlikely to cheapen words.

Dr. Eric Leuschner, chair of the English department, was quick to point out that the fears regarding AI and writing will likely die down over time. He notes that writers will adapt: “The upshot is to focus more on style, language and evaluating value thusly.”

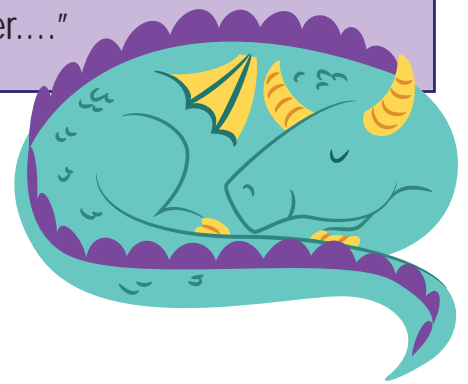
Though the scope of ChatGPT’s abilities is impressive, it is not without flaw. It maintains a strict formula that adheres to the genre of the command given to it.

For example, when given the prompt “Write a story about a dragon who lives in the clouds. He meets a unicorn, and slowly they become friends,” the program provided the response at the top of the next page. The piece lacks

“High above the world, in the clouds, there lived a dragon named Smoky. Smoky was a majestic creature, with bright green scales and piercing blue eyes. He lived a peaceful life in the clouds, spending his days basking in the sun and breathing out plumes of smoke.

One day, Smoky met a unicorn named Starlight. Starlight was unlike any creature Smoky had ever seen. She was pure white, with a mane and tail that shimmered in the light, and a horn that glowed with a soft, magical light.

At first, Smoky was wary of Starlight. He had never met a unicorn before, and he wasn't sure what to make of her. But as they spent more time together, Smoky realized that Starlight was kind and gentle, and he slowly started to open up to her....”



any sense of originality. The names of the characters are predictable, the story progression is simple, and repetitive language is peppered throughout. Most importantly, it lacks a human touch. Writing of this quality could receive poor marks from a creative writing professor.

any tool, its effectiveness depends on how it is used.

AI is not yet sophisticated enough to take over the world or the writing field. Nor is an AI takeover the goal of chatbots such as ChatGPT. Commercially, companies intend to develop them for customer service use.

that require deep critical thinking and essays that have a personal element.

“The knee-jerk reaction is to say don't use ChatGPT. I say use it as a tool.” -Dr. Eric Leuschner

Leuschner notes, “The knee-jerk reaction is to say don't use ChatGPT. I say use it as a tool.” One of Leuschner's suggestions is to use ChatGPT for a “bare-bones first draft” and to build out the rest of the piece from that point.

Dozens of tutorials online explain unique ways to use ChatGPT, from drafting a resume to strengthening headlines. But like

in the near future, ChatGPT will be hidden behind a paywall, as the company behind it states on its website.

Paid services already exist that help students act as less than academically honest. Professors currently combat such services by assigning exams

ChatGPT is currently only publicly available to test the bot and hone its skills. At some point

Rather than remain ignorant of it, faculty will apply grading practices that evolve with this new technology. In the past, adaptation has served humanity more than rejection of new technology, and it may be best to view AI and language models through the same lens.



About the Writer

Cosmo Jarboe is a hobbyist to the extreme and a neuroscience major who sews, draws, writes and sings on the side.

Writing Center directorship passes to Lisa Bell

by CJ Gibson

Dr. Lexey Bartlett, after holding the position of Writing Center director since fall 2018, is stepping aside to focus on developing the online English BA program.

Bartlett's favorite element of being the Writing Center director has been working with student staff. Those students will miss her, as well.

"What I'll miss most is that I come in here and she's here always to help with questions that come up in appointments," says Tanner Callis, an English graduate student and two-year Writing Center staff member. "She's always willing to provide tutoring guidance, but also she provides other academic or career guidance while she's in the Writing Center."

