

In Writing

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Distinction in Writing: Encouraging Writing Beyond the Classroom

Mieke Stoub

If you have recently looked for a writing job, you've probably seen "experience necessary" as often as "Bachelor's Degree." Learning about the field is no longer enough; students have to leave college with applicable writing experience. To bridge the gap between college and career, the Distinction in Writing program gives students professional and well-rounded experiences that employers crave in applicants.

Associate Professor Chris Haven, who spearheaded the Distinction in Writing program in 2005, wanted to give students the opportunity to gain this experience while still in school.

"There's a paradox when you go to apply for a job or even a graduate program," he said. "They require experience doing what it is you're trying to get experience to do. We look at this program as a way to bridge that gap."

The program has five separate components: Writing Among Disciplines, Writing in Off-Campus Communities, Writing Across Cultures, Writing for Publication or Performance, and Writing as a Professional. To complete the program, students must fulfill four out of the five components. Students should plan on each component taking roughly a semester.

After completing four components, students will assemble a portfolio under their advisor's supervision. The contents of this portfolio are evidence of students' achievements. Each portfolio must include: 1) a résumé 2) a reflection about the completed components and how the experience has helped them grow 3) four to eight artifacts produced while fulfilling the components.

Kiera Wilson, who finished her portfolio this Fall semester, said, "Keeping track of my portfolio was the easy part, but compiling it required much more thought and preparation. I would suggest that students who plan to complete the program start the portfolio early. Give yourself time to make revisions."

Within each component are Level A and a Level B project suggestions. To receive

credit for the component, students must complete either one Level A project or two Level B projects. These projects include (but are by no means limited to) writing for on-campus publications such as *In Writing* or *fishladder*, studying abroad, or completing internships.

While this may seem like a lot of work on top of coursework, Haven says that the program is quite flexible.

"You can custom fit a plan and discuss

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"This program is about developing new job connections and familiarizing yourself with new worlds of discourse," said Royer.

Department Welcomes New Faculty

*Mieke Stoub &
Emilee Andrews*

After saying goodbye at the end of Winter 2011 to Professor Catherine Frerichs, the Writing Department welcomed two new tenure-track assistant professors—Amorak Huey and Oindrila Mukherjee—in the Fall.

Amorak Huey

Amorak Huey is a published poet, film critic, and former sports writer. Coming from a family of writers, it's hard to imagine he would do anything but. His career began in newspapers and continues here as a professor. After teaching as a Visiting Professor at GVSU for three years, Huey is now an Assistant Professor of Writing.

Although Huey was born in Kalamazoo, MI, his family moved to a small town outside of Birmingham, AL when he was four. He studied at Birmingham Southern College, where he majored in English and considered going to law school “for about an hour.” After that thought fled, his next step was graduate school. He spent two semesters at Florida State University before deciding the time wasn't right. Instead, he began his career in newspapers working for papers in Florida and Kentucky for the next six years.

Huey and his wife, Associate Professor Ellen Schendel, moved to Michigan in 2000 for her job at GVSU. Later that same year, Huey got a job at *The Grand*

Rapids Press as a sports copyeditor. Since he wrote for three other newspapers prior to moving, he had little trouble getting the job. Huey joked that it was when newspapers were still hiring people. While he liked how the newspaper business was “outcome oriented,” Huey admitted that he wasn't satisfied.

“It felt like the end of something and people weren't excited anymore,” he said.

So after eight years at *The Press* and 15 years in the newspaper business, Huey was ready for a change.

While writing for *The Press*, Huey worked on his MFA in Creative Writing at Western Michigan University and taught WRT 381 Sports and Writing as an adjunct at GVSU. During that time, he and Dan Royer, Chair of the Writing Department, got to know each other quite well. In 2008, there was an unexpected increase in freshman enrollment and Royer told Huey: “Quit your job at *The*

India and moved to Gainesville to study at the University of Florida. After she finished at UF, she moved to Houston to complete her PhD at the University of Houston. Once finished, she was granted a Creative Writing Fellow in Fiction from Emory University in Atlanta for the 2009-2010 school year. During her fellowship, she finished writing her first novel, *House of Rain*, and is currently looking for a publisher.

