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From the Department Chair

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *The Final Draft*, the newsletter for the Department of English and Modern Languages. Our department embraces our mission statement: We educate students to write well, think critically, and examine the world through the lenses of literature and languages. As you will see, our students consistently succeed inside and outside of the classroom. We are proud to celebrate their achievements here.

If you would like more information about our department, be sure to visit our website (www.shepherd.edu/eml) and our Facebook page (Shepherd University's Dept. of English & Modern Languages). And graduates: we would love to hear from you! Please let us know what you are up to. You might find yourself featured in an upcoming installment of our "Alumni Spotlight."

Whether you are a current student, a future student, an alum, or simply a supporter of our department, we hope you will enjoy reading about the exciting news we have to share.

Sincerely,

Dr. Betty Ellzey



Cecelia Mason

Dr. Betty Ellzey

Chair of the Department of English and Modern Languages

The writer is by nature a dreamer – a conscious dreamer.

—Carson McCullers





Actors and actresses performing their fall 2019 play, William Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

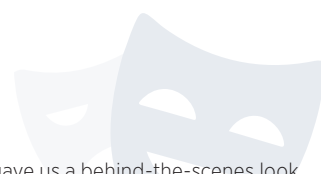
Checking in with The Rude Mechanicals

For more than 20 years, The Rude Mechanicals have been dedicating their time and talents to achieve two major goals: producing Greek, Medieval, and Renaissance dramas that are true to the spirit of the time in which the plays were performed while also being relevant to 21st-century audiences, and producing short plays written by Shepherd University Creative Writing majors. With such a diverse group of actors and actresses, the Rude Mechanicals work closely with Dr. Betty Ellzey (the troupe's advisor and director) to put on well-produced productions. The work of these actors and actresses goes far beyond spring and fall semesters. The Rude Mechanicals are busy all year long with plays that have been performed around the country and internationally.

In the spring semester of 2018, the Rudes performed Hrothsvita's *The Conversion of Thais* at the New College Biennial Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Studies, a biennial event covering all aspects of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, in Sarasota, Florida. After such an amazing performance, the Rudes have been invited to perform at the next conference in March 2020.

The Rude Mechanicals stay busy in the summer perfecting their craft and performing plays for the community. During summer of 2019, they performed plays by three alumni: Adam Solomon '11, Katy Cousino '13, and Aja Bailey '15.

This fall, the Rudes took on Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Cast member



Ashley Barr gave us a behind-the-scenes look at what it means to be a Rude. Barr, who played Hermia in the production, is a recent member of the group. Joining this past summer, she says that being a part of the Rudes has helped her to "rekindle the love she has for theater and more specifically her passion for acting." Aside from acting on stage together, Barr describes the Rude Mechanicals as a family: laughing together, going on group dinner dates together, and helping one another through school as a solid support system.

For more information on The Rude Mechanicals and to see what's next for the group, visit: www.shepherd.edu/eml/rude-mechanicals ■



Walt Whitman's Birthday

On May 31, 2019, the Department of English celebrated the 200th anniversary of Walt Whitman's birth. The celebration consisted of a wandering event that began at the Rumsey Monument, stopped at McMurrin Hall, and ended at Four Seasons Bookstore. At each stop, individuals read excerpts of Whitman's poetry or pieces inspired by Whitman. Shepherd University faculty, staff, alumnae, and community members participated. Featured readers included Dr. James Pate, assistant professor of English; Sadie Shorr-Parks, adjunct instructor of English; Ed Zahniser, Shepherdstown poet; and Katie Quinnelly '17, Shepherd alumna. ■

Cecelia Mason

Page-to-Stage: A Unique Shepherd Experience

In addition to performing Greek, Medieval, and Renaissance plays, the Rude Mechanicals also strive to achieve their other goal of performing work written by students. In the spring of 2019, Andrea Monsma's *Welcome to the Poetry Club*, Claudia McCarron's *Harper and Laurel*, and Lena Nuñez's *Charity, Cubes, and Caroline* were selected as the three creative writing pieces that would be performed for audiences at Shepherd and the local community. Here's what each playwright has to say about the experience of seeing her work put on stage:

Andrea Monsma: "Watching my play performed by the Rude Mechanicals through Page to Stage was probably the best and most surreal moment

of my life. Before that *Welcome to the Poetry Club* had only existed as a collection of words on a page and suddenly it was up on a stage in front of me. The actors did a fantastic job, they really embodied the characters and turned them into living breathing people."