Fortunately, the Writing Center will remain in good hands when Lisa Bell takes over as director in the fall.

When Bell was a graduate student in 2014, she oversaw the Writing Center for a year. At that time, long-time director Pam Shaffer had just retired, and the Writing Center moved from the basement to the ground floor of Forsyth Library.

"It's always been my ambition to have the Writing Center all to myself," Bell jokes.

Bell has many ambitions for the Writing Center moving forward. She hopes to continue efforts to diversify the Writing Center's staff—bringing in staff from a range of majors rather than having mostly English students. She also wants to host more writing workshops, especially for graduate students.

Though Bartlett and Writing Center staff made appointments available online, visits are still lower than before the pandemic. Bell hopes to help those numbers return to previous levels by encouraging professors to promote the service.

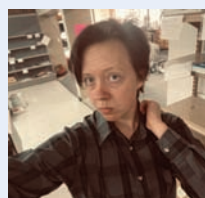
"You can just go in, and someone will help you do the thing that you hate doing. I've never understood why students are not like 'Yes, I will absolutely do that,'" Bell says.

As with refining a draft, moving forward, the Writing Center will benefit from the involvement of professors and students—and, of course, its staff.



Pictured: Dr. Lexey Bartlett (left) and Lisa Bell (right)

About the Writer



CJ Gibson is an English (Writing) and Psychology major and a trans transcendentalist. He's walking his way up from rock bottom while listening to podcasts about his passions and deciphering radical self-acceptance.

WRITING RESEARCH ACROSS BORDERS

Professor Cheryl Duffy presents at international WRAB Conference in Norway

by Allison Hillebrand

Professor Cheryl Duffy traveled to Norway on Feb. 14, where she presented research about the work of the Sustainable Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Consortium.

Held internationally every three years, the Writing Research Across Borders (WRAB) conference, hosted in 2023 by the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, welcomed participants from 56 countries.

Four years ago, on behalf of Fort Hays State University, Duffy applied to participate in a grant-funded study designed by three WAC program directors and authors of the book *Sustainable WAC: A Whole Systems Approach to Launching and Developing Writing Across the Curriculum Programs*—Michelle



Duffy enjoys an authentic Norwegian meal while abroad in Norway.



Professor Cheryl Duffy presents at the Writing Research Across Borders Conference held in Trondheim, Norway. Duffy worked alongside Writing Across the Curriculum consortium co-director Jeffrey Galin of Florida Atlantic University.

(Cox) Crow, Jeffrey Galin and Dan Melzer.

Duffy co-presented with Galin to report on their study looking at the application of the Whole Systems Approach.

The Whole Systems Approach promotes strategies to keep WAC Programs moving forward and make them sustainable.

“Many schools will start a WAC Program, and it goes well for a little while,” Duffy says. “Then it just fades away and is gone.”

Members of the consortium came up with 167 tactics under 15 strategies, and those involved in the WAC consortium took a survey to determine which tactics had been used.

During the conference, Duffy also had the opportunity to

attend other presentations, including a session by Dr. Troy Hicks on “Mindful Teaching with Technology.” The session covered activities used to help students develop media literacy.

“The day I got back here, I talked with Dr. Leuschner, our department chair,” Duffy says. “I want to use [Hicks’] book for a graduate course I may teach. Hicks even agreed to Zoom in to the class if I offer it.”

The conference sparked several ideas for Duffy to bring back to FHSU, including a research study to measure how well faculty help their students address different audiences when they write. Perhaps she will be able to present the results at the next WRAB Conference—scheduled for Sydney, Australia, in 2026.

Next Stop, Denver!

FHSU'S **ΣΤΔ** members participate in the 2023 national convention

by Rachel Beck



Kati Rivera poses next to a Sigma Tau Delta banner.

In March, professors Lexey Bartlett and Lisa Bell, along with a group of 10 FHSU English enthusiasts, traveled to Denver to participate in the annual Sigma Tau Delta International Convention. At the convention, students had the opportunity to socialize with students from all over, engage with literature and social issues and contribute to critical discussions.