Mukherjee said, “My novel follows a young woman as she travels from India to England in search of love, literature, and rain. It examines the lives of young Indians who grew up in urban, cosmopolitan India, and the confusion that globalization brings.”

Mukherjee is passionate about writing, but has not had much time to devote to her craft while adjusting to her first hectic semester. In addition to her love of fiction, she enthusiastically admits to writing about sports, especially tennis. She also contributes to blogs and writes some non-fiction pieces for newspapers. She

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Oindrila Mukherjee

See *MUKHERJEE* on Page 7

Constantly relocating is not a remote concept for Oindrila Mukherjee, who moved to Michigan this past summer.

“This is my fourth city in the U.S. alone,” she said.

She has also lived in Atlanta, GA; Gainesville, FL; and Houston, TX. Mukherjee was born in India and has lived in various cities throughout her home country. Before coming to the U.S., she also lived and studied at Cambridge University in the U.K. Mukherjee looks forward to the cultural exchange she can bring to her students and fellow faculty colleagues.

“Being new to this region, I know there's a lot to learn, but I have a lot to offer, too,” she said.

To pursue an MFA in Creative Writing, Mukherjee quit her job as a journalist in



Nothing *RUST*ic About It

Kira Smith-Butland

R*UST*, written by GVSU's Assistant Professor Austin Bunn, premiered at the Actors' Theatre Grand Rapids on Thursday, September 29th. The play followed Austin (the character, played by the professor) as he journeyed to discover why the GM plant in Wyoming, MI closed, who closed it, and how thousands left unemployed were affected. A unique hybrid of documentary, drama, comedy, with a kind of intimacy that only theatre can achieve, *RUST* succeeded in not only educating its audience in the tragedy of this plant's closing, but in providing a portrait of the loss that GM workers suffered on a much smaller scale.

Aptly staged, *RUST* began its work on audiences before the play even began, with

a set of rusty, corroded metal doors and beams. Live music, metallic and somber, crept through the auditorium as audience members took their seats. The music was accompanied by the occasional thud or grind of metal, creating the sense of being within the bowels of a GM plant. As the play began, two doors slid apart revealing a giant screen that provided backdrops to scenes and displayed news footage and old GM propaganda films.

RUST centered on Austin and his college student assistant, James, (based on Writing major James Walsh) as they worked to get in touch with various "GM gypsies," or the workers who were displaced from the Wyoming plant closing.

Hank and Leah, two of these GM gypsies, provided the play with both linearity and heart, and their small-scale



story served as an allegory for the life-shattering circumstances these workers and their families faced with each plant

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10th GVSU Poetry Night Delights Crowd

Erin Quakenbush

“His fists stand like stones on the tops of his thighs—white boulders, alabaster—and the flesh/ sinks under the weight of everything/he’s squeezed within them,” read Ted Kooser to an absorbed audience. The excerpt comes from his poem, “Two Men on an Errand.”

On Friday, October 21st, GVSU and Grand Rapids poetry lovers gathered for the 10th annual Fall Arts Celebration Poetry Night. The night featured two successful American poets: Ted Kooser and Terrance Hayes. The event was held downtown in the L.V. Eberhard Center and attracted a large crowd.

The evening began with a welcome from Fred Antczak, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at GVSU. Writing Department Full Professor and Poet-in-Residence, Patricia Clark, introduced the poets and talked about the theme of the Fall Arts Celebration: home.

Kooser was the first poet to read. Originally from Nebraska, Kooser is a two-time U.S. Poet Laureate. He is a professor of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and his book, *Delights*

and *Shadows* won the highly esteemed 2005 Pulitzer Prize.

Kooser began the night reading his poem, “Success,” collecting laughs from the audience.

“All for the hope that they will/suddenly dilate their nostrils, squeeze/the hard carry-on handles, and rise to/the ripening odor of praise with which I have/basted myself, stinking to heaven,” read Kooser.

Kooser presented many newer poems that gave detailed descriptions of people’s interactions with one another. The poem “At Arbys at Noon” painted a picture of a kiss between a blind woman and a man with a scarred face. “Ray” told the story of a man who had attempted suicide and was then avoided by his community. Kooser’s poems kept the audience alert and attentive, like children listening to a vivid story.