Claudia McCarron: "Being able to see *Harper and Laurel* onstage was one of the most exciting and rewarding experiences of my time at Shepherd. I was seeing something that before had only existed in my head being acted out onstage by real people, and that's an incredible experience for any young writer to have. I also got to see a director's interpretation of my scenes and characters, which was just fascinating. Some things

were staged exactly how I imagined them, and some of them were not, and I loved seeing someone else's vision of my story."

Lena Nuñez: "Having my play, *Charity, Cubes, and Caroline*, performed by the Rude Mechanicals was an incredible experience. It was exciting seeing my work come to life on the stage. Of course I had a vision for it when I wrote it but it came out better than I could have imagined. What I wrote is good but they're the ones who made it great. That's part of the magic of theater, how collaborative it is. It's easily one of the best experiences I've had at Shepherd." ■



Sans Merci: Looking Back, Looking Forward



Student produced and edited, *Sans Merci*, Shepherd's creative journal and a joint endeavor of the English and Art Departments, has had an impressive launch of their most recent release, Volume 43. In March 2019, students and other guests

gathered at the War Memorial building in Shepherdstown for the annual Release Party. This volume hit a record high 100 submissions sent in for consideration. The final composition includes 33 written texts and 17 works of art, representing a narrowing-down process that was taken very seriously by the editors. Literary editor Katie Hardy looked for pieces that felt personal. Hardy says, "I wanted to feel like I could connect with what I was reading, and I think one of the best ways to create that kind of work is to write from experience and an emotion-based state of mind." She also mentioned that the team of editors leaned toward pieces that were descriptive and abstract. She says that these two major elements of someone's writing led the editors

to prefer abstract pieces because they took the volume to a deeper and more personal level. Students, faculty, staff, and community members can find copies of the most recent volume of *Sans Merci* in Knutti Hall and the Scarborough Library.

When can you get the next issue of *Sans Merci*? Volume 44 is currently in the beginning stages of editing, with the edition scheduled for release in spring 2020, complete with another release party. Senior editor Andrea Monsma is very excited and eager to begin work on the next volume. Monsma says that the editors have been working really hard to get things in place for submissions to start rolling in and the editing process to begin. She says, "I'm excited to have the honor of selecting from such an amazing pool of writing talent. We have a ton of really amazing writers and artists on this campus so I am confident that it's going to be a fantastic volume!" *Sans Merci* has allowed for student-produced work to have a place to flourish and be shared with other students on campus. If you're interested in more information on *Sans Merci*, visit: www.shepherd.edu/eml/sans-merci or follow them on Instagram: @sansmercimag. ■



Guests gather at the War Memorial building in downtown Shepherdstown to celebrate the release of *Sans Merci* Volume 43.

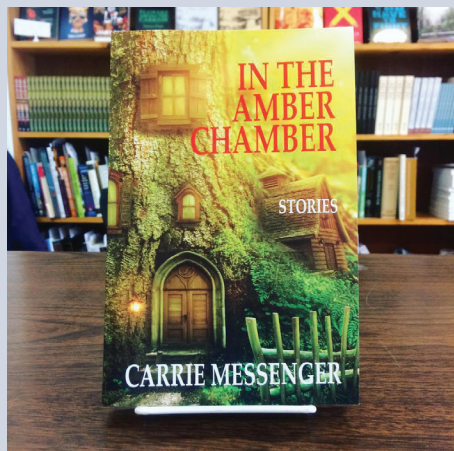
2018 West Virginia Professor of the Year



Cecelia Mason

Dr. Heidi M. Hanrahan, professor of English, was named the 2018 West Virginia Professor of the Year at an awards ceremony and dinner at the Culture Center in Charleston on Tuesday, April 9. The award is bestowed on a single West Virginia professor every year by the state's Faculty Merit Foundation. ■

In the Amber Chamber



On Saturday, February 23, Four Seasons Books in Shepherdstown hosted a release party for Dr. Carrie Messenger's story collection, *In the Amber Chamber*, which was published by Bright-horse. ■

What's New in Modern Languages?