Seven FHSU students were selected to present their work: Tanner Callis, Hannah Eller, CJ Gibson, Harrison Jenkins, Alissa Rehmert, Kati Rivera and Taylor Vredenburg. Each



10 ΣΤΔ members attended: Harrison Jenkins, Tanner Callis, CJ Gibson, Isaiah Russell, Hannah Eller, Rachel Beck, Taygan McBurney, Alissa Rehmert, Taylor Vredenburg and Kati Rivera.

covered a variety of literary and social topics, from Rivera's "Not So Great Great Gatsby" to Eller's creative non-fiction piece, "Experiencing Pride." In their free time, students enjoyed shopping at the 16th Street Mall and playing board games in their hotel room, such as a Shakespearean card game called Bards Dispense Profanity (a pun on the more familiar Cards Against Humanity).

This year Rivera served as an Associate Student Representative of the High-Plains Region. "Participating in an academic conference like Sigma Tau Delta has definitely helped me appreciate my major more and opened



Rachel Beck poses with The Toni Morrison Book Club authors: Juda Bennett, Winnifred Brown-Glaude, Cassandra Jackson, Piper Kendrix Williams.

new doors and connections inside of my future occupation,” she says. Also, as an ASR, Rivera was able to experience the convention in a completely different way than she had done last year as an attendee: “I sat in on committee work, helped organize events, but mainly worked on promoting how Sigma Tau Delta can benefit students in my region. I am considering applying to be a Student Rep again next year.”

Callis, FHSU’s 2022-2023 Sigma Tau Delta Chapter President, participated in a roundtable with the Southern Regent, Dr. Leigh Dillard, titled “The UnEssay: Creative Projects in Lit Classes.”

The 2023 Sigma Tau Delta convention featured the four authors of *The Toni Morrison Book Club*

and Brenda Peynado, author of a collection of short speculative fiction stories, *The Rock Eaters*. Last year, Bartlett was elected vice president of Sigma Tau Delta and has now completed her first year in a two-year position. Look forward to next year’s English Post, as Bartlett will assume the role of national president in 2024.



About the Writer

Rachel Beck is a senior English (Writing) major. After graduation, she plans to achieve world peace.

Well, back in *my* day

Can’t keep up with the latest lingo?

Check out these slang phrases, their definitions and (not-so) old-timey equivalents provided by faculty and office staff.

based (adj.)	a good take	“that’s hot” - Lisa Bell
Example: What a bold argument—that thesis statement is based.		
lit (adj.)	exciting	“money” - Dr. Matthew Smalley
Example: When you find the right book, reading is lit!		
faded (adj.)	intoxicated; very high/drunken	“ripped” - Linda Smith
Example: While the contents of his hookah are unknown, Carroll’s blue caterpillar seems faded.		
mid (adj.)	so-so; mediocre	“eh, it’s OK” - Amy Richecky
Example: Compared to Lee’s other novel, <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> , <i>Go Set a Watchman</i> wasn’t published during her lifetime because the work is surprisingly mid.		
simp (n. or v.)	to bend over backwards for a romantic interest	“whipped” - Dr. Cheryl Duffy
Example: Gatsby really simps for Daisy; he throws all those parties just to get her attention.		
slay (v.)	to do/look well	“cool” - Dr. Eric Leuschner
Example: Katniss Everdeen slays in that fire dress.		
stan (v.)	to obsess over someone, particularly a celebrity	“stalk” - Jason Markins
Example: Mercutio is by far the best character in <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> ; we stan Mercutio.		

A new journey!

Sharon Wilson begins her retirement

by Taygan McBurney

Sharon Wilson is recognized and loved for her renowned devotion to her students, colleagues and school. Wilson taught for almost fifty years after earning her MA at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. She devoted her career to teaching students and sharing her vast knowledge of diverse cultural backgrounds. "I've had so many exciting experiences. It's wonderful," Wilson says.