Following Kooser, Hayes announced that Kooser was “one of the first poets I was really excited about.”

Originally a painting major in college, Hayes is now an accomplished poet. Hayes and his family live in Pittsburgh where he teaches at Carnegie Mellon University. He is the winner of the 2010 National Book Award in Poetry for his book, *Lighthead*.

Hayes entertained the audience with a

mix of upbeat and deep poems. Following the theme of home, Hayes read “A House is Not a Home.”

“The night I embraced Ron’s wife a bit too long/because he’d refused to kiss me goodbye, / I realized the essential nature of sound,” read Hayes.

Hayes spoke with a distinct rhythm and style. His longest poem of the night, “Arbor For Butch,” told the story of Hayes meeting his biological father for the first time. Hayes sweat with feeling as he leaned into the microphone reading the somber poem.

Following the readings, both poets signed books for fans, and artist Jack Smith unveiled his art, “Portraits of American Poets.”

Earlier in the day, the poets traveled to the Allendale campus where they met with a small number of faculty and students for an intimate question and answer event. Students were able to ask specific questions about poems, the writing process, and the poets’ careers. Kooser talked about the idea of poetry having no one-right answer or interpretation.

“Once the poem is out of our hands, it really belongs to everybody,” said Kooser.

FMCWMA Goes to Miami

Hannah Matro

This November, nine writing consultants from GVSU's Frederick Meijer Center for Writing and Michigan Authors (FMCWMA) attended the National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing (NCPTW) in Miami, FL. The conference, *Tutoring, Tutors, and the Teaching of Tutors*, was held November 4-6. Primarily focusing on the daily work of student consultants, the conference's main goal analyzed what it means to be a tutor and how to conduct one-on-one writing consultations in a beneficial way.

Laura Breen, Hollie McDonald, Hannah Moeggenborg, Erica Jones, Sara Johnson, Dale Johnson, Katie Crabtree, Jessie Miller, and Lindsay Stoyka were the nine students who attended from GVSU. Though the conference took place in Florida, providing the attendees a chance to escape the cool Michigan fall, the conference was far from leisurely. The nine students were required to deliver a presentation on a topic of their choice. One such presentation was based on

a survey conducted by Laura Breen, a history major and writing consultant for the past two years. Breen presented about the different preferences consultants have about working with strangers versus friends.

"The results came out just as I had figured they would," Breen said. "Consultants would much rather work with people they don't know than they would with friends."

This presentation and others allowed GVSU consultants to share their research and discoveries about the consulting process.

FMCWMA is hardly a new institution, and has been helping students improve their writing for years. Associate Professor Ellen Schendel, the Director of FMCWMA since 2003, says that the fundamentals of the consulting process have stayed the same since the Center's beginning, but it has gotten "bigger, better, and more complex".

In the year she took over, roughly 3,000 students dropped in for assistance on writing assignments. In 2011, close to 10,000 appointments have been made,

nearly tripling the number of writing consultations. These numbers do not even account for the newly implemented online tutoring, which rakes in a considerable amount of students on top of the face-to-face consultations.

Schendel doesn't see any major improvements needed at FMCWMA. Therefore, the reason the nine consultants attended the national conference was not for the bettering of FMCWMA directly. Instead, Schendel said that she hopes the students who attend will get a broadened view of how their work at GVSU relates to the field as a whole. By obtaining a big-picture view, the consultants will better understand the importance of their work.

GVSU writing consultants have opportunities to attend regional and state conferences annually. The difference between those and the national conference is that the NCPTW offers a wider view of the relationship and camaraderie GVSU's FMCWMA has with the nation's writing programs. No doubt the FMCWMA tutors profited from the conference, in turn allowing the GVSU student population to benefit as well.

FMCWMA Welcomes New Asst. Director

Lauren Smith

The Fred Meijer Center for Writing and Michigan Authors (FMCWMA) welcomed Patrick Johnson as the new Assistant Director on July 1, 2011. Although Johnson is still adjusting to the Michigan weather and GVSU atmosphere, he enjoys his new position so far.

"Everyone has been nice and welcoming [towards me]," he said.