Besides offering majors in Spanish and Spanish Education, our department also offers a Modern Languages minor and Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) Spanish. West Virginia, Virginia, and Maryland have a major demand for teachers who can speak foreign languages fluently, especially Spanish. As the department has followed up with graduates, we have found that all of our alumni have found employment in positions that are both financially and emotionally fulfilling.

The major and the teaching major require students to travel abroad, so we have several



Dr. Denis Berenschot and Dr. Rachel Krantz (r.) at the Phi Beta Delta initiation.



Dr. Denis Berenschot with students at the Sigma Delta Pi initiation.



Dr. Denis Berenschot and Dean Dow Benedict (r.) at the Phi Beta Delta initiation.

opportunities for students to study abroad each year. So far we have traveled to Argentina, Peru, Uruguay, Cuba, Costa Rica, and Quebec. Plans for travel to other destinations are in the works.

The department is also highly involved with campus life, including the events of Shepherd University's chapter of Sigma Delta Pi (the Spanish Honors Society), the Spanish cultural club on campus named Alianza, and the German conversational group called Stammtisch.

On Tuesday, April 2, the honor society for international scholars, Phi Beta Delta (ΦΒΔ)—specifically Shepherd University's Theta Epsilon chapter—held its annual induction ceremony. One of our own, Dr. Rachel Krantz, was inducted, as was our former dean, Dow Benedict. Dr. Denis Berenschot, associate professor of Spanish, is the president of Phi Beta Delta and welcomed the inductees into the organization. ■



Stammtisch meeting at the Blue Moon.



Quebec, Summer 2019



This past summer, Dr. Rachel Krantz led a group of Shepherd students to Quebec City for a two-week language/culture immersion experience. The goal of the trip was to interface with contemporary Québécois culture and improve the students' ability to understand and speak French.

During the day, participants attended language classes at BLI Institute. In the afternoon and on

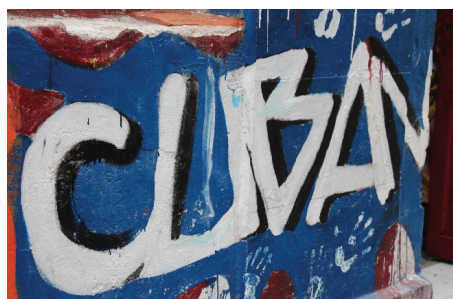
weekends, they were free to explore the various neighborhoods of Quebec City, including Old Quebec (a UNESCO World Heritage Site). The trip was timed to coincide with the annual summer music festival (Festival d'Été), where one pass gives you access to all the venues of the festival. This year's headliners included Blink 182, Slipknot, Imagine Dragons, and Quebec's own Coeur de Pirate. During their time abroad, participants lived with carefully selected local



families, providing them with additional opportunities for culture and language learning.

According to the participants, highlights of the trip included eating poutine (French fries topped with cheese curds and hot gravy), being able to navigate the city in French, and soaking up rays at the open-air pool and bar. ■

Cuba Trip, Summer 2019



A week after finals ended in spring 2019, Dr. Denis Berenschot, associate professor of Spanish, Dr. Keith Alexander, associate professor of history, and Amy Hampton, instructor in social work, accompanied by nearly 20 students on a 17-day trip to Cuba. During the week, students participated in four-hour language classes in the morning and spent the afternoons learning

about the culture. Students were led through tours, participated in dance lessons, visited beaches, museums, and other notable locations such as the Callejon de Hamel and Cuba's institute for LGBT rights, Cenesex. The weekends were spent visiting Viñales, where students went horseback riding, and Trinidad, where they explored the old town's architecture.