Wilson, at first, wanted to avoid becoming a teacher. Instead, she wanted to become a doctor, psychologist or psychiatrist and wanted nothing to do with education. However, this decision changed with the inspiration of her father. "My love of teaching and interacting with students came from him," Wilson says. She describes her father as a "gregarious, open man" who cared about his students. Her father's inspiration made Wilson realize her love for English and teaching. "My love of English was a priority," she says. She was still passionate about sociology, psychology and philosophy, so she studied them. "I use these disciplines when teaching literature, and I think that is important."

When Wilson searched for a job in Hays, she applied at Thomas More Prep-Marian, Hays High School and Fort Hays State University. The chair of FHSU's English department, Dr. Paul Gatschet, called Wilson for an interview. "Immediately, when I walked into Picken Hall and into his office, JoAnn Crist, his secretary at the time, was so welcoming and warm," Wilson remembers. JoAnn's warm welcome was one of the reasons that Wilson chose the University. The other reason was Dr. Gatschet, whom Wilson describes as "a remarkable man." Wilson received a temporary position of three years at Fort Hays State University, but this three-year position turned into decades of commitment to the university.



Former student Valerie Brown-Kuchera reads her tribute to Mrs. Wilson at the retirement party.

The Pilot Award is the top award given for teaching at FHSU, and Wilson was nominated for it multiple times. "One thing I am most proud of is when I was nominated for the Pilot Award," Wilson says. At first, Wilson could not accept the award because of policies regarding her "temporary" position. This all changed when multiple students wrote to get the policy changed. After the help of former students and colleagues, Wilson was formally chosen for the Pilot Award in 2001. "That award was the highlight of my career because it was given for teaching," Wilson says.

Wilson is known for her love of teaching the course Young Adult Literature. She chose specific authors carefully because she wanted her students to understand each piece's importance while still enjoying the class. "By exposing them to diverse writers with characters, conflicts, themes, etc., that they can relate to, I help them to enjoy the book even with its challenges," Wilson says. By exposing her students to diverse backgrounds, she hoped they would learn important lessons to take into the real

world. “One key to eliminating prejudice and discrimination is to understand that culture. One book may not do it, but it does open a window,” Wilson says.

Wilson is beloved among her former students. Students have considered Wilson to be more than just a professor. They believe her to be a friend and someone to lean on during rough times. Wilson was an inspiration among her students, just as her father was to her. “She was tough, but she always loved us. And I feel like she’d call your B-loney Sandwich from a mile away!” says Whitney Linenberger, a Fort Hays State English alumna.



“She has always been my absolute favorite person, and like many have said, she told me during my freshman year first semester that I was in the wrong major...so I switched from Social Work to English Ed. She was my advisor all the way through college, and she became my mom on campus. She definitely taught me how I wanted my classroom to look, and for 22 years, it did—she even got to come see me in my classroom, and I got to come back to FHSU to talk to her students. Congrats, Mrs. Wilson! We love ya!!”
-Audra Seeman

“
One key to eliminating prejudice and discrimination is to understand that culture. One book may not do it, but it does open a window.
-Dr. Sharon Wilson”

Although Wilson was not really ready to retire, she is excited to work on different hobbies. She is writing an article and collaborating with former students on a second article. She hopes to finish these articles and submit them to Kansas English and the KATE Conference in October.

Outside of writing and researching, she hopes to spend more time with family. “I want to spend more time with my grandchildren and more time reading, and I think I may give photography a shot. I love watching and studying birds,” Wilson says.

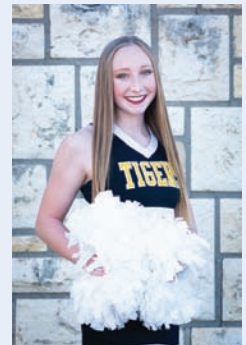
The Department of English is grateful for the years of leadership and devotion Wilson continually provided. Former students are thankful to Wilson for her love and inspiration. Her legacy will be cherished for years to come.