He graduated from Washington State University with Bachelor's degrees in English and advertising. He earned a Master's degree in English with an emphasis in Rhetoric and Composition, which Johnson says "is a big way to say the way people write and talk."

Johnson's position at the FMCWMA includes training the new consultants,

coordinating their schedules, and helping professors implement the Center's services into their classes.

"Writing center directors have one of the best jobs in the field, he said. "It is my job to help people, and it is a very fun and rewarding."

Johnson has worked as a writing instructor in previous years, but found his home in the Writing Center. When he attended Washington State University, the Writing Center became his sanctuary.

"A Writing Center position is the best because we get to help with writing, but at the same time we don't have to worry about grading. It is all about productivity," he said.

Johnson has always been "attracted to the skill," but first became involved with writing from his next-door neighbor, who he believes was "[his] first hero." He finds the most challenging part about writing

to be the daily struggles one faces, such as writer's block.

"I am no stranger to writer's block," Johnson said. "Writing is not just a skill but is also an art. You get better on the path you spend the most time on, and writing was the [path] I spent the most time on."

Johnson has been working closely with other faculty members and FMCWMA's Director, Associate Professor Ellen Schendel, to make the Center stronger and more available to students through technology.

"I have just recently submitted a grant with a fellow faculty member to provide writing support [for] veterans. I still see a lot of areas of growth for technology, especially making [FMCWMA] user

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Widespread Praise for Horrock's *City*

Morgan Miller

Assistant Professor Caitlin Horrocks spent her years as a graduate student at Arizona State University writing short stories for her Master of Fine Arts thesis. The assignment was to create a book-length collection of stories. Flash forward a couple of years and that thesis landed her name right underneath New York Times in Old English typeface.

This Is Not Your City has received nothing but positive reviews from *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, and *Publisher's Weekly*. *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* gave it a Grade A, *The Grand Rapids Press* hailed her "Wonder Woman," and reviewers have labeled her "a master of words," a "literary phenomenon," a "magician," and a "master storyteller."

And this whole time she thought she was just a GVSU writing professor.

To add to her long list of achievements, *The New Yorker* featured Horrocks on its blog, The Book Bench, just a couple days before it published her short story, "Sun City."

This Is Not Your City

is a collection of 11 stories with "unusual situations." Some stories originated from exercises Horrocks used to challenge herself or from exploring topics she hadn't

written about but wanted to try. Some stories sprouted from news articles including "In the Gulf of Aden, Past the Cape of Guardafui," a story about a cruise ship held hostage by pirates and "Steal Small," a story about dog poachers and a beautiful Dalmatian. The stories might have completely different characters and plots, but the one thing they have in common is that they are all darkly comic.

"Even when terrible things happen, there is still laughter in everyday life," Horrocks said.

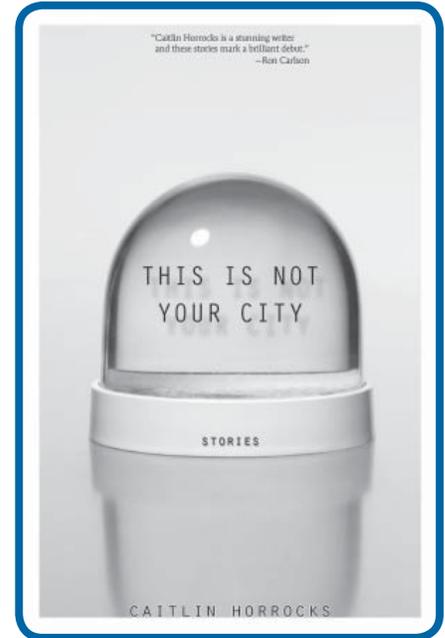
The short story collection has been through an obstacle course since the manuscript caught publishers' eyes in 2008. Horrocks' manuscript was supposed to be published in 2009 by Eastern Washington University Press, but just before publication, the company went out of business from budget cuts. Although the publishing company would have still published the collection, Horrocks went with her gut and decided to pull the book.

"It was a great decision," Horrocks said.

She felt like she wouldn't have received as many positive reviews if she had stuck with the small publishing company.

But then things

took a sharp turn from an unfortunate event to a lucky one. Assistant Professor Austin Bunn contacted his friends at Sarabande Books in Louisville, KY and



informed them about Horrocks' project. After reading her manuscript, Sarabande immediately accepted it.