What made the 2019 trip stand out from previous visits is that students stayed in the working-class district (rather than the business-class district) where they were able to see the real conditions that many people live their day-to-day lives in. Only a week after students returned, the United States shut down travel to Cuba, making this experience even more special for its participants. ■



Shepherd Students Succeed: Sigma Tau Delta and Beyond

In March 2019, six Shepherd University English students and a recent graduate **attended the Sigma Tau Delta International Convention** from March 27-30 in St. Louis. The six students, Alexandra McCarron, Lilli Sutton, Sarah Markle,



Claudia McCarron, Gabrielle Hersey, and Katharine Hardy, presented individual papers during the convention, which also provided networking and professional development opportunities. The Shepherd University Foundation's President's Club provided support for the students to attend the convention. ■



Cecelia Mason

In October, **Shepherd's Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta was recognized** as a 2018-19 Outstanding Chapter recipient. The Outstanding Chapter Award is designed to recognize local chapters that have exhibited outstanding motivation, creativity, and service in the preceding year. Our chapter received \$500 and a plaque. In addition, we have been selected to present a display at the 2020 International Conference in Las Vegas. ■



Congratulations to Alex McCarron for becoming the Sigma Tau Delta Student Representative for the Eastern Region. Alex, who enjoys studying English, American, and

Young Adult literature, has been a member of Sigma Tau Delta since 2018, and has presented at the 2018 and 2019 West Virginia Literary Symposium, as well as at the Sigma Tau Delta 2019 International Convention. ■



English majors and Sigma Tau Delta members, Ashley Hess (r.) and Fiona Tracy **presented their work** at Hood College's "Discovering the Humanities Conference" on September 14. Ashley presented a paper titled "Ovid's Metamorphoses as a Feminist Text," which she wrote for ENGL 400: Greek Mythology. Fiona presented a paper titled "Rejection, Emulation and Exploitation: Feminism in the Columns of Fanny Fern and Candace Bushnell," which she wrote for ENGL 312: American Literature to 1900. ■

Three recent English graduates, Gabrielle Hersey, Claudia McCarron, and Caitlyn Sheets, and current student Linnea Meyer **led a round-table presentation** based on work they did during the spring 2019 semester titled "Nineteenth-Century Women Writers at Work" at the Sigma Tau Delta Regional Conference hosted by Mount St. Mary's College on September 21. ■



When **Shepherd hosted the "Manuscript to Marketplace" writers' conference** in September, members of Sigma Tau Delta served as volunteers and participants. Students were given free access

to professional panels such as Selling Your Book, Writing Your Book, and Writing Aids & Resources. Keynote speakers included Robin Cutler, the director of IngramSpark, Amy Collins, the president of New Shelves Books, Wendy H. Jones, president of the Scottish Association of Writers, and Laurence O'Brian, author and founder of BooksGoSocial. ■



Our department **hosted the 27th annual West Virginia Undergraduate Literary Symposium** in March. Students from all over West Virginia attended and presented their work. Members of Sigma Tau Delta helped plan the event and served as session moderators. Dr. Carrie Messenger, associate professor of English, gave a keynote address and read from her new book: *In the Amber Chamber*. Shepherd students won five of the six prizes, including both top prizes overall. In the Outstanding Written Essay category, the winners were Claudia McCarron (1st place), Elisha Pidcock (2nd place), and Alex McCarron (3rd place). In the Outstanding Presentation category, Bethany Kaetzel won 1st place, and Bailee Dugan of West Liberty and Linnea Meyer tied for 2nd place. ■

2019 English graduate Claudia McCarron, continues to add to her already-impressive résumé. Her essay "The Revelation to Jane: Christianity and Apocalypse in Jane Eyre" was **published in the 2019 volume of the Sigma Tau Delta Review**. The essay began as a paper Claudia wrote for Dr. Hanrahan's ENGL 402: Bible as Literature class. In October, she also learned that