Sharon Wilson was always a champion of diversity.

About the Writer

Taygan McBurney is a third-year English major with a Concentration in Writing. She enjoys being on the sideline with her cheer team during her free time. After this year, she will be a captain of the Cheerleading team.





Professors and students spent a weekend traveling across Kansas to attend the annual Shakespeare Festival and Kansas Book Festival. Pictured from left to right are Professor Perry Harrison, Allyiah McCartney, McKena McBride, Isaiah Russell, Elizabeth Clingan, Grace McCord, Harrison Jenkins, Taylor Vredenburg, Mar (Moore) Sarratt, Jewell Dinsmore, CJ Gibson, Professor Lexey Bartlett and Professor Cheryl Duffy.

Travel!

Professors take students on immersive English experiences

by Allison Hillebrand

Eager to gain new perspectives, students and professors took advantage of the annual Flint Hills Shakespeare Festival, Kansas Book Festival and Kansas Association of Teachers of English (KATE) Conference this past fall.

In September, Professors Perry Harrison and Lexey Bartlett encouraged students to spend a weekend exploring literature in Kansas. Graduate and undergraduate students were invited to attend.

Initially, Harrison had intended to attend only the Shakespeare festival in Saint Marys on Sept. 23 before partnering with Bartlett to also take the students to the Kansas Book Festival the following day.

The Shakespeare festival is reminiscent of a Renaissance festival, including archery, axe-throwing and food vendors. The event hosted an outdoor performance of the Shakespeare play *Othello*.

On the morning of Sept. 24, the group traveled to Topeka for the Kansas Book Festival, where

they were joined by Professor Cheryl Duffy. Duffy serves on the festival board and had been asked to moderate a panel of authors, so she had arrived in Topeka the day before.

This festival features presentations from several Kansas and Kansas-themed writers.

“
The excerpts she read sounded so fascinating, like a surreal, prairie horror.
-Dr. Perry Harrison

“The Kansas Book Festival at one time was mostly authors reading from their books,” Duffy says. “What it has evolved into now is authors talking about their work, such as the process of writing and the themes in their work.”

The festival is an opportunity for a discussion among the authors and the audience.

“Since I moved here from Texas about four years ago, I don’t know many Kansas writers,” Harrison says. “I got to be introduced to a lot of interesting literary works.”

Salina writer Patricia Traxler particularly caught his attention with her book *In the Skin*.

“I immediately went out and purchased her book,” Harrison says. “The excerpts she read sounded so fascinating, like a surreal prairie horror.”

Harrison’s goal for the students on this trip was for them to realize that there is a literary culture in Kansas.

“Especially being out here, it can be fairly isolating,” Harrison says. “They had the chance to meet all of these writers and these scholars. There also aren’t a lot of opportunities in Western Kansas to see Shakespeare plays, and they had the chance to do that.”

In November, Duffy gave several aspiring teachers the opportunity to explore their interests and build connections with successful professionals from all over Kansas. The group—consisting of Duffy and students Katie Crawford, Harrison Jenkins, Cassandra Osorio and Kati Rivera—spent the weekend at the KATE Conference.

Duffy reached out to graduate student Jenkins during his first semester at Fort Hays State University to ask him to participate as a speaker at the conference.

Duffy, Jenkins and librarian Robyn Hartman created a panel to share their insights, as well as tactics that have worked for them.

Their presentation, “Plagiarism-Proof Pedagogy,” provided tips for teachers to prevent students from feeling the need to plagiarize.

“I was able to talk about why students plagiarize,” Duffy says. “[Jenkins] talked about what teachers can do to prevent their students from getting into a panic or a position where plagiarism looks like the best option.”

Students appreciated the friendly and professional interactions they had with other English professionals at the conference.