From cutting and reorganizing paragraphs of "Zolaria" on the floor to salvaging her stories from the effects of budget cuts, *This Is Not Your City* plowed through obstacles to make a safe landing on bookshelves and receive top notch reviews.

Horrocks is currently working on her first novel, although she's secretly working on another short story collection. Just don't tell her agent.

"I just really love short stories," she said.

"Even when terrible things happen, there is still laughter in everyday life," Horrocks said.

JOHNSON

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friendly with students who have iPads and iPhones."

Johnson brings many years of experience to GVSU and is open to anyone who would like to come by his office to get help with writing or just have a talk.

When he isn't thinking of new ideas for the FMCWMA, Johnson loves to play video games, spend time with his wife, read comic books, and even brew his own beer. He quirkiest trait, however, might be that he can quote every line from *The*

Princess Bride. So the next time you're in the FMCWMA getting help with writing, take a moment to test Johnson's memorization skills.

RUST

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closing and relocation.

Hank, a family man, and Leah, a young loner, are introduced early in the play. Their relationship is unique, as they are relocated hundreds of miles from their

families, and becomes sexual. The collapse of both their friendship and Hank's family life culminates in the play's most emotional scene: an angry monologue from Hank's wife, Carol, where she tells Leah that she and her family will do what they need to do to get by. "So help me god," she says. "I am not going to let a soul know how angry I am."

The Hank and Leah story was a play-within-a-play. It gave *RUST*'s audience a comfortable place to return amidst in-plant deaths, suicides, and the disregard for workers that one character succinctly describes as "business as [...] usual for the general."

Amend: Shipwrecked in Oklahoma

Claire Banner

“Prepare to be shipwrecked.”

Those were the words uttered by GVSU student Karla Lamb as she introduced Allison Amend, GVSU’s first Writer Series guest. Amend may have dropped out of Stanford three times before graduating, but that did not hinder the writing abilities which brought her to GVSU.

On October 6, Amend held a reading which included a Q&A. Amend started the reading with an excerpt from the beginning of her new novel, *Stations West*, which follows the lives of Jewish immigrants living in Oklahoma. While the concept may seem strange, the novel “shipwrecks” her readers in a world they might never have found themselves.

She followed *Stations West* with “The People You Know Best” from her collection of short stories, *Things that Pass*

for *Love*, skipping the scenes containing mature content.

“You have to buy the book to read that,” joked Amend.

While the two excerpts covered drastically different content, Amend has a way of shocking her readers, yet drawing them further into her work.

After the readings, Amend answered questions regarding her publication experience. Originally, she had gone to Random House, where they asked if her novel could be a love story. Eager to please, Amend agreed and went home to write an outline. She came to an impasse, however, when Random House would not publish without the new edition and Amend wouldn’t add it if she couldn’t see the finished version before publication.

When Amend’s editor dropped her, she described the feeling of getting her book back in the mail “like we broke up and she was giving me back my mix tapes.”

While it took her almost 10 years to

publish her book, Amend can still laugh about the rough times, knowing she produced a magnificent work that captures her readers in a never before seen web of Oklahoma Jewish immigrants.

Many writers may have given up after a failed attempt at publication, but not Amend. Her reasoning, “I’m a fiction idiot. I have no other skills but writing.” She added later that it also had a lot to do with “sheer stubbornness” and belief in her book. She kept going because she knew it would be a better book for it.

Amend ended the Q&A joking, “Look out for the Jews in *Weird Places Trilogy*, coming in 2023.”

Amend may not continue writing about Jews in strange places across the U.S. or on Mars, but no matter what she writes, fans will flock to be stranded in a new place, laughing and cringing with each turn of the page.

E-Lit: An Emerging Writing Trend

Kira Smith-Butland

During her recent visit to GVSU, author Stephanie Strickland introduced a type of literature that many might not even know exists: Electronic Literature, or, “E-Lit,” as Strickland called it.

“E-Lit only works when a computer is running it,” Strickland explained.

Her presentation on Wednesday, November 2nd, as part of the GVSU’s Writers Series, included an array of E-Lit samples from her website, collection.eliterature.org, the second volume of which was released in February.