(continued on next page)





she has won the Lisa Crafton Essay Award, given to the outstanding essay published in Literary Undergraduate Research (LUR) journal. McCarron's essay, written as her English and Honors capstone project, "A French Dancer's Bastard": Imperialism, Girlhood, and Adèle Varens in Brontë's *Jane Eyre*," also appears in the Fall 2019 issue of the journal. The award carries with it a \$500 prize. ■



the value of a liberal arts education on the web site of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC). ■

Congratulations to John-Paul Bronzi, winner of this 2019's Catherine Fix Essay Contest, awarded annually to the best essay written for English 101 or 102. John-Paul's essay, "Queen of the Freak Bikes," composed for Professor Sadie

2019 graduate Jessica Perez was **awarded an Honorable Mention** in the David M. Prior Award essay contest. You can read Jessica's essay about the

Shorr-Parks' ENGL 102 class, is vividly written, compelling, and timely. It uses different kinds of sources (interviews, etc.) to make an academic argument that is also about the "real world." It incorporates images seamlessly and intelligently into the prose. It teaches readers about a world/culture that they probably know nothing about and makes them want to know more. ■



Student Voices: Favorite Classes



Andrea Monsma

English Major, Graduating Senior, and President of Sigma Tau Delta

My favorite English class is Intro to Creative Writing. It's a fantastic introduction to the world of creative writing that teaches you how to write fiction, poetry, nonfiction, and drama. You get to experiment in all these different genres and discover what makes each one beautiful and unique. Before I took this class I thought that I could only write fiction, but I soon discovered my passion for writing extended into all genres. Thanks to this class I became a much stronger writer who was bold enough to try writing anything.

Stephen Beard

English Major, Senior

The class I am most looking forward to next semester is Dr. Wegner's Grant Writing class. It teaches a subject that is very practical for students and useful for the future. I feel like I will have a lot of applications for it after I graduate.

Aneyla Dozier

English Major, Junior

My favorite class that I have taken so far was The Art of Literature with Dr. Messenger. I feel like a lot of times in college we become overwhelmed with reading and it makes students not enjoy it

as much, but she really helped me reignite my love for reading in that class.

Bethany Kaetzel

English Major, Graduating Senior

Dr. Pate's Gothic Literature is my favorite class. The reading selection really matched to my specific interests and it was particularly nice to be able to study in-depth into a specific genre of literature.

Nicole Merkel

Spanish Major, Senior

My favorite class would be Spanish Film Studies with Dr. Berenschot. We watched films of different genres that were made in Spain. I personally thought it was interesting to hear how people from Spain speak Spanish differently from other Spanish-speaking countries.

Linnea Meyer

English Creative Writing Major, Biology Minor, Senior

My favorite class is Dr. Nixon's first-year Honors Core class in German literature, because it was my introduction to the English department and to college literature classes. Dr. Nixon made all of the tough material fascinating. I learned so much about how to talk about books, which were always my favorite subject, in an articulate way.

Alison Brashears

English Creative Writing major, Historic Preservation major

My favorite classes would probably be the creative writing classes. I had Journalism last semester and this semester I have Creative Writing: Nonfiction. I like being able to exercise creativity.

Henry S. Navarrete Méndez

Spanish and Computer and Information Technology Major, Senior, Multicultural Leadership Team Member, International Student Leadership Team Member, and Senior Class President

My favorite Spanish classes have been the independent studies I've completed with Dr. Eva María Suárez-Büdenbender. These have included Aspects of Bilingualism in Latin America, a research study about called Attitudes Towards English-Spanish Bilingualism by Native Spanish Speakers, and lastly, Exploring Language Contact by Example of Spanish-Nahuatl. I love these classes because not only did they challenge me, but they are about topics which I am interested in learning about and exploring. They connect me with my culture and are something special for me. There is truly nothing better than to be able to learn about something that you are passionate about.