“There was a real sense of camaraderie there between the teachers,” Jenkins says. “I recommend it for any other English majors that are thinking about going into teaching.”



Professor Cheryl Duffy takes aspiring teachers Cassandra Osorio, Katie Crawford, Harrison Jenkins and Kati Rivera to the KATE Conference.

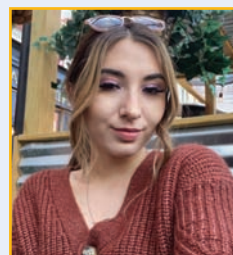
While at the conference, the group was able to attend other presentations that covered topics such as young adult literature, grammar and poetry.

Both Crawford and Rivera say that their experience was memorable, and they would likely attend again.

“I honestly did learn a lot,” Crawford says. “After the presentations, there was a lot of time for feedback, so I was able to get into conversations with teachers who have been teaching for 10 or 20 years already. It really fortified me that I was going into the right field and that I made the right decision.”

Thanks to generous donations, the English department was able to provide funds for registrations, transportation and lodging for these meaningful – and fun! – experiences.

About the Writer



Allison Hillebrand is a third-year student who is majoring in both English and Public Relations. She enjoys spending her free time with her dog, Ghost, and cat, Macaroni.

Writing in podcasts

English professors discuss podcasts as a genre

by CJ Gibson

When you think of genres of writing, you may think of novels, essays, articles, short stories, poems and screenplays. After all, these genres are the focus of an English department like FHSU's.

But what about a genre you may not think of as a typical writing opportunity: podcasts?



Dr. Perry Harrison in his office, where he records *The Forgotten Archive*.

Dr. Perry Harrison, Assistant Professor of English, writes and produces his own podcast, *The Forgotten Archive*.

In his podcast, Harrison discusses unusual books, such as ones bound in human skin—a subject that Harrison hasn't otherwise been able to flesh out in his academic career.

He notes that podcasts may appeal to the same audience that audiobooks do. Both can be listened to while your hands or eyes are otherwise occupied.

Most podcasts are much shorter than audiobooks, and podcast episode length can be flexible. *The Forgotten Archive's* podcasts are about fifteen minutes long, while some podcasts can last more than two hours. Harrison chooses to make his episodes this length because he prefers finishing short episodes during his commute rather than starting and stopping a longer work.

Harrison says he takes about ten days to write an episode, and he uses the free audio software Audacity to produce it. "I like the democratization, the openness of podcasts—that you can do it on very little money and still create a good product," Harrison says.

Since podcasts of varying quality can be produced by such a wide range of people, sometimes they are discredited as a literary medium.

Harrison, however, doesn't believe this should discourage people from producing podcasts:

"If you were to find out that a significant portion of the United States population had tried out creative writing and half of them decided this wasn't for them, you'd still say good for them, good job for trying it out and seeing what that is like and trying on a creative art."

Harrison hopes that the English department will go on to host podcast writing workshops or perhaps a podcast writing course someday.

Dr. Bradley Will, Associate Professor of English and Assistant Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, collaborates on an unscripted podcast. He participates in the tabletop roleplay podcast *Critical Hit* from Major Spoilers Entertainment.

Will's main motivation for participating in podcasts is to socialize with his friends.

Though the spontaneous *Critical Hit* differs from the scripted content that Harrison produces, Will and Major Spoilers Entertainment have still navigated the dramatic changes in the podcast.

"It's just harder to get an audience now," Will says. Since the podcast market is so saturated,

creators need to be aggressive about keeping their content interesting.

“The key is to get a really niche audience, to do something so super special that you get an audience,” Will says. “You’ve got to curate what you listen to and edit what you produce.”

While the market is competitive and an indie podcast may not gather a large audience, Will and Harrison agree that producing a quality podcast can still be rewarding.

“It’s mostly just a matter of doing it,” Will says.