Strickland, who worked as a librarian in the 90s, became interested in E-Lit when her children left for college. Long distance calls were expensive, and she needed a new way to stay in contact with her kids. So Strickland began using email.

“Librarians were ecstatic about the introduction of keywords,” Strickland said.

Technology was changing, and Strickland saw an opportunity to do something new and different with literature.

Her book, *V*, was the first collection of poetry to exist simultaneously in print and digital form. *V*, when accessed digitally,

words. Depending on which constellation readers clicked next, the poems would end differently. *V* worked as a “choose your own adventure” novel, except on a computer screen with stars and endless outcomes of poetry.

The E-Lit Strickland talked about included a modification, or “mod,” to the game *Half Life*. In “Sandy’s Mod,” players were able to interact with words as they floated around their screen in blocks. They could shoot, attack, jump, or push blocks of words, rearranging them into endless combinations of sentences. Players would need *Half Life* installed on their computer to experience “Sandy’s Mod,” but there were plenty of other examples of E-Lit in Strickland’s presentation.

Strickland also discussed E-Lit in gallery installations and “caves,” hardware rooms created for the sole purpose of giving its audience a dark room in which they can experience E-Lit. The



showed its audience a night sky filled with constellations. As readers clicked on different stars, constellations, and numbers that correlated to the constellations, they would be introduced to different strings of

See E-LIT on Page 7

DISTINCT*...continued from Page 1*

with your advisor what the best thing to do is,” Haven said. “We wanted to set it up with boundaries that can help a student frame it and understand what the general expectation is; mold it to the skill strengths of our students.”

Full Professor Daniel Royer, Chair of the Writing Department, emphasizes how the program prepares students for life as a professional.

“This program is not just about showing off what you’ve learned as a writing student,” Royer said “It’s also about developing new job connections and familiarizing yourself with new worlds of discourse and broadening your sense of the ways that this very difficult business of ‘writing well’ is valued by so many.”

Along with building résumés before graduation, the Distinction in Writing Program can also benefit students in other ways. Associate Professor Ellen Schendel, who helped Haven initiate the Distinction in Writing program, has noticed that students who go through the program become more aware of their career choice.

“Something I’ve discovered over the last few years is how much engaging in the program really helps people to clarify what it is they want to do with writing,” she said. “It’s exactly what liberal arts schools are trying to do more of: help students to see the applicability of what they’re doing in the classroom.”

Allie Oosta, who graduated last April with a degree in Creative Writing, said the Distinction in Writing program helped diversify her degree.

“I genuinely believe that, without it, I wouldn’t have been able to articulate my writing experiences, the skills that I had come to possess, or my level of preparedness for the professional writing world,” she said.

Deadlines for submitting portfolios are November 1 for Fall graduation and March 1 for Winter. More information and official portfolio guidelines can be found at www.gvsu.edu/writing under the “Distinction in Writing” tab. To start the Distinction in Writing program, contact your academic advisor.

Recent Distinction in Writing Honorees**2011**

**Jamie deGraaf
Madeleine Hart
Claire Helakoski
Meghan McAfee
Allison Oosta
Kiera Wilson
Ashley Zirkle**

2010

**Katie Booms
Latricia Phillips**

MUKHERJEE*...continued from Page 2*

often reviews books for Indian newspapers as well.

“Writing reviews helps me straddle the two fields that I’ve always been torn between: journalism and literature. It also forces me to read good new fiction, which in turn helps me as a writer,” she said.

The position at GVSU is her first tenure-track job. This Fall she is teaching Introduction to Creative Writing, Introduction to Magazine Writing, and will be teaching Advanced Magazine Writing during the Winter. Teaching here has been one of freedom and fluidity for Mukherjee, especially as she pilots the magazine writing courses, which are new additions to the curriculum.

“There is very little precedent for [Magazine Writing courses],” she said. “I am free to design things the way I want and I think that’s part of the reason I really like this department.”

Mukherjee is excited to be a part of GVSU’s unique program dedicated to writing. That “isn’t something you see very often,” she said.