About Our Student Writers and Editors

The content of this first newsletter comes almost entirely from two Shepherd English majors, who have completed the work as part of a practicum course they are taking with Dr. Hanrahan. Below, you can read a little bit about them.

My name is **Katreena Stracke**, but most people on campus just know me as Treena (or the purple haired girl that works at the library.) I'm senior English major at Shepherd with a double minor in Computer Science and Communications. I'm also a member of the English honor society, Sigma Tau Delta, and vice president of the Student Library Advisory Board. I became an English major because I have a passion for stories. Stories have power; they remind us of our humanity. There is a trend in society where writers imagine a better world and once that dream takes on a life and circulates through the masses, it starts to become reality as people become inspired. My favorite book is *Inkheart* by Cornelia Funke. In the series, the main character

literally creates and alters worlds through her writing. The series is what inspired me to try writing for myself. Working as an intern for the English and Modern Languages department and on the newsletter has been an amazing experience. There always seems to be countless events going on in the department and I've been able to put both my major and minors to use in documenting everything. The professors are all phenomenal in their fields, as teachers and as people who care deeply about their students. I've found that the newsletter has been especially important to me because I want more people to realize the outstanding programs the English and Modern Languages department has to offer. ■



My name is **Keara Heck** and I am a senior English major and education minor at Shepherd. Like Margaret Atwood, I believe that writing is a form of power that every individual has the right to discover within themselves. Over the past four years, I have discovered my power through writing, thanks to my professors within the English department. I recently started a blog, a goal I would have never achieved without the constant reassurance from my professors that I was in the right major. My blog is a way for me to grow as a writer and reminds me to never be shy about my writing. I am thankful to be an editor for the first issue of the English department's newsletter. This opportunity has allowed me to connect closer to different elements within the department and hear stories from other students who

have been positively affected by the programs our department offers. One of the most influential classes that I have taken while in my undergrad was a seminar on the writings of James Baldwin. My love for literature was strengthened after reading his work and I grew to appreciate the effect literature has on the world more than I already did. I can't thank my professors enough for allowing me and my peers to have these experiences that greatly shape our education. In addition to my studies, I also serve as the 2019 chapter president for my sorority, Sigma Sigma Sigma, and I'm a member of the English honor society, Sigma Tau Delta. Upon graduation, I'm interested in using my writing experience to get a job in communications or PR. ■



McMurrin Scholars

In April 2019, seven of our majors were named McMurrin Scholars, earning Shepherd's highest academic honor. From left to right: Dr. Betty Ellzey, Dr. Carrie Messenger, Marilyn Creager, Dr. Heidi Hanrahan, Claudia McCarron, Dr. Mark Cantrell, Paige Conrad, and Andrea Monsma. Not pictured: Olivia Barrett, Madison Ingram, and Kellie Sansone. ■

Faculty Highlights

Along with highlighting the work and achievements accomplished by our students, we would also like to **highlight the amazing work our professors** are doing to improve their field of study. Our professors continue to be great role models and mentors for our students.

Since January 2019, faculty in the Department of English and Modern Languages have:

Presented work at 11 conferences, including venues like the College Composition and Communication Conference, the Annual Meeting of the T.S. Eliot Society, the Popular Culture Association Conference, the International Writing Centers Association National Conference, and the North American Victorian Studies Association Conference.

Given invited lectures at venues like the Delta Mouth Literary Festival, the Western States

Rhetoric and Literacy Conference, and the Friedrich-Alexander Universität in Germany.

Published 12 works, both critical articles and creative writing, in journals and edited collections including Women's Studies, Burning House Press, Dialects from Tropical Islands, The Encyclopedia of Victorian Women Writers, Trespass: Ecotone, and Next Steps: New Ideas for/in Writing about Writing.

Led student field-trips to museums, plays, and cultural sites in D.C. and Baltimore.

Were **nominated for awards** including the 2020 Excellence in Teaching First-Year Seminars Award.

Were **elected to positions within professional organizations** including the International Writing Centers Association. ■

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