Dr. Lexey Bartlett, Associate Professor of English, enjoys listening to podcasts as a way to find more content about the topics she’s interested in academically.

Bartlett says that some of her favorite podcasts rely on research: “They are academic to the point where they’re citing current research. I appreciate that they’re not just spouting things off the top of their heads, but experts who are interpreting material that I might not be able to understand myself.”

Bartlett recommends listening to podcasts as a method of life-long learning.

“I think the great thing about podcasts is there’s something for everybody,” Bartlett says.

While they’re not yet typically taught in literature courses, podcasts can be educational, whether you want to develop your writing skills or to learn something new.

9 Podcast Picks from Dr. Lexey Bartlett

- Unladylike scan with the Spotify app
You’re Dead to Me
If Books Could Kill
Tenfold More Wicked
Small Town Dicks
Criminal
Infinite Monkey Cage
Hidden Brain
How We’re Wired

Video games in class?

Jason Markins teaches new game-writing course

by Cosmo Jarboe

The FHSU English department is no stranger to offering intriguing courses. During the spring semester of 2023, one such standout course was Digital Game Writing, taught by Dr. Jason Markins.

The students used twinery.org, which allows users to easily create choose-your-own-adventure-style stories as playable games. These games aren’t confined to text alone. Using programming languages

such as HTML and CSS, users can add graphics and music to their creations.

To encourage students “not to get trapped in the same genres,” Markins urges them to write outside of their comfort zones. “Risks with writing are hard to take when working within a formal genre, but for most of my students, game writing is completely new,” says Markins. “It opens a new avenue for expression.”

Spring ’23 was Markins’ first time teaching the class, and he hopes to teach it again in the future. “There’s a lot I want to do with the class,” he shared while showcasing the assigned readings for the course.

The English department has offered classes that interest both teachers and students alike, from the literature of crime to a course on J.R.R. Tolkien. By offering unique classes, professors inspire students to think in new ways and create truly innovative works.

In Memoriam CHRISTIANE LUEHRS

by Rachel Beck



FHSU's first-ever Halloween festival in the 1970s. These festivals, which she organized with her husband, featured speakers, musical and theatrical events, public displays and movies. Eventually, the Luehrses'

If you were to visit with a colleague, friend or family member of Christiane "Chris" Luehrs, they would warmly remember her as an educator, author, hostess, chef and woman of eccentric taste. Luehrs, 81, passed away quietly in her sleep in July 2022.

Before retiring fully in 2018, her dedication to her role as an educator was evident in her high expectations for her students. As Luehrs had an uncanny ability to read people, students who took classes with her could expect to have their potential and talents recognized, then developed. One of her teaching goals was to bring out the qualities of each student, and she did so with generosity, patience, motivation and tough love.

Luehrs' gravitation toward unique subjects was evident in both her professional and personal lives. She was known for her interests in mythology, folklore, Halloween, British mystery novels and history. In addition to teaching her composition classes, she often taught with her husband, Dr. Robert Luehrs, an online course — Religion, Heresy, Magic, and Myth — which explored elements of Gothic fiction.

She expressed her natural creative nature and enthusiasm for Halloween by introducing

tradition continued through three display cases in Forsyth Library. For many decades, students and faculty could look forward to the library's macabre display cases in October.

Halloween was not the only way Luehrs served as a dedicated faculty member. She also hosted English Honor Society initiations, prepared the English department's Parents Day Reception and elegantly performed as the Lady of the Manor or Queen Elizabeth at the annual Madrigal Dinner for 20 years. When not performing at the Madrigal Dinners, she often assisted in costume design.

She was not only a dedicated educator and campus personality but an author as well. She and Dr. Luehrs co-authored seven scholarly articles together. Dr. Luehrs attributes the craft and articulate language of their papers to her precise editing skills. Two of their articles were published in a social science non-fiction text titled *The Detective as Historian: History and Art in Historical Crime Fiction*.