E-LIT*...continued from Page 6*

literature would be projected onto the cave’s walls, letting the audience act as the cursor, so to speak, as they would click and drag words from one spot to another. In one gallery installation specifically, viewers had to stand perfectly still in front of a giant screen for the poem on the screen to line up with the silhouette of their bodies. Strickland explained that this led to a “much better sense of touch, feel, and interaction” with the literature.

Though some of the E-Lit appeared dated, and her presentation included jargon that only a hardcore coder could understand, Strickland introduced an unknown idea to an interested audience. Interacting with literature electronically makes even the most educated reader stop and think about the new possibilities.

HUEY*...continued from Page 2*

Press and work for me.” After finishing his MFA that year, he left the newspaper business for good.

In the shift from newspaper man to professor, Huey says it’s the students that really made the difference.

“The students are so excited on a college campus,” he said. “The atmosphere is positive and moving forward and that’s what I like about it.”

In addition to teaching creative and professional writing classes, Huey is also Managing Editor of *Wake*, a website hosted by GVSU that celebrates the uniqueness of the Great Lakes region. He also keeps up his own personal blog where he critiques movies, books, and poetry. A list of his published works can also be found on his blog. Keep up with both at <http://www.wakegreatlakes.org> and amorakhuey.org.

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Alumni News

Anne (McKay) Clark (2006) completed a Master's of Library Science in 2008 and works as the Children's Librarian at Shiawassee District Library in Owosso, MI. In her position, she buys books for infants through high schoolers, plans and presents programs for the same ages groups, and helps them with homework and other research projects. She also serves on Michigan's Mitten Award committee.

Janelle (Wing) DeBlaay (2010) works for Zondervan as an Editorial Coordinator in the Curriculum, Church, Academic, Reference, and Resource department. She performs editorial assistant tasks such as proofing and managing the schedule for book production processes.

Amber Eby-Shearer (2004) is an Adoption Counselor for the San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, a no-kill animal shelter and education center. She received the Society's Above and Beyond Award in 2010 and a 2011 Jim Ludwig Continuing Education Grant. Best of all, she helps people find their new four-legged best friends!

Josh Fish (2008) recently started The University of Alaska's MFA program focusing on Creative Nonfiction in Fairbanks. In the program, he is a teaching assistant. Since graduating from GVSU, Fish has spent almost two years in Taiwan and China teaching English and traveling.

Hillary Fishler (2009) is finishing a Master's in Public Policy at Oregon State and intends to begin a PhD program. She currently works with three agencies: Institute for Natural Resources in Corvallis, OR; Earth Economics in Tacoma, WA; and Carpe Diem West in Sausalito, CA. The projects within these three agencies focus on valuation of ecosystem services.

T Fleischmann (2005) lives in rural Tennessee. Fleischmann's book, *Syzygy, Beauty*, will be released by Sarabande in early 2012.

AJ Gretz (2007) is in his second year at Calvin Theological Seminary pursuing a Master of Divinity. He recently had a piece published in the online magazine,

The Art of Manliness, and is currently co-editing the seminary's student magazine, *Kerux*.

Robyn Gordon (2010) works in Holland, MI as a Technical Writer at JR Automation. She collaborates with engineers and machine builders to write maintenance, changeover, calibration, and other types of procedures for their machines. She volunteers with WMEAC, which is where she interned while at GVSU, as well as with Bikestock and the Grand River Clean Up.

Elizabeth Guarino-Kozlowski (2003) works for the Kent District Library as the manager of the Caledonia Branch. She was promoted to this position in October 2010 after working with KDL for six years. In this position, she manages a staff of librarians and circulation assistants.

Katie (Lewis) Hayes (2005) is employed as the Entrepreneurship and Leadership Coordinator at Lawrence Technological University in Southfield, MI. She recently took a group of students to teach English in China for a month.

Abby Heugel (2003) has worked for Great American Publishing for the past four years. She is the Editor (and Head Writer) for two national trade publications, as well as the Interactive Editor of a third. She is responsible for the entire editorial related to the three publications and all online activity, product reviews, art solicitation, and e-newsletters. She has also published freelance features in the *Grand Rapids Magazine*.

Jessie Levine (2010) works in Ann Arbor at PRIME Research, which specializes in strategic communication. Her role is a media analyst and researcher. She also blogs for AnnArbor.com's food and drink section.

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