Additionally, Luehrs led several book discussions sponsored by Humanities Kansas. She also delivered several conference papers, such as "Death and Taxes: Sarah Caudwell's Quartet

of Classic Mysteries” and “Barbara Hambly’s Vampire Novels.”

She frequently hosted parties and dinners beyond traditional holidays. In particular, she loved masquerade parties and was fascinated by obscure holidays. While organizing the party’s decor, menu and costumes, she was imaginative and considerate, going above and beyond to capture the holiday’s characteristics.

Her parties were not only an outlet for her affable nature and creativity but also a time when her culinary skills flourished. She was an accomplished chef, often preparing ethnic, historical or Italian Renaissance dishes. Before teaching, she even ran a catering business.

Luehrs’ goal in retirement was to read and limit her time using her computer. Dr. Luehrs fondly remembers her as she sat at their dining room table with a book in hand, a glass of wine and a red pen. Meanwhile, her computer sat in their basement, decorated by cobwebs.



For all these reasons, those who knew her cherish the memory of her contagious personality, formidable presence, eccentric taste and curious sense of humor. Luehrs’ diverse talents added to her impact on those who knew her, which Dr. Luehrs illustrated perfectly, identifying her as a Renaissance woman.

“She would say, ‘I have two speeds: fast and off,’” Dr. Luehrs remembers. It may seem impossible to achieve so much and take on so many identities in one lifetime, yet she spent so much time on high speed.

'67 and '71 English grad awarded for achievements

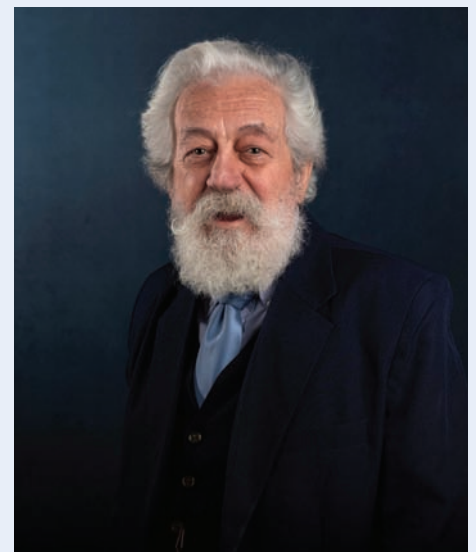
Fort Hays State University recognized English alumnus Donald Richardson with a 2022 Alumni Achievement Award. Richardson graduated from FHSU in 1967 with dual Bachelor of Arts degrees in English and Communication, then went on to earn his Master of Arts degree in English at FHSU in 1971.

He’s filled the years since then with teaching and writing. At Phoenix College, where he teaches English Composition, he’s been inducted into the Phoenix College Hall of Fame, has received the

Phoenix Chapter President’s Award and has been nominated several times for the Phoenix College Outstanding Teacher of the Year.

He has self-published more than 39 Shakespeare editions and has published other books as well, including *Libertyville*, a recent book on voting access in the United States.

Richardson, 80, lives in Phoenix, where he continues to teach and write — and sing. He enjoys singing in choirs and barbershop quartets and shows no sign of slowing down.



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Paige Harvey
Braxton Hawkins
Esther Hernandez
Sarah Maxwell
Olivia McGillivray
Alayna Moore
Elle Anna Tharman
Eileen Veatch

Impromptu English Summer MA reunion

A group of FHSU grads and professors gathered in Kansas City in late July 2022 to catch up after some 30 years. Their conversation at one point turned to sending a photo to the English Post, and so. . . .



Pictured clockwise from the left are Rebecca (Berens) Brungardt, BS '82; Kevin Brungardt, MA '91, MS '01; Dr. Bruce Spitzer, MA '93; Dr. Al Geritz; Dr. Linda (Bullock) Blair; Dr. Dick Leeson; Mike Blair, MA '91. Geritz, Bullock and Leeson were English faculty members who taught in the Summer English MA program.